

# ELITE

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# CLASS OF '22

JURAJ SLAFKOVSKÝ | SHANE WRIGHT | LOGAN COOLEY

THE TOP 121, WITH 300 PROSPECT PROFILES,  
PLAYER GRADES, AND GAME REPORTS

# THE TOP 121

RANK	PLAYER	PAGE	RANK	PLAYER	PAGE	RANK	PLAYER	PAGE
1	Shane Wright	56	46	Adam Ingram	392	91	Tyler Brennan	623
2	David Jiříček	65	47	Lane Hutson	398	92	Servác Petrovský	625
3	Juraj Slafkovský	75	48	Pano Fimis	406	93	Zachary Bookman	630
4	Logan Cooley	86	49	Cameron Lund	411	94	Ty Nelson	632
5	Frank Nazar	95	50	David Goyette	416	95	Nikita Blednov	640
6	Simon Nemeč	105	51	Danny Zhilkin	423	96	Zam Plante	643
7	Pavel Mintyukov	117	52	Jordan Gustafson	429	97	Gustav Karlsson	649
8	Denton Mateychuk	125	53	Nicholas Moldenhauer	434	98	Otto Salin	652
9	Matthew Savoie	134	54	Daimon Gardner	438	99	Kirill Dolzhenkov	658
10	Joakim Kemell	144	55	Paul Ludwinski	444	100	Topi Rönni	661
11	Cutter Gauthier	154	56	Noah Warren	451	101	Ludwig Persson	666
12	Marco Kasper	162	57	Elias Pettersson	455	102	Reid Schaefer	670
13	Liam Öhgren	168	58	Ryan Healey	459	103	Daniil Davydov	675
14	Brad Lambert	177	59	Vinzenz Rohrer	463	104	Kirill Kudryavtsev	678
15	Calle Odellius	189	60	Simon Forsmark	468	105	Garrett Brown	682
16	Owen Pickering	197	61	Devin Kaplan	472	106	Théo Rochette	686
17	Conor Geekie	205	62	Maveric Lamoureux	477	107	Zakary Lavoie	692
18	Jonathan Lekkerimäki	216	63	Mikey Milne	483	108	Aleksanteri Kaskimäki	698
19	Kevin Korhinski	223	64	Fraser Minten	489	109	Rieger Lorenz	701
20	Jagger Firkus	232	65	Tomas Hamara	495	110	Marek Alšcher	703
21	Owen Beck	238	66	Alexander Pelevin	500	111	Thomas Milic	708
22	Gleb Trikozov	247	67	Bryce McConnell-Barker	503	112	Frederic Brunet	710
23	Danila Yurov	254	68	Kasper Kulonummi	513	113	Kocha Delic	713
24	Jimmy Snuggerud	261	69	Tristan Luneau	513	114	Jack Devine	718
25	Nathan Gaucher	268	70	Filip Bystedt	520	115	Marcus Nguyen	721
26	Mattias Hävelid	273	71	Matthew Seminoff	524	116	Connor McGrath	725
27	Noah Östlund	279	72	Ilya Kvochko	531	117	Jake Livanavage	727
28	Lian Bichsel	285	73	Jorian Donovan	535	118	Alexander Perevalov	732
29	Jiří Kulich	291	74	Mats Lindgren	538	119	Miko Matikka	737
30	Ryan Chesley	297	75	Viktor Neuchev	546	120	Alex Bump	740
31	Vladimir Grudinin	305	76	Matyáš Šapovaliv	550	121	Topias Leinonen	745
32	Sam Rinzel	311	77	Jani Nyman	557			
33	Ivan Miroshnichenko	318	78	Matthew Poitras	562			
34	Hunter Haight	324	79	Beau Jelsma	567			
35	Isaiah George	330	80	Hudson Thornton	572			
36	Filip Mešár	337	81	Jordan Dumais	581			
37	Julian Lutz	344	82	Owen Van Steensel	586			
38	Adam Sýkora	347	83	Cedrick Guindon	590			
39	Christian Kyrou	350	84	Luca DelBelBelluz	594			
40	Rutger McGroarty	356	85	Samuel Savoie	600			
41	Isaac Howard	363	86	Tyson Jugnauth	604			
42	Michael Fisher	371	87	Rodwin Dionicio	607			
43	Seamus Casey	374	88	Elias Salomonsson	612			
44	Jack Hughes	383	89	Matthew Morden	616			
45	Michael La Starza	387	90	Ryan Greene	618			



## ALPHABETICAL INDEX

PLAYER	PAGE	PLAYER	PAGE	PLAYER	PAGE
Ryan Abraham	746	Aidan Castle	790	Quinn Finley	851
Brennan Ali	748	Ales Cech	793	Jagger Firkus	232
Tim Almgren	751	Ryan Chesley	297	James Fisher	853
Marek Alscher	703	Kyle Chyzowski	796	Michael Fisher	371
Liam Arnsby	753	Nolan Collins	799	Nolan Flamand	855
Vasili Atanasov	755	Logan Cooley	86	Maddox Fleming	859
Artyom Barabosha	756	Justin Côté	801	Simon Forsmark	468
Maxim Barbashev	758	Brody Crane	804	Jake Furlong	862
Samu Bau	760	Blake Dangos	808	Daimon Gardner	438
Mason Beaupit	763	Joshua Davies	810	Nathan Gaucher	268
Owen Beck	238	Daniil Davydov	675	Marc-André Gaudet	864
Alessio Beglieri	764	Luca DelBelBelluz	594	Cutter Gauthier	154
Julien Béland	765	Kocha Delic	713	Ruslan Gazizov	865
Parker Bell	766	Jack Devine	718	Patrick Geary	868
Brady Berard	769	Ben Dexheimer	813	Conor Geekie	205
Lian Bichsel	285	Rodwin Dionicio	607	Alexis Gendron	871
Alex Blais	771	Kirill Dolzhenkov	658	Isaiah George	330
Nikita Blednov	640	Jorian Donovan	535	Dyllan Gill	874
Pavel Bocharov	772	Noah Dorey	815	Deni Goure	875
Zachary Bookman	630	Jackson Dorrington	819	David Goyette	416
Angus Booth	774	Keaton Dowhaniuk	821	Max Graham	878
Vinny Borgesi	776	Aiden Dubinsky	827	Ryan Greene	618
Daniil Bourosh	779	Artyom Duda	829	Leo Gruba	880
Tyler Brennan	623	Tyler Duke	831	Vladimir Grudinin	305
Garrett Brown	682	Jordan Dumais	581	David Gucciardi	883
Frederic Brunet	710	Reid Dyck	835	Cedrick Guindon	590
Michael Buchinger	780	Lucas Edmonds	836	Jordan Gustafson	429
Ben Bujold	783	Jackson Edward	838	Lukas Gustafsson	886
Alex Bump	740	Adam Engström	841	Hunter Haight	324
François-James Buteau	785	George Fegaras	843	Aaron Hakala	889
Filip Bystedt	520	Layton Feist	844	Barrett Hall	891
Atley Calvert	786	Niks Fenenko	846	Stephen Halliday	893
Adam Cardona	788	Josh Filmon	848	Tomas Hamara	495
Seamus Casey	374	Pano Fimis	406	Jeremy Hanzel	895



PLAYER	PAGE	PLAYER	PAGE	PLAYER	PAGE
Jack Harvey	899	Joakim Kemell	144	Cameron Lund	411
Hugo Hävelid	902	Ben King	945	Kasper Lundell	982
Mattias Hävelid	273	Jozef Viliam Kmec	947	Tristan Luneau	513
Avery Hayes	903	Cole Knuble	950	Julian Lutz	344
Gavin Hayes	906	Niklas Kokko	953	Ben MacDonald	984
Ryan Healey	459	Vsevolod Komarov	954	Mitchell Martin	987
Marek Hejduk	909	Evan Konyen	956	Michael Mastrodomenico	989
Ben Hemmerling	911	Kevin Korchinski	223	Denton Mateychuk	125
Ryan Hofer	913	Arseni Koromyslov	959	Jacob Mathieu	992
Otto Hokkanen	916	Kirill Kudryavtsev	678	Tnias Mathurin	994
Ryan Hopkins	919	Jiří Kulich	291	Miko Matikka	737
Isaac Howard	363	Kasper Kulonummi	513	Hunter Mayo	996
Jack Hughes	383	Connor Kurth	961	Bryce McConnell-Barker	503
Jakub Hujer	920	Ilya Kvochko	531	Connor McGrath	725
Lane Hutson	398	Christian Kyrou	350	Rutger McGroarty	356
Connor Hvidston	921	Elmeri Laakso	964	Filip Mešár	337
Francesco Lasenza	924	Brad Lambert	177	Thomas Milic	708
Adam Ingram	392	Maveric Lamoureux	477	Mikey Milne	483
Kenta Isogai	925	Jérémy Langlois	966	Fraser Minten	489
Ilya Ivantsov	928	Jere Lassila	967	Pavel Mintyukov	117
Dominic James	930	Michael La Starza	387	Ivan Miroshnichenko	318
Dylan James	932	Zakary Lavoie	692	Luke Mittelstadt	998
Ludvig Jansson	935	Charlie Leddy	969	Nicholas Moldenhauer	434
Beau Jelsma	567	Topias Leinonen	745	David Moravec	1002
David Jiříček	65	Jonathan Lekkerimäki	216	Matthew Morden	616
Roenick Jodoin	937	Mats Lindgren	538	Maxim Muranov	1004
Joel Jonsson	939	Brandon Lisowsky	971	Tyler Muszelik	1006
Tyson Jugnauth	604	Jake Livanavage	727	Matvei Nadvornyy	1007
Patrik Juhola	941	Dans Locmelis	974	Frank Nazar	95
Devin Kaplan	472	Amadeus Lombardi	976	Ty Nelson	632
Jake Karabela	943	Rieger Lorenz	701	Simon Nemeč	105
Gustav Karlsson	649	Yoan Loshing	978	Viktor Neuchev	546
Aleksanteri Kaskimäki	698	Cruz Lucius	980	Marcus Nguyen	721
Marco Kasper	162	Paul Ludwinski	444	Joshua Niedermayer	1009



PLAYER	PAGE	PLAYER	PAGE	PLAYER	PAGE
Filip Nordberg	1010	Matyáš Šapovaliv	550	Adam Sýkora	347
Jani Nyman	557	Tristan Sarsland	1041	Gabriel Szturc	1101
Gavin O'Connell	1012	Matthew Savoie	134	Ryder Thompson	1104
Cameron O'Neill	1016	Samuel Savoie	600	Hudson Thornton	572
Calle Odellius	189	Teddy Sawyer	1043	Miguël Tourigny	1107
Liam Öhgren	168	Reid Schaefer	670	Gleb Trikozov	247
Andrew Oke	1018	Brayden Schmitt	1045	Owen Van Steensel	586
Daniil Orlov	1019	Will Schumacher	1047	Zander Veccia	1109
Noah Östlund	279	Brayden Schuurman	1049	Antonin Verreault	1112
Erik Pahlsson	1020	Kai Schwindt	1052	Markus Vidicek	1115
Jaksen Panzer	1022	Sam Sedley	1055	Sandis Vilmanis	1117
Alexander Pelevin	500	Matthew Seminoff	524	Fabian Wagner	1118
Alexander Perevalov	732	T.J. Semptimphelter	1058	Dalyn Wakely	1120
Matthew Perkins	1025	Egor Sidorov	1059	Mathew Ward	1123
Ludwig Persson	666	Grayden Siepmann	1061	Noah Warren	451
Servác Petrovský	625	Dylan Silverstein	1064	Jace Weir	1126
Oskar Pettersson	1026	Landon Sim	1066	Cameron Whitehead	1129
Elias Pettersson	455	Semyon Sinyatkin	1068	Jeremy Wilmer	1130
Owen Pickering	197	Juraj Slafkovský	75	Zaccharya Wisdom	1133
Nick Pierre	1028	Jake Sloan	1069	Trevor Wong	1135
Zam Plante	643	Colton Smith	1072	Luke Woodworth	1141
Matthew Poitras	562	Derek Smyth	1074	Jared Wright	1144
Alexander Ponomaryov	1030	Jimmy Snuggerud	261	Charlie Wright	1146
Sam Rinzell	311	Alex Šotek	1074	Shane Wright	56
Tucker Robertson	1031	Spencer Sova	1077	Ty Young	1148
Théo Rochette	686	David Spacek	1080	Danila Yurov	254
Rylen Roersma	1033	Jack Sparkes	1083	Ivan Zhigalov	1149
Ilya Rogovsky	1035	Cole Spicer	1084	Danny Zhilkin	423
Vinzenz Rohrer	463	Jan Spunar	1087		
Topi Rönni	661	Brady Stonehouse	1088		
Dylan Roobroeck	1037	Santeri Sulku	1091		
Pier-Olivier Roy	1039	Jimi Suomi	1094		
Otto Salin	652	Alexander Suvorov	1097		
Elias Salomonsson	612	Alexander Suzdalev	1099		

## 2022 NHL DRAFT GUIDE

# INTRODUCTION

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You won't find a more challenging job in all the world of sports than that of the amateur scout. These talent evaluators have to cover thousands of miles to watch hundreds of games in a single calendar year, all in the pursuit of determining which 18-year-olds have what it takes to help guide their franchise to the promised land when they're in their mid-20s.

It's mostly a thankless job, too. The fans often haven't even the vaguest idea how much work went into unearthing late-round gems or making a tough call in the top-five, much less the people responsible for those decisions. When a pick goes well, it was a group effort; when you stick your neck out and miss on a prospect, that's on you. That's just the way it goes.

So, it's with the utmost respect and even some degree of deference that we endeavour to approximate the scouting process with our work covering the NHL Entry Draft at Elite Prospects and on EP Rinkside. We don't have the vast resources or person-hours available to us as these hundred-million-dollar entities. Still, our belief is that our work ethic, curiosity, and desire to learn from those within the game distinguish us in the public sphere.

We take great pride in what we do, and we hope that is reflected in the work you'll find in the Elite Prospects 2022 NHL Draft Guide.

While the receding nature of the ongoing pandemic has the Hockey World more or less open for business, this year wasn't without its fair share of challenges. We still lost countless valuable opportunities to scout these players, whether it was league seasons going on pause, cancelled international tournaments, or restrictions to press box attendance forcing us to rely on film.

The contributions of our partners at InStat Hockey have, once again, proven invaluable in this respect. Their treasure trove of data and corresponding tape have made what we do at Elite Prospects and EP Rinkside possible. They've made our scouting operations more efficient and our content more in-depth.

Getting to the matter of this year's draft, you'll find that our enthusiasm for many of the players that feature in this

year's guide is muted past the first 15 or so picks. This draft doesn't possess the high-end talent of a 2020 NHL Draft or the 2023 affair that will follow it, but there is considerable depth and a chance to find players well outside of the first round.

"I gotta be honest with you. I think you could arrange the players from about 10 to 40 in any order, and it would make some sense," one Western Conference executive told Elite Prospects. "It's wide open after that first group of players."

We're not sure if we share that sentiment to the letter, but it's not that far off from our own assessment of the class. It's just a revolving cast of Rorschach Tests, and where one lands on these players often says more about themselves as an evaluator than the prospects themselves.

What this draft may lack in established star power, it more than makes up for with legitimate intrigue from about the first overall pick onward. Far from the rote debates of past seasons, there's genuine mystery about what direction the Montréal Canadiens will go with the No. 1 pick in this year's draft, and the ripple effects that will follow.

Let's say that the Canadiens shake things up and grab Juraj Slafkovský. Do the New Jersey Devils draft Shane Wright with the second overall pick with Jack Hughes, Nico Hischier, and Dawson Mercer already established in the middle of their lineup? Could the Arizona Coyotes get our No. 1-ranked prospect with the third overall pick, or do they shoot for the stars and grab Logan Cooley?

Whatever happens, we hope that the Elite Prospects 2022 NHL Draft Guide arms you with the best, most reliable information possible to react in real-time. We've lined this year's guide with hundreds of individual game reports, manually tracked data from Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown and Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen, proprietary analytics in the form of pGPS and the SEAL adjusted scoring model (coming in the second edition) from Jeremy Davis, and quotes from industry sources.

It's as expansive a draft guide as has ever been produced, and we can't wait for you to dive right in.

elite prospects

# What We're Looking for in a Prospect

Hockey is a strong-link game. It's the league's stars that form the shape of the Stanley Cup Playoffs, not the depth pieces.

We're trying to unearth and sort the players most likely to develop into those top of the lineup talents -- the ones that Stanley Cup contenders are built around. That means prioritizing upside when determining player values.

If we miss on a few depth pieces here or there in the pursuit of impact players, that's a tradeoff we're prepared to make. Ultimately, we hope that our ranking will align with the WAR (Wins Above Replacement) leaderboard at the top more closely than it does the games played leaderboard.

In the pursuit of those types of players, we use a tools grade system and Future Value to help us determine one's proficiency in several critical areas of the game and then to weight their likelihood of making it to the NHL as a full-time contributor. Simply put: We've introduced a little scientific method to a process that is largely defined by subjectivity to help counter our biases and arrive at the soundest conclusions.

We're going to have our fair share of hits and misses. That's just par for the course in this part of the industry. Most teams view a draft in which they unearth two players for every seven picks -- about a 29 percent success rate -- to be a good draft.

If our hit rate lands somewhere in that range, then I'm happy.

The one thing you can count on is that we've put in the work, deliberated amongst ourselves for untold hours, and incorporated a data-friendly approach that's uncommon in the public sphere.

We've turned over every stone in our quest to appropriately rank the best players in the 2022 NHL Draft.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My first set of acknowledgments has to go to the people who have helped me turn EP Rinkside into the powerhouse that it is today.

This project can't happen without the work that Mitch Brown, Cam Robinson, David St-Louis, Lassi Alanen, Daniel Gee, Joey Padmanabhan, Lauren Kelly, Julie Robenhymer, Russ Cohen, Catherine Silverman, Jimmy Hamrin, and Dylan Griffing all put in over the course of the year.

I'll be forever grateful for their contributions to EliteProspects more broadly and for their hard work in the draft guide especially. It's been my distinct honour and privilege to work with each and every one of these individuals.

Likewise, I would like to acknowledge the support of EverySport Media Group. They provided me with the resources necessary to see this project through, and they've been unwavering in their support of everything we do at EliteProspects.

Specifically, I would like to thank Peter Sibner and Johan Nilsson. This job has been the privilege of my lifetime, and that's in large part due to your belief and support in everything we do at Elite Prospects Rinkside.



**J.D. BURKE**  
Editor-In-Chief

J.D. Burke is the Editor-in-Chief of EP Rinkside, the editorial branch of EliteProspects, and the co-host of the Elite Prospects Podcast with J.D. Burke and Craig Button. His work has appeared previously on TheAthletic, Sporting News, and The Nation Network. Burke is an established name in the amateur scouting community, with nearly a decade of experience covering the NHL Entry Draft and prospects in at least some capacity.

# MEET THE TEAM



**DAVID ST-LOUIS** | Lead Scout

@DavidSt\_Louis

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David St-Louis is a writer and the Lead Scout for EliteProspects, based out of Trois-Rivières, Quebec, in Canada, where he regularly attends Remparts games. His work can also be found on TheCoachesSite and SBNation's 'Eyes on the Prize' blog, where he covers the Montréal Canadiens. He's watched more hockey than probably everyone in your life combined, and that just accounts for this season's work.



**MITCH BROWN** | Dir. of North American Scouting

@MitchLBrown

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Mitch Brown is the Elite Prospects Director of North American Scouting. Based out of Canmore, Alberta, in Canada, Brown regularly scouts the WHL along with the BCHL and AJHL, too. His passion for hockey takes him all over the hockey world, though, including brief stops in Sweden, Ontario, and anywhere else where one might find a rink. Mitch never sleeps, because sleep is the cousin of death, and it allows him to manually track obscene amounts of data through developmental leagues where it's otherwise not available.



**LASSI ALANEN** | Finnish Scout

@lassialanen

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Lassi Alanen is a rising star in the realm of player evaluation, particularly on the amateur side, carried him to Elite Prospects this year, where he scouts Finland's professional and junior hockey leagues. This year alone, Alanen attended 70 games in person and supplemented that number with many more on tape. Not willing to leave any stone unturned, Alanen manually tracks data from the top draft-eligible prospects in the Liiga, Mestis, and Finnish U20 circuits.



**RUSS COHEN** | American Scout

@sportsology

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Russ Cohen is an American scout for Elite Prospects, covering the professional and NCAA ranks, as well as being an accomplished writer for Sportsology and radio host for the Sportsology Radio Network. He covers the New York Rangers and Philadelphia Flyers on the NHL side, too. His work has appeared on NHL.com, CSNPhilly.com, FoxSports, The Hockey News, and countless other venues. He also co-hosted Hockey Prospect Radio on NHL Network Radio as part of the SiriusXM network.



**JOEY PADMANABHAN** | USHL Scout

@joeypad2

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Joey Padmanabhan traded in his skates and stick for a pen and notepad this year, joining the Elite Prospects Rinkside team as a USHL scout and Data Analyst. He played AAA hockey in Chicago, going toe-to-toe with many of the players he now scouts in the USHL. When he's not taking notes or watching film, he enjoys playing pick-up hockey at his community rink and walking his dog, Jay-Jay. Joey attends Cornell University, where he majors in statistics and economics.





**CAM ROBINSON** | Dir. of Film Scouting

[@Hockey\\_Robinson](#)

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Cam Robinson is the Director of Film Scouting for EP Rinkside analyzing and assessing prospects from around the globe. He is also the Managing Editor of DobberProspects, an Associate Editor at DobberHockey and contributor with Daily Hive Vancouver, and Sportsnet650. Cam is also a middle school generalist teacher, a father of two, a husband of one, and an avid reader.



**CATHERINE SILVERMAN** | Goaltending Scout

[@catmsilverman](#)

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Catherine Silverman is the goaltending scout for EliteProspects, providing scouting reports and player grades for targets across the hockey world. Goaltender, coach, journalist, and runner. Bylines at The Athletic NHL, InGoal Magazine, NHL.com, and more along the way. Specialist in goaltending video and analysis, but great for chats about distance running and New York style pizza in her spare time.



**LAUREN KELLY** | OHL Scout

[@laurkelly24](#)

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Lauren Kelly joined Elite Prospects as an OHL scout after recreationally scouting online for years. She is based just north of Toronto and an alumna of Ryerson's RTA: Sport Media program. When she's not accidentally injuring herself in some bizarre fashion, Lauren spends a ridiculous amount of time watching hockey, between junior games and the NHL. She has also dabbled in OHL colour commentary. You can find her other written work at SB Nation and FC Hockey.



**DYLAN GRIFFING** | Russian Regional Scout

[@GriffingDylan](#)

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Dylan Griffing is a writer and the Russian regional scout for EliteProspects while being based out of Wisconsin, USA. He spends his time tracking data, playing Football Manager, doing puzzles, and then staying up until four in the morning watching Russian junior hockey. He is very grateful for his three cats, Lulu, Lola, and Pandy, who constantly distract him while he tries to get work done.



**JIMMY HAMRIN** | Swedish Regional Scout

[@jimmyhamrin](#)

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Jimmy Hamrin is the Swedish regional scout for EliteProspects. His work has appeared previously in McKeen's, and he also contributes to HockeySverige. He's a rink rat with a passion for scouting, looking to find the best Swedish draft-eligible players for the NHL Entry Draft.



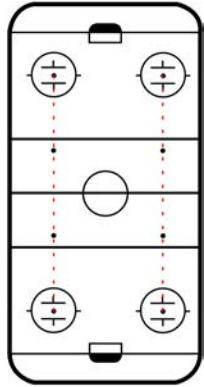
**MAREK NOVOTNÝ** | Czechia and Slovakia Regional Scout

[@MarekNovotny96](#)

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Marek Novotný is the Elite Prospects Czechia and Slovakia regional scout, as well as a contributor to EP Rinkside. Novotný has been passionate about hockey since he was a child, and he turned that passion into a professional pursuit in 2019 when he worked for a year with his hometown hockey team, HC Slovan Ústí nad Labem, as a business manager. He's continued to work in hockey, completing an internship at the Czech Hockey Association earlier this year and working in the sales department for Bílí Tygři Liberec of the Czech Extraliga.

# GLOSSARY



## **DOT(TED) LINE**

An invisible line that runs parallel to the boards from the defensive zone faceoff dot to the offensive zone faceoff dots, dividing the "interior" of the ice and "exterior" of the ice.



## **STRIDE EXTENSION**

The generation of power in a stride, characterized by a push and extension finishing behind the player, ideally with a toe push and ankle twist.



## **STRIDE RECOVERY**

The forward movement of the extended leg, ideally under the shoulders finished with a 90-degree knee bend.



## **GAP CONTROL**

The management of distance between the defender and attacker; an ideal gap is often stick-on-stick to limit options, and increase the odds of a break up and recovery of possession.



## **RISK-MITIGATING FOOTWORK**

A rush defence strategy that emphasizes middle-and-out backpedal routes, backward momentum, and avoiding weight-committing crossovers until the attacker has as few options as possible.

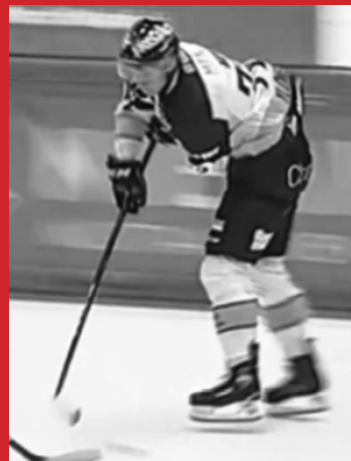


## **PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS/ADAPTABILITY**

The ability to locate a secondary or tertiary play after an unexpected variable alters or eliminates the primary option.

## **SMALL-AREA GAME**

The puck control, handling, and skating that allow a player to maneuver through traffic, and often times, escape traffic.



## **SLIP PASS**

An alternative to the saucer pass where the player pulls the puck in towards their skates then passes, changing the angle of release.

## **HOOK PASS**

An alternative to the saucer pass where the player lengths their grip to change of angle of the pass.

**RUSH PATTERNS:** The combination of routes, stickhandling, and skating habits (especially crossover usage) that a player uses in transition.

**DECEPTION:** The ability to mask intentions by indicating another play, ranging from fakes shots to more complex combinations of look-offs and subtle body fakes.

**PACE:** The speeds at which a player can execute; often characterized by active feet through pressure, passes, and puckhandling.

**OFF-PUCK OFFENCE:** The movement a player makes into pockets of space for supporting the offence or becoming a scoring threat, often timed with passes or shots to decrease odds of getting tied up by the defending team.

**OFF-PUCK DEFENCE:** How a player defends players without the puck, including but not limited to: net-front defence and closing gaps to deter passes.

**AWARENESS:** How often, when, and where a player scan's the ice.

**PROCESSING:** The speed at which a player picks up on the details of the play, including the speed, direction, weight-shift, flexion, stick and feet angle of teammates and opponents (and the space between them).

**ANTICIPATION:** Ability to fill the blanks of perception based on the knowledge and experience of the game, his team's system, and the opposition's.

**TIMING:** A player's ability to organize his movements to be in a position to make a play at the right time.

**SELF-AWARENESS:** A player's ability to know what plays are accessible based on his skill-level.

**MANIPULATION:** The use of movement, puck positioning, passing, or deception to move defenders away from the player's desired space or lane.

**ADVANTAGE CREATION:** Plays made with the intention of maximizing the recipient's time, space, and options with the puck.

**BODY POSITIONING:** A player's ability to put himself between the puck and opponent, by cutting in front of that opponent.

**PUCK PROTECTION:** A player's ability to use his body (knee, free-arm, and back), skating and handling moves to shield the puck and escape pressure.

You'll note that we grade our draft-eligible skaters based on six criteria using a 1-to-9 linear rating scale. Where necessary, we've applied half-grades to widen the range of outcomes. The six items that we've identified as most crucial to the evaluation process are as follows: skating, shooting, passing, puckhandling, hockey sense, and one's physical ability. For posterity, the absence of something from our rating rubric isn't evidence of its absence in our evaluation. We've covered every base, whether it's firsthand analysis gleaned from entire days spent in musky rinks sipping stale coffee or making phone calls to the scouts who hold the levers of power at the NHL draft. Now, let's get into the specific player tools that help shape the form of our analysis.

# Ratings System Explained



This one seems pretty straightforward, right? Think again. So much goes into a player's skating, and then there's a whole heap of contributing factors that help one determine whether there is room for improvement, the capacity for development, etc.

Here are the items on our checklist when evaluating a player's skating:

- Input: ankle flexion, hip flexion, knee-bend, stride extension, stride recovery, torso angle, hip tilt, head movement, arm swing.
- Output: three-step explosiveness, top-end speed, agility (four-way mobility).
- Habits (frequency and timing of usage): crossover usage,, in-motion plays, cutbacks, heel-to-heel (ten-and-two), motor.

Most of these items are covered in the glossary section of the EliteProspects 2022 NHL Draft Guide. If it's not, then we feel as though it's relatively commonplace in hockey conversations and not worthy of the space.



You know it when you see it. Some players can sling the puck with such thunderous force and surgical precision as to leave their opponents completely helpless. The Patrik Laines, Auston Matthews, and Shea Webbers of the world deploy this threat on a shift-to-shift basis, and they make it look easy.

Then there's everyone else. For the remainder of the league, it's about increasing one's ability to create offence on the margins with tactical efficiency rather than any overwhelming physical force.

Here are some of the items that help us evaluate the best shooters, the worst shooters, and everyone in-between: Power, shot placement, diversity of shots and releases, feet inside the release, shot selection, shooting under pressure.

We've graded shooting including an off-puck timing/pocket of space identification variable, much like how there are more sense-based attributes in the passing section.



Rigorous, peer-reviewed work in the analytics sphere has shown that playmaking is the ability that holds up best in the fight against Father Time. One can build a lengthy, productive NHL career playing the role of a set-up man rather than a finisher. It's a pretty valuable skill, even if it doesn't earn one as much time in the limelight.

Here are the items we've honed in on as indicative of one's passing ability: Diversity of passes, directionality, deception, quick-possession reads, willingness to pass.

Just like shooting, we've graded passing while also including some hockey sense elements, like the awareness and anticipation of a player and his ability to create lanes by manipulating defenders.



## Puckhandling

---

The ratio of relative importance to controlling the flow of play or goals to the highlight reel potential of puckhandling is perhaps the most disproportionate of any ability in any sport.

The list of phenomenal puckhandlers who couldn't bring enough value elsewhere to justify their position in the NHL is a mile long.

This is a list of the items we consider when evaluating a player's puckhandling ability:

Technique (top hand positioning, rolling motion, posture...), hip pocket handling, in-motion handling, backhand use, underhandling, first-touch plays.



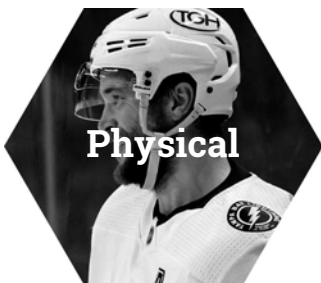
## Hockey Sense

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The EliteProspects Dir. of North American Scouting, Mitch Brown, put it best when describing hockey sense, saying "hockey sense is like borscht; everyone has their own recipe."

We've tried to create our own version of hockey sense, and in so doing created a fairly extensive list of items, some of which would suffice for a player rating all their own:

- Habits: Rotations, awareness (scanning)
- Reads: Processing, adaptability, anticipation, planning, manipulation
- Decision-making: feel for what plays are open or not, self and role awareness, play selection



## Physical

---

The NHL is doubtless a more accommodating environment for smaller, more skilled players. Even so, it's inherently more difficult for players with certain physical profiles than others. Size is one of the few things one can't teach.

On top of a player's willingness to be physical, these are the items that helped us determine a player's physical grade:

- Skills: Body positioning, puck protection, absorbing contact, escaping contact, plays from the boards to the inside lane.
- Strength: height, weight, force, stamina.



# 1-TO-9 RATINGS SCALE



We've introduced a 1-to-9 linear rating scale for six player attributes.

Definition: the grade represents the most likely outcome of the player's tool in the NHL. This doesn't include just regular NHLers, but includes the 900-plus skaters who play in the NHL in any given season.

A 5 means that we project this skill, at minimum, to be NHL average, an 8 projects to be a high-end skill, and a 3 means not NHL-calibre.



## GRADING SYSTEM

Two competent interlocutors might process the same information and arrive at different conclusions. It's true of almost any field, within reason of course.

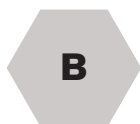
The average NHL draft board is somewhere between 80-120 players long, and I've yet to speak with a single team that's ever finished their list.

With that, we wanted to help offer a more holistic, single-use metric to account for a player's acceptable range based on our determination of the player's skill set, upside, and certainty. Someone might not make our final draft ranking, but that doesn't mean there isn't a reasonable range where they should go.

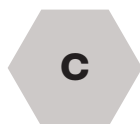
This grading system works as follows.



First Round Grade



Second Round Grade



Third-to-Fifth Round Grade



Sixth-to-Seventh Round Grade



Do Not Draft

# pGPS

pGPS, short for Prospect Graduation Probability System, is a cohort model designed to estimate the likelihood of a prospect making the NHL based on a variety of offensive factors. The system compares a target player against thousands of players that came before them within a window of age and stature. Based on a sample of those deemed to be statistically similar, pGPS generates weighted probabilities of being a full-time NHL player (bXLS, or base Expected Likelihood of Success) or impact NHL player (iXLS, or impact Expected Likelihood of Success). If a player appeared in multiple prominent feeder leagues, their bXLS and iXLS are combined and weighted based on games played in those leagues.

New to this year's version is three-year weighted XLS, which includes the present season and the two most recent previous seasons, where data is available, and weighted the results for recency. As a result, players who had inordinately good or bad seasons are regressed to some extent based on their past performances.

pGPS' inherent advantages include the ability to compare across ages and leagues, though it can be at a disadvantage with players that are so good they have no historical comparison. pGPS is best thought of as betting odds, offering a basic read of the player's likelihood of NHL success before digging into context to determine whether a visually enticing player can beat long odds.



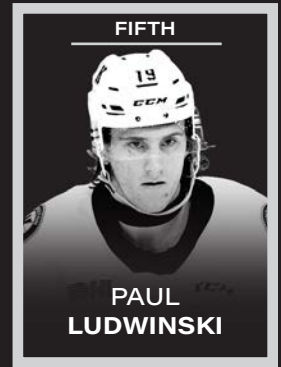
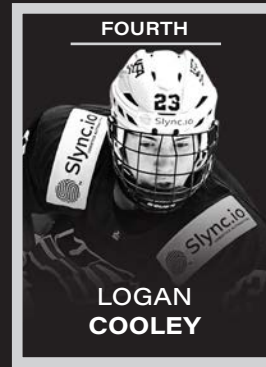
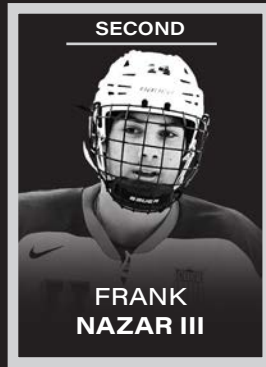
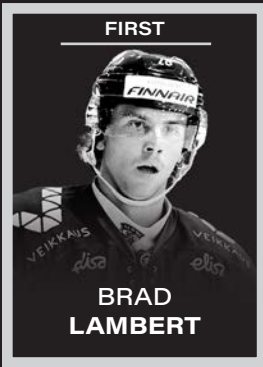
# SEAL

SEAL, short for Situation-Era-Age-League, is an adjusted scoring metric that adjusts a player's production based on the factors that make up its acronymic name. All players are regressed as though they turned 20 on January 1st, and played in an average North American major-junior league in a year where each team scored three goals per game and 1.67 assists were awarded on each goal. Goals, primary assists and secondary assists are treated differently depending on whether they were accumulated at even strength, on the power play, or while shorthanded, and whether the points were picked up by a forward or defender.

SEAL gives a great comparison when looking at two or more players in different situations, though on its own it tells you little about a player's chances of future success. SEAL also avoids the elite player issue found in cohort systems, when a lack of potential matches leads to small samples and unpredictable results.



# BEST STRAIGHT-LINE SKATER



DAVID  
ST. LOUIS

J.D.  
BURKE

DANIEL  
GEE

MITCH  
BROWN

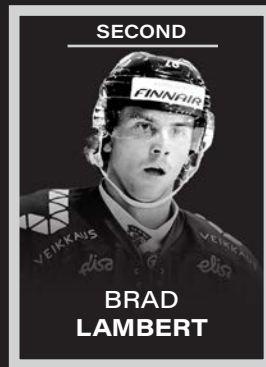
DYLAN  
GRIFFING

RUSS  
COHEN

CAM  
ROBINSON

- |                      |                   |                |                |                |                |                |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Frank Nazar III   | Brad Lambert      | Brad Lambert   | Brad Lambert   | Brad Lambert   | Shane Wright   | Brad Lambert   |
| 2. Marco Kasper      | Frank Nazar       | Filip Mesar    | Frank Nazar    | Logan Cooley   | Frank Nazar    | Frank Nazar    |
| 3. Elias Salomonsson | Filip Mesar       | Marco Kasper   | Filip Mesar    | Paul Ludwinski | Logan Cooley   | Paul Ludwinski |
| 4. Brad Lambert      | Elias Salomonsson | Logan Cooley   | Matthew Savoie | Filip Mesar    | Matthew Savoie | Isaiah George  |
| 5. Yoan Loshing      | Paul Ludwinski    | Paul Ludwinski | Yoan Loshing   | Jiri Kulich    | Ryan Chesley   | Simon Nemeč    |

# BEST FOUR-WAY MOBILITY



DAVID  
ST. LOUIS

J.D.  
BURKE

DANIEL  
GEE

MITCH  
BROWN

DYLAN  
GRIFFING

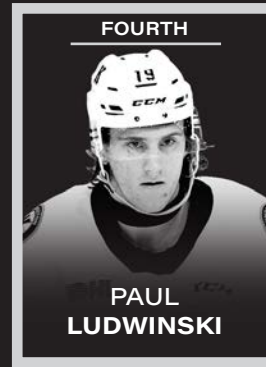
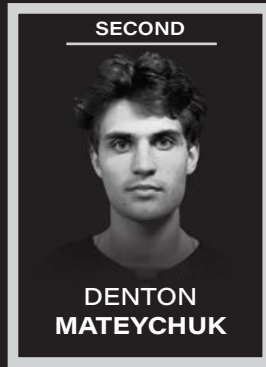
RUSS  
COHEN

CAM  
ROBINSON

- |                      |                   |                   |                 |                 |                  |                 |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Vladimir Grudin   | Vladimir Grudin   | Denton Mateychuk  | Brad Lambert    | David Jiricek   | Matthew Savoie   | Isaiah George   |
| 2. Brad Lambert      | Brad Lambert      | Calle Odellius    | Vladimir Grudin | Vladimir Grudin | Logan Cooley     | Vladimir Grudin |
| 3. Isaiah George     | Logan Cooley      | Michael La Starza | Isaiah George   | Simon Nemeč     | Shane Wright     | Simon Nemeč     |
| 4. Elias Salomonsson | Frank Nazar       | David Jiricek     | Frank Nazar     | Calle Odellius  | Simon Nemeč      | Calle Odellius  |
| 5. Simon Nemeč       | Elias Salomonsson | Simon Nemeč       | Filip Mesar     | Mattias Havelid | Juraj Slafkovsky | Logan Cooley    |



# BEST MOTOR



## DAVID ST. LOUIS

1. Marco Kasper
2. Juri Kulich
3. Paul Ludwinski
4. Matthew Poitras
5. Calle Odellius

## J.D. BURKE

1. Marco Kasper
2. Denton Mateychuk
3. Paul Ludwinski
4. Cutter Gauthier
5. Frank Nazar

## DANIEL GEE

1. Marco Kasper
2. Filip Mesar
3. Brennan Ali
4. Matthew Seminoff
5. Hudson Thornton

## MITCH BROWN

1. Marco Kasper
2. Denton Mateychuk
3. Mikey Milne
4. David Jiricek
5. Beau Jelsma

## DYLAN GRIFFING

1. Liam Ohgren
2. Marco Kasper
3. Matthew Savoie
4. Frank Nazar
5. Jiri Kulich

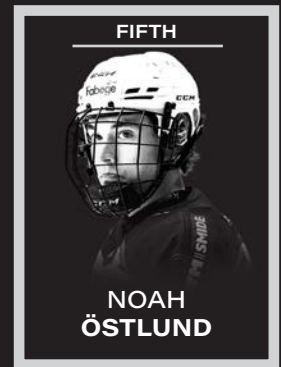
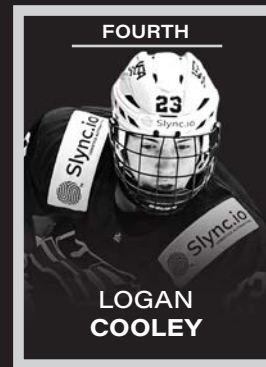
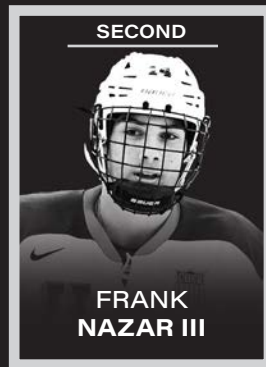
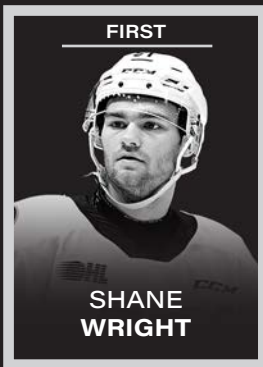
## RUSS COHEN

1. Matthew Savoie
2. Juraj Slafkovsky
3. Frank Nazar
4. Logan Cooley
5. Cutter Gauthier

## CAM ROBINSON

1. Marco Kasper
2. Brad Lambert
3. Filip Mesar
4. Frank Nazar
5. Cutter Gauthier

# BEST PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS



## DAVID ST. LOUIS

1. Frank Nazar
2. Logan Cooley
3. Juraj Slafkovsky
4. Danila Yurov
5. Denton Mateychuk

## J.D. BURKE

1. Frank Nazar
2. Logan Cooley
3. Shane Wright
4. Calle Odellius
5. Juraj Slafkovsky

## DANIEL GEE

1. Shane Wright
2. Juraj Slafkovsky
3. Owen Beck
4. Pavel Mintyukov
5. David Jiricek

## MITCH BROWN

1. Frank Nazar
2. Shane Wright
3. Juraj Slafkovsky
4. David Jiricek
5. Denton Mateychuk

## DYLAN GRIFFING

1. Shane Wright
2. Noah Ostlund
3. Frank Nazar
4. Liam Ohgren
5. Calle Odellius

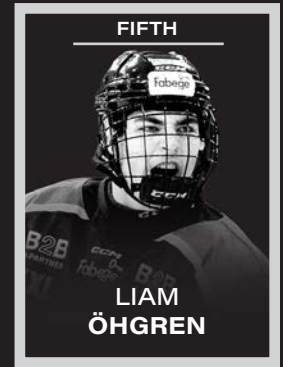
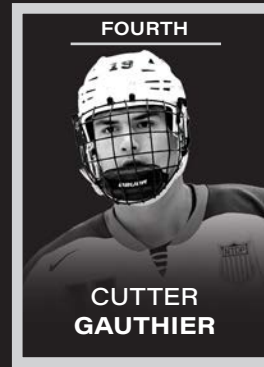
## RUSS COHEN

1. Shane Wright
2. Juraj Slafkovsky
3. David Jiricek
4. Matthew Savoie
5. Liam Ohgren

## CAM ROBINSON

1. Shane Wright
2. Logan Cooley
3. Gleb Trikozov
4. Frank Nazar
5. David Jiricek

# BEST SHOT



## DAVID ST. LOUIS

1. Joakim Kemell
2. Jagger Firkus
3. Matthew Savoie
4. Shane Wright
5. J. Lekkerimäki

## J.D. BURKE

1. J. Lekkerimäki
2. Joakim Kemell
3. Jagger Firkus
4. David Jiricek
5. Cutter Gauthier

## DANIEL GEE

1. Jagger Firkus
2. J. Lekkerimäki
3. Joakim Kemell
4. Liam Öhgren
5. Shane Wright

## MITCH BROWN

1. J. Lekkerimäki
2. Joakim Kemell
3. Jagger Firkus
4. Cutter Gauthier
5. Matthew Savoie

## DYLAN GRIFFING

1. Jagger Firkus
2. J. Lekkerimäki
3. Gleb Trikozov
4. David Jiricek
5. Joakim Kemell

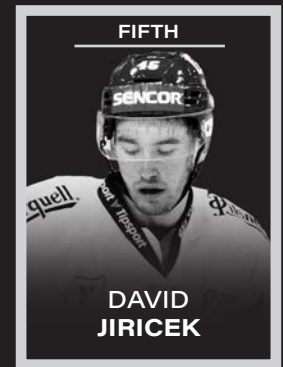
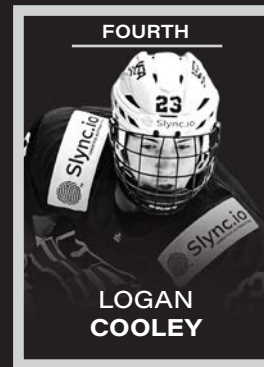
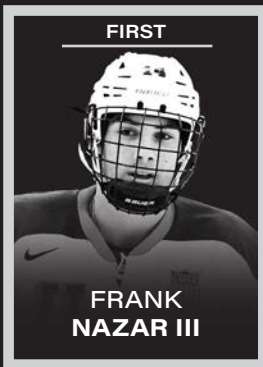
## RUSS COHEN

1. Cutter Gauthier
2. Joakim Kemell
3. Juraj Slafkovsky
4. Matthew Savoie
5. Isaac Howard

## CAM ROBINSON

1. Liam Öhgren
2. Brad Lambert
3. Jagger Firkus
4. J. Lekkerimäki
5. Juraj Slafkovsky

# HIGHEST CEILING



## DAVID ST. LOUIS

1. Frank Nazar
2. Juraj Slafkovsky
3. Shane Wright
4. Brad Lambert
5. Logan Cooley

## J.D. BURKE

1. Frank Nazar
2. Logan Cooley
3. Shane Wright
4. Juraj Slafkovsky
5. David Jiricek

## DANIEL GEE

1. Shane Wright
2. Frank Nazar
3. Juraj Slafkovsky
4. Logan Cooley
5. Conor Geekie

## MITCH BROWN

1. David Jiricek
2. Juraj Slafkovsky
3. Frank Nazar
4. Shane Wright
5. Logan Cooley

## DYLAN GRIFFING

1. Shane Wright
2. David Jiricek
3. Brad Lambert
4. Logan Cooley
5. Liam Öhgren

## RUSS COHEN

1. Logan Cooley
2. Matthew Savoie
3. David Jiricek
4. Juraj Slafkovsky
5. Shane Wright

## CAM ROBINSON

1. Frank Nazar
2. Jagger Firkus
3. Juraj Slafkovsky
4. Shane Wright
5. Denton Mateychuk

# HIGHEST FLOOR



## DAVID ST. LOUIS

1. Shane Wright
2. David Jiricek
3. Juraj Slafkovsky
4. Marco Kasper
5. Owen Beck

## J.D. BURKE

1. Shane Wright
2. David Jiricek
3. Juraj Slafkovsky
4. Simon Nemeč
5. Logan Cooley

## DANIEL GEE

1. Shane Wright
2. Cutter Gauthier
3. Owen Beck
4. Nathan Gaucher
5. I. Miroshnichenko

## MITCH BROWN

1. Shane Wright
2. David Jiricek
3. Juraj Slafkovsky
4. Logan Cooley
5. Cutter Gauthier

## DYLAN GRIFFING

1. Shane Wright
2. Juraj Slafkovsky
3. Simon Nemeč
4. David Jiricek
5. Logan Cooley

## RUSS COHEN

1. Shane Wright
2. Matthew Savoie
3. Juraj Slafkovsky
4. Logan Cooley
5. Simon Nemeč

## CAM ROBINSON

1. Shane Wright
2. Logan Cooley
3. Liam Öhgren
4. Danila Yurov
5. Marco Kasper

# BEST VISION



## DAVID ST. LOUIS

1. Pavel Mintyukov
2. Frank Nazar
3. Shane Wright
4. Logan Cooley
5. Jimmy Snuggerud

## J.D. BURKE

1. Shane Wright
2. Frank Nazar
3. Logan Cooley
4. Pavel Mintyukov
5. Denton Mateychuk

## DANIEL GEE

1. Shane Wright
2. Jimmy Snuggerud
3. Noah Ostlund
4. Logan Cooley
5. Juraj Slafkovsky

## MITCH BROWN

1. Shane Wright
2. Pavel Mintyukov
3. Logan Cooley
4. Frank Nazar
5. Denton Mateychuk

## DYLAN GRIFFING

1. Shane Wright
2. Gleb Trikozov
3. Devin Kaplan
4. Joakim Kemell
5. David Goyette

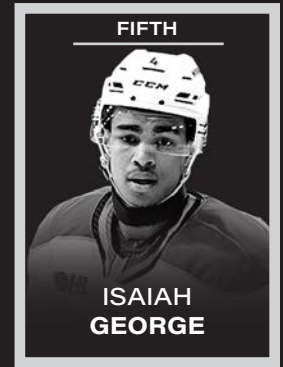
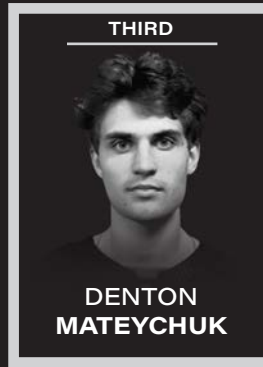
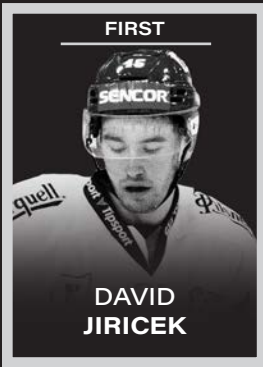
## RUSS COHEN

1. Shane Wright
2. Matthew Savoie
3. Frank Nazar
4. Brad Lambert
5. Marco Kasper

## CAM ROBINSON

1. Matthew Savoie
2. Shane Wright
3. Logan Cooley
4. Conor Geekie
5. Noah Ostlund

# BEST NEUTRAL ZONE DEFENDER



DAVID  
ST. LOUIS

J.D.  
BURKE

DANIEL  
GEE

MITCH  
BROWN

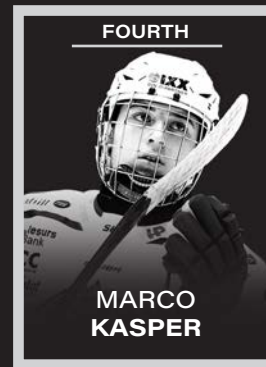
DYLAN  
GRIFFING

RUSS  
COHEN

CAM  
ROBINSON

- |                     |                   |                   |                  |                   |                  |                |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Denton Mateychuk | David Jiricek     | David Jiricek     | David Jiricek    | David Jiricek     | David Jiricek    | Calle Odelius  |
| 2. Calle Odelius    | Calle Odelius     | Denton Mateychuk  | Isaiah George    | Vladimir Grudinin | Simon Nemeč      | Lian Bichsel   |
| 3. David Jiricek    | Ryan Chesley      | Pavel Mintyukov   | Denton Mateychuk | Isaiah George     | Ryan Chesley     | Noah Warren    |
| 4. Isaiah Goerge    | Simon Nemeč       | Simon Nemeč       | Calle Odelius    | Ryan Chesley      | Pavel Mintyukov  | Simon Nemeč    |
| 5. Pavel Mintyukov  | Vladimir Grudinin | Maveric Lamoureux | Ryan Chesley     | Alexander Pelevin | Denton Mateychuk | Owen Pickering |

# HARDEST HITTER



DAVID  
ST. LOUIS

J.D.  
BURKE

DANIEL  
GEE

MITCH  
BROWN

DYLAN  
GRIFFING

RUSS  
COHEN

CAM  
ROBINSON

- |                     |               |                   |                 |                   |                  |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Joshua Davies    | Joshua Davies | Joshua Davies     | Joshua Davies   | Lian Bichsel      | David Jiricek    |
| 2. Liam Bichsel     | Marco Kasper  | Daimon Gardner    | Lian Bichsel    | Artyom Barabosha  | Gleb Veremyev    |
| 3. David Jiricek    | Lian Bichsel  | Maveric Lamoureux | Marco Kasper    | Noah Warren       | Juraj Slafkovsky |
| 4. Samuel Savoie    | David Jiricek | Fraser Minten     | Rodwin Dionicio | Vladimir Andreyev | Cutter Gauthier  |
| 5. Juraj Slafkovsky | Ryan Chesley  | Michael Fisher    | Ryan Chesley    | Filip Nordberg    | Rutger McGroarty |

# BEST TRANSITION DEFENCEMAN



## DAVID ST. LOUIS

1. Denton Mateychuk
2. Pavel Mintyukov
3. David Jiricek
4. Kevin Korchinski
5. Mattias Havelid

## J.D. BURKE

1. Denton Mateychuk
2. Pavel Mintyukov
3. Calle Odellius
4. Kevin Korchinski
5. David Jiricek

## DANIEL GEE

1. Denton Mateychuk
2. Pavel Mintyukov
3. Michael Fisher
4. Christian Kyrou
5. Isaiah George

## MITCH BROWN

1. Pavel Mintyukov
2. Denton Mateychuk
3. David Jiricek
4. Kevin Korchinski
5. Mattias Havelid

## DYLAN GRIFFING

1. Simon Nemeč
2. Calle Odellius
3. Vladimir Grudinin
4. Mattias Havelid
5. Lane Hutson

## RUSS COHEN

1. Simon Nemeč
2. David Jiricek
3. Seamus Casey
4. Ryan Chesley
5. Lane Hutson

## CAM ROBINSON

1. Denton Mateychuk
2. Pavel Mintyukov
3. Simon Nemeč
4. David Jiricek
5. Mattias Hävelid

# BEST TRANSITION FORWARD



## DAVID ST. LOUIS

1. Brad Lambert
2. Frank Nazar
3. Shane Wright
4. Logan Cooley
5. Filip Mesar

## J.D. BURKE

1. Brad Lambert
2. Frank Nazar
3. Logan Cooley
4. Filip Mesar
5. Shane Wright

## DANIEL GEE

1. Frank Nazar
2. Marco Kasper
3. Shane Wright
4. Michael La Starza
5. Logan Cooley

## MITCH BROWN

1. Frank Nazar
2. Shane Wright
3. Logan Cooley
4. Brad Lambert
5. Owen Beck

## DYLAN GRIFFING

1. Logan Cooley
2. Brad Lambert
3. Filip Mesar
4. Matthew Savoie
5. Isaac Howard

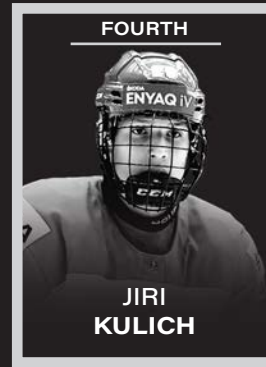
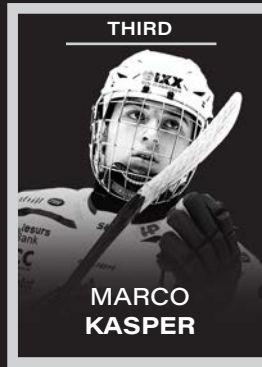
## RUSS COHEN

1. Shane Wright
2. Logan Cooley
3. Frank Nazar
4. Danila Yurov
5. Matthew Savoie

## CAM ROBINSON

1. Frank Nazar
2. Brad Lambert
3. Shane Wright
4. Logan Cooley
5. Jagger Firkus

# BEST TWO-WAY FORWARD



## DAVID ST. LOUIS

- Owen Beck
- Shane Wright
- Marco Kasper
- Jiri Kulich
- Danila Yurov

## J.D. BURKE

- Shane Wright
- Owen Beck
- Marco Kasper
- Conor Geekie
- Danila Yurov

## DANIEL GEE

- Jimmy Snuggerud
- Shane Wright
- Nathan Gaucher
- Daimon Gardner
- Matthew Seminoff

## MITCH BROWN

- Owen Beck
- Marco Kasper
- Shane Wright
- Jiri Kulich
- Mikey Milne

## DYLAN GRIFFING

- Jiri Kulich
- Owen Beck
- Marco Kasper
- Shane Wright
- Danila Yurov

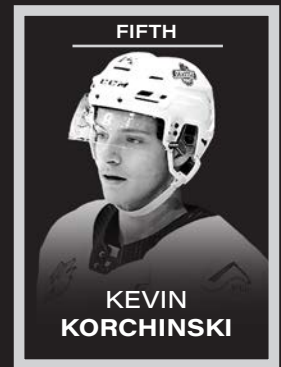
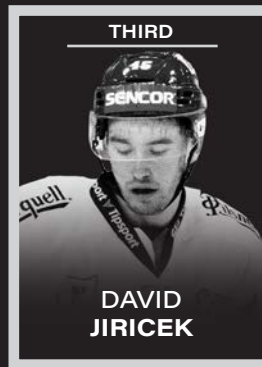
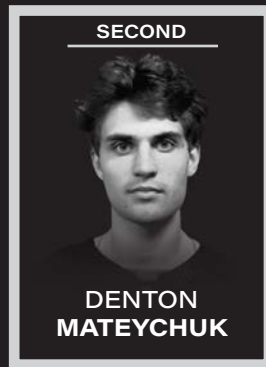
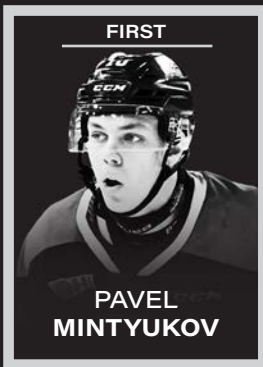
## RUSS COHEN

- Shane Wright
- Logan Cooley
- Conor Geekie
- Rutger McGroarty
- Matthew Savoie

## CAM ROBINSON

- Shane Wright
- Logan Cooley
- Adam Sykora
- Owen Beck
- Marco Kasper

# BEST OFFENSIVE DEFENCEMAN



## DAVID ST. LOUIS

- Pavel Mintyukov
- Denton Mateychuk
- Kevin Korchinski
- David Jiricek
- Simon Nemeč

## J.D. BURKE

- Pavel Mintyukov
- Denton Mateychuk
- Kevin Korchinski
- David Jiricek
- Mattias Havelid

## DANIEL GEE

- David Jiricek
- Pavel Mintyukov
- Michael Fisher
- Denton Mateychuk
- Sam Rinzel

## MITCH BROWN

- Pavel Mintyukov
- Denton Mateychuk
- Lane Hutson
- David Jiricek
- Kevin Korchinski

## DYLAN GRIFFING

- Pavel Mintyukov
- Simon Nemeč
- Seamus Casey
- Denton Mateychuk
- Mattias Havelid

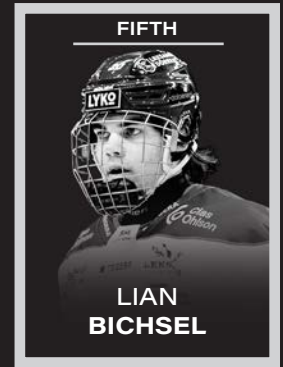
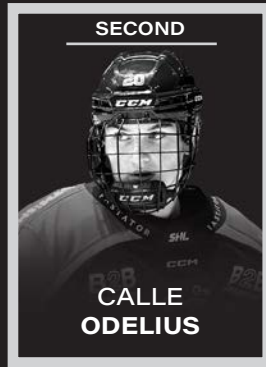
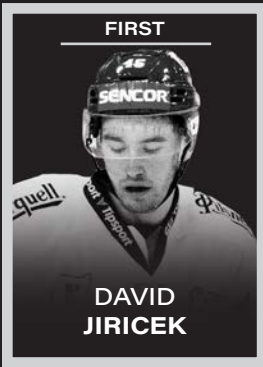
## RUSS COHEN

- David Jiricek
- Lane Hutson
- Simon Nemeč
- Kevin Korchinski
- Denton Mateychuk

## CAM ROBINSON

- Denton Mateychuk
- Simon Nemeč
- David Jiricek
- Pavel Mintyukov
- Isaiah George

# BEST DEFENSIVE DEFENCEMAN



## DAVID ST. LOUIS

1. Calle Odellius
2. Isaiah George
3. David Jiricek
4. Lian Bichsel
5. Pavel Mintyukov

## J.D. BURKE

1. David Jiricek
2. Calle Odellius
3. Lian Bichsel
4. Simon Nemec
5. Ryan Chesley

## DANIEL GEE

1. Lian Bichsel
2. Isaiah George
3. Ryan Chesley
4. Maveric Lamoureux
5. Owen Pickering

## MITCH BROWN

1. David Jiricek
2. Isaiah George
3. Lian Bichsel
4. Ryan Chesley
5. Noah Warren

## DYLAN GRIFFING

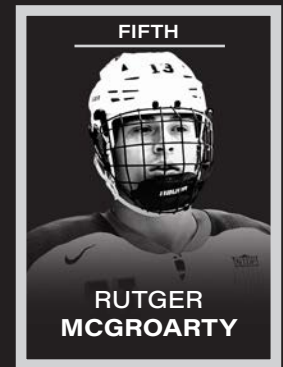
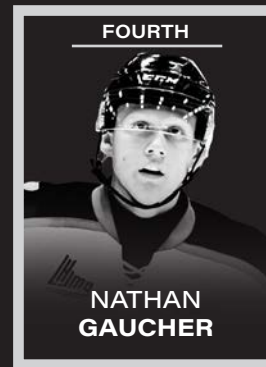
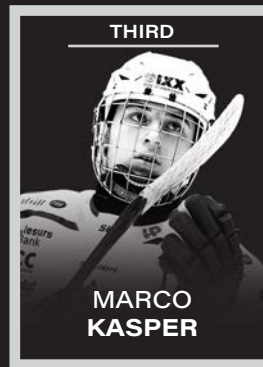
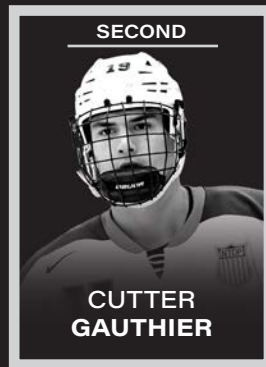
1. David Jiricek
2. Kevin Korhinski
3. Vladimir Grudinin
4. Lian Bichsel
5. Ryan Chesley

## RUSS COHEN

1. Ryan Chesley
2. Owen Pickering
3. Matthias Havelid
4. Charlie Leddy
5. Seamus Powell

## CAM ROBINSON

# BEST POWER FORWARD



## DAVID ST. LOUIS

1. Juraj Slafkovsky
2. Marco Kasper
3. Cutter Gauchier
4. Liam Öhgren
5. Jiri Kulich

## J.D. BURKE

1. Juraj Slafkovsky
2. Marco Kasper
3. Cutter Gauthier
4. Nathan Gaucher
5. Jiri Kulich

## DANIEL GEE

1. Cutter Gauthier
2. Nathan Gaucher
3. Conor Geekie
4. Filip Bystedt
5. Daimon Gardner

## MITCH BROWN

1. Juraj Slafkovsky
2. Marco Kasper
3. Cutter Gauthier
4. Nathan Gaucher
5. Rutger McGroarty

## DYLAN GRIFFING

1. Juraj Slafkovsky
2. Julian Lutz
3. Nathan Gaucher
4. Filip Bystedt
5. Matyas Sapovaliv

## RUSS COHEN

1. Cutter Gauthier
2. Rutger McGroarty
3. Juraj Slafkovsky
4. James Fisher
5. Gleb Veremyev

## CAM ROBINSON

1. Juraj Slafkovsky
2. Rutger McGroarty
3. Cutter Gauthier
4. Jimmy Snuggerud
5. Nathan Gaucher

# ANAHEIM DUCKS



## GENERAL MANAGER

Pat Verbeek

## SCOUTING STAFF

Martin Madden, Head of Pro and Amateur Scouting	Rick Paterson, Pro Scout
Jan-Åke Danielson, Head European Scout	Stéphane Pilotte, Amateur Scout
Glen Cochrane, Amateur Scout	Rich Preston, Pro Scout
Mikko Jokela, European Scout	Pavel Routa, European Scout
Konstantin Krylov, European Scout	Jim Sandlak, Amateur Scout
Thomas Carlsson, European Scout	Mike Stapleton, Pro Scout
Corey Crocker, Scout	Gabriella Switaj, Amateur Scout

## TEAM PROFILE

This will be Pat Verbeek's first draft as the Anaheim Ducks general manager, and it's going to be a fascinating one to follow for fans of the team and the sport at large alike.

On the one hand, they took a modest step forward last season, and the installment of Trevor Zegras and Jamie Drysdale has them well-positioned at two of three premium positions moving forward. One could, if they felt so inclined, convince themselves that this team is ready to shift its rebuild into high gear and push their chips in on a playoff chase next season.

On the other hand, Verbeek's decision to move Hampus Lindholm and Rickard Rakell at last year's trade deadline signals that their commitment to a long-term rebuild is ongoing. That the most high-stakes off-season rumblings to come out of the Honda Center concern the availability of long-time starting goaltender John Gibson seems to follow that same line of thinking.

Then there's the matter of the draft itself. The mystery concerning the first overall pick is hard to match, but the Ducks position at No. 10 overall offers plenty of intrigue all its own. Things start to open up at that point in this year's draft, and that's where an amateur scouting staff reveals its quality.

Historically, the Ducks have fared well in this regard under assistant general manager Martin Madden's leadership at the draft table, consistently punching above their weight and finding top-of-the-lineup calibre talents without much in the way of lottery prize draft capital.

You needn't look far for examples either. Just take Zegras, the team's franchise centre and a Calder Trophy finalist that they unearthed with the ninth overall pick in the 2019 draft. Then there's his running mate Troy Terry, the team's leading scorer last season and a 148th overall pick back in 2015. Gibson's been the team's starter in goal for the better part of six seasons, and he was a second-round pick. And on, and on.

Cumulatively, the result has been a system that's rated in the top half of the league for the last two seasons, finishing as high as fourth in our 2021 affiliated prospect pool rankings.

The only real need for this team going into the draft is on the wing. Sasha Pastujov broke out in a big way last season after the club grabbed him in the third round of last year's draft, and they've got Jacob Perreault and Brayden Tracey back on track, but that's not enough. They need to find long-term support pieces to line their flanks to keep up with Zegras and, eventually, Mason McTavish.

Otherwise, this group has free rein to pick according to the best player on their board, and that's bad news for the rest of the league. This team has a knack for identifying those players, especially on the blue line and down the middle. You know, the most important positions in the game.

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

When the Ducks draft a defenceman, we listen. Their track record with the position is exceptionally strong, whether you go as far back as the Hampus Lindholm pick (panned at the time as a reach) or look to more recent examples like Olen Zellweger at 34th overall in last year's draft.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

The Ducks track record with big, mean, shoot-first wingers leaves a lot to be desired. They definitely have a type when they're looking for talent on the flanks, and they've lost a lot of draft capital to chasing it historically.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Right Wing, Left Wing

## 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

**ROUND 1**  
PICKS 10, 22

**ROUND 2**  
PICKS 42, 53

**ROUND 3**  
NONE

**ROUND 4**  
PICK 107

**ROUND 5**  
PICKS 139, 154

**ROUND 6**  
PICK 178

**ROUND 7**  
NONE





# ARIZONA COYOTES

## TEAM PROFILE

Arizona Coyotes general manager Bill Armstrong has stripped this once okay-at-best franchise down to the studs in the hopes of one day building the desert dogs into a durable contender from the ground up.

This is a rebuild in the most aggressive, uncompromising terms possible, and they've left no stone unturned in the pursuit of futures. The early returns are a bounty of picks and prospects that would be the envy of the most rapacious of their rebuilding forebears -- even the 2014-15 Buffalo Sabres.

As you've doubtless heard a few times, that's the easy part. Anyone can tear a team down, but it takes real foresight, discipline, and even a bit of luck to get things back on track. Even then, there's no promise of contention. The NHL's history is lined with teams who got the first part down pat and barely took a single step forward on their way back up.

It all starts at the draft, though. You have to put a foundation in place with cost- and team-controlled, top-of-the-lineup talent, and if you're a Coyotes team on the cusp of setting up shop as a secondary tenant in a college hockey arena for the foreseeable future, that's the only way you're getting it.

With eight picks through the first three rounds and 12 total, the Coyotes are as well-positioned as any team to find those players in this year's draft. The fun starts with the third overall pick after the draft lottery nudged them down from second. It's difficult but not impossible to imagine a scenario where one of Shane Wright or Juraj Slafkovsky falls to them, but they're probably picking from a group that includes Logan Cooley, David Jiříček, and Šimon Nemec. Any

of those five players would immediately be the crown jewel in their system, too.

From there, they'll be taking dart tosses as if by a Gatling Gun for the next two rounds, with an additional first-round pick and four (4!) second-rounders.

You'd have a hard time not finding quality NHLers with so many picks in that range, but the Coyotes won't need to rely on sheer luck. Armstrong joined their franchise with 17 years of amateur scouting experience, all of them spent helping build the St. Louis Blues team that eventually won the Stanley Cup in 2019.

Armstrong's first draft with the Coyotes left us a little puzzled in spots, but the early returns on some of their most confounding picks are undeniably positive. Josh Doan may have seemed like a reach to us at No. 37 overall, but the son of Coyotes legend Shane Doan is already scoring at better than a point per game clip with Arizona State University. Janis Jérôme Moser at the end of the second seemed totally out of left field, but he's already played games with the big club and produced offence at a solid clip in a depth role; he could be an everyday player for them as soon as next season if he can iron out his defensive warts. Even Cal Thomas looked like an actual prospect in our viewings this season, which is about all you can ask for from a sixth-round pick.

Here's hoping that success carries over into this year's draft, because the Coyotes can't afford to skip a beat at this stage in their rebuild. They need as much team-controlled, top-end talent as they can find, and the sooner they snag those players, the better.



### GENERAL MANAGER

Bill Armstrong

### SCOUTING STAFF

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Darryl Plandowski, Dir. of Amateur Scouting     | Mike Guentzel, Pro Scout                  |
| Ryan Jankowski, Assoc. Dir. of Amateur Scouting | Randy Hansch, Amateur Scout               |
| Brett Stewart, Dir. of European Scouting        | Jani Kiviharju, European Scout            |
| Alan Hepple, Dir. of Pro Scouting               | David Oliver, Pro Scout                   |
| Clay Adams, Goaltending Scout                   | Magnus Olsson, European Goaltending Scout |
| Cory Banika, Amateur Scout                      | Kevin Pedersen, Amateur Scout             |
| Tyler Bilton, Amateur Scout                     | Scott Pellerin, Pro Scout                 |
| Rick Comley Jr., Amateur Scout                  | Kevin Thacker, Amateur Scout              |
| Thomas Carlsson, European Scout                 | Matt Tiesling, Goaltending Scout          |
| Corey Crocker, Scout                            |   |

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

**ROUND 1**  
PICKS 3, 27, 32

**ROUND 2**  
PICKS 34, 36, 43, 45

**ROUND 3**  
PICK 67

**ROUND 4**  
NONE

**ROUND 5**  
PICK 131

**ROUND 6**  
PICK 163

**ROUND 7**  
NONE

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

The Coyotes may not have the reputation of teams like the Anaheim Ducks or Nashville Predators when it comes to mining defensive talent in the draft, but they've quietly done a really solid job with that position.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT* SO WELL

The obvious, perhaps cheeky answer here is simple... cheating. Don't do that. The combine testing scandal cost them a pair of picks in the last two drafts, including a mid-first-rounder – picks that they can't afford to lose. But Armstrong wasn't around for that, so let's go with drafting goalies. They barely invest in the position at the draft, and when they do, they don't get much of a return on their investment.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Goalie, Left Wing



# BOSTON BRUINS

## TEAM PROFILE

Sooner or later, the Boston Bruins are going to have to engage in a full-scale rebuild. Never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee, and so on.

Some of that is beyond their control. How many teams could weather the loss of Zdeno Chára, Torey Krug, David Krejčí, and Tuukka Rask in successive years without taking at least a few steps back? And how many of those teams could do so with Brad Marchand, Charlie McAvoy, Mike Reilly, and Matt Grzelcyk going under the knife in the same offseason, all of them slated to miss at least some time in the following campaign?

The answer is probably zero. Not even the most capable executive could sustain that level of attrition without the on-ice product suffering and suffering considerably at that.

Don't shed any tears for this front office, though. Don Sweeney and his amateur scouting department deserve to bear a significant brunt of the blame for the doom that awaits this franchise at one point or another.

The Bruins have squandered significant draft capital en route to producing among the worst results at the draft during Sweeney's time at the helm. They've unearthed two everyday NHL contributors out of seven first-round picks during his reign, and one of them is a middle-of-the-lineup winger with a pending trade request. You have to go all the way back to 2017 to find the last player Boston drafted to feature in their lineup in any capacity.

They could've easily cushioned the blow of the Chára and Krejčí and Rask retiring with a little more diligence and ambition at the draft, but they chose to chase players who all shared a ceiling as depth pieces at nearly every turn. This is the result.

Perhaps there is some solace to be found in their more recent work at the draft. We assigned a B-grade to last year's haul and the early returns on their four picks in the draft that preceded it seem relatively strong. Still, they had only the 24th-best prospect pool when our scouts ranked every one of the league's systems last offseason, so there's a ways to go.

They're going to be in tough to elevate that pool this offseason. The Bruins are without their first-round pick after moving it at the trade deadline to acquire defenceman Hampus Lindholm from the Anaheim Ducks.

They won't be on the clock until the 54th overall pick. That's the best of the Bruins six selections. Based on the last Elite Prospects ranking, that could yield a player who would instantly become one of their three best prospects. The question is whether they'll be able to identify that player when their number is called.



### GENERAL MANAGER

Don Sweeney

### SCOUTING STAFF

Ryan Nadeau, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Doug Leaverton, Amateur Scout
Scott Fitzgerald, Dir. of Collegiate Scouting	Matt Lindblad, Pro Scout
Per-Johan Axelsson, Dir. of European Scouting	Parker MacKay, Amateur Scout
Jeffrey Barratt, Amateur Scout	Dean Malkoc, Amateur Scout
Thomas Carlsson, European Scout	Colin Mayberry, Amateur Scout
Corey Crocker, Scout	Teemu Numminen, European Scout
Dennis Bonvie, Head Pro Scout	Victor Nybladh, European Scout
Adam Creighton, Pro Scout	Matt Ryan, Amateur Scout
Brett Harkins, Amateur Scout	Svenåke Svensson, European Scout
	Bob Wetick, Amateur Scout

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

Between Jeremy Swayman (2017 fourth-round pick) and Daniel Vladař (2015 third-round pick), this team has done really exceptionally well mining goaltending talent in the middle of the draft. The sample isn't especially large, but the hit rate couldn't be any better.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT* SO WELL

They could really stand to be a little more ambitious with their first-round picks. John Beecher, Trent Frederic, Urho Vaakanainen, etc. all shared the same profile as supposed high-floor, low-ceiling players, and they basically don't have anything to show for those investments to date, though there's still hope with Beecher.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Left Wing, Right Wing

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1 NONE	
ROUND 2 PICK 54	ROUND 3 PICK 91
ROUND 4 PICK 119	ROUND 5 NONE
ROUND 6 PICK 183	ROUND 7 PICK 200, 215



# BUFFALO SABRES

## TEAM PROFILE

A big reason why the Buffalo Sabres are the way that they are is because of their failures at the NHL Entry Draft. They're the typical case of a team that tore it down to the studs with ruthless efficiency and built a dilapidated shack that's collapsed on itself repeatedly on the leftover plot of land.

The result is a run of futility that has seen them amass the 30th-most standings points in the league (ahead of only a pair of expansion franchises) en route to 11 straight postseason misses. They've run through four different general managers in that time and seven coaches. It's the longest active streak of playoff misses in the NHL at present. Sabres fans, they've seen some stuff.

The good news? Sabres general manager Kevyn Adams has -- to the surprise of many, given his status as a relative unknown prior to this station -- performed admirably in his first two years at the helm. His work at the draft, in particular, has drawn strong reviews from our staff. That's important for a team that hopes to transition from rebuilding to rebuilt.

He wasn't our No. 1-ranked prospect in the 2021 NHL Draft, but time has shone a favourable light on the Owen Power pick. Jack Quinn was a bit rich for our blood at eighth overall only a year earlier, but he's quietly looked the part through his first two years in their system. Sprinkle in some commendable mid-to-late round picks like John-Jason Peterka, Prokhor Poltapov, and Olivier Nadeau, and you've got the basis for a strong pool. The 12th-best system in the league by our scouts' reckoning last offseason.

They'll get another 11 kicks at the can to add to their pool at this year's draft, starting with three selections in the first round. They're relatively well-positioned with the first of those picks sitting at ninth overall, right at the tail end of that second-tier of prospects just a cut below the Shane Wright, David Jiříček, and Juraj Slafkovský group.

Will they swing for the fences with a player like Brad Lambert? Settle for a player with a much clearer path to a perhaps less ambitious NHL future in Conor Geekie? Their affinity for off-puck scoring wingers could lend itself to Joakim Kemell or Jonathan Lekkerimäki in that spot.

They're still a little thin down the middle in their prospect pool, so I'd place my money on the first group of players (if pressed). Whatever the case, they've proven in the past two drafts that they can be trusted to identify the talent necessary to turn this operation around. Sabres fans should feel (relative) excitement about what this July 7th and 8th may hold for the future of their beleaguered franchise. Better days may well be on the horizon.



### GENERAL MANAGER

Kevyn Adams

### SCOUTING STAFF

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Jerry Forton, Dir. of Amateur Scouting            | Frantisek Musil, Amateur Scout  |
| Jason Nightingale, Asst. Dir. of Amateur Scouting | Tristan Musser, Scout           |
| Jeremiah Crowe, Dir. of Pro Scouting              | Ruslan Petsonkin, Amateur Scout |
| Graham Beamish, Pro Scout                         | Marty Stein, Amateur Scout      |
| Thomas Carlsson, European Scout                   | Lukas Sutter, Amateur Scout     |
| Corey Crocker, Scout                              | Tommi Vesanen, Scout            |
| Anders Forsberg, Scout                            |                                 |

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

**ROUND 1**  
PICKS 9, 16, 28

**ROUND 2**  
PICK 41

**ROUND 3**  
PICK 74

**ROUND 4**  
PICK 106

**ROUND 5**  
PICK 134

**ROUND 6**  
PICKS 170, 187

**ROUND 7**  
PICK 202

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

The Sabres seem to excel at identifying shoot-first wingers with a little sandpaper to their game in the middle of the draft, whether it's John-Jason Peterka or Prokhor Poltapov or Olivier Nadeau.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

Not sure if Kevyn Adams should have to bear the brunt of this since the worst offences occurred well before he'd arrived on the scene, but this team has made some terrible decisions with top-10 picks. You uh... can't really do that as a rebuilding team.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Left Wing, Right Defence

## GENERAL MANAGER

Brad Treliving

## SCOUTING STAFF

Tod Button, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Trevor Hanson, Amateur Scout
Fred Parker, Asst. Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Darren Kruger, Amateur Scout
Rob Sumner, Asst. Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Patrick Lachance, Amateur Scout
David Åkerblom, Scout	Allister MacNeil, Amateur Scout
Thomas Carlsson, European Scout	Bob Murray, Scout
Corey Crocker, Scout	Steve Pleau, Pro Scout
Jim Cummins, Amateur Scout	Billy Powers, Amateur Scout
Terry Doran, Amateur Scout	Jason Taylor, Amateur Scout
Ari Haanpää, Amateur Scout	

# CALGARY FLAMES

## TEAM PROFILE

The Calgary Flames are going to be one of the league's credible Stanley Cup contenders if they carefully navigate the choppy waters of this offseason, and does their prospect pool ever reflect that reality.

Things are lean on the farm in Calgary. They had the 18th-best system by our scouts' reckoning coming into the season, and that was before Connor Zary had an injury-driven down year, they parted with Emil Heine-man in a trade, and Yan Kuznetsov and Jérémie Poirier's development continued to stagnate.

Flames general manager Brad Treliving and Co. don't really have the ammunition to change that in one fell swoop at this year's draft, either. They parted with their first-round pick in the trade that brought Tyler Toffoli into the fold, moved their third-rounder to grab backup goaltender Dan Vladař, lost their fourth to acquire Tyler Pitlick last offseason, and ditched their sixth-round pick in the Sam Bennett deal at the 2021 trade deadline.

So, it's not going to be the most exciting draft for Flames fans, but the limited capital in their war chest just adds that much more weight to each selection. Few teams have to get their second-round pick right like the Flames do; it's going to shape how we view their entire body of work at this draft.

They haven't exactly done great in that range in years past. William Ström-gren at 45 was a bit rich for our blood last year (we had him at 50), and the early returns don't look great. Kuznetsov at 50 was probably well-received on the team side, but that

was a reach from where we were sitting, and it's looking like we may come out on top on that evaluation. But that's a sample of two picks in a range where you're hardly guaranteed a future NHL player, so perhaps that's undue scrutiny.

Overall, the Flames have drafted reasonably well. They're probably about an average draft-and-development team by our estimation, with their highs coming at the beginning of Treliving's reign and some of their lows occurring more recently. Which, in fairness, aligns with their draft position and capital in both phases pretty accurately; more and better picks early, fewer and lesser ones late.

Another way to look at it is that the Flames have done about as well as the circumstances have permitted -- no better, no worse. That's better than many teams can say, and it's allowed them to consistently filter cost-controlled, everyday NHL contributors through a lineup that's regularly finished near the top of the table in the Western Conference.

I wouldn't expect much from this draft as a Flames fan, but that's hardly a knock on the franchise given where they are in the competitive arc. This team is built to win Stanley Cups, not to earn high grades from EP Rinkside for their work at the draft. Any fan base would take those circumstances in a heartbeat.

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

The Flames don't draft with a measuring stick. They've found top-of-the-lineup contributors like Johnny Gaudreau and Andrew Mangiapane late in the draft by evaluating players for their skill on the ice rather than fixating on their measurables. The pay-off has been pretty sweet.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

We haven't really been thrilled with any of their first-round picks in the last few years, but this is a minor quibble. Connor Zary had a down year, but was trending well prior to that. Jakob Pelletier and Matt Coronato have outperformed our expectations to date.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Goalie, Left Wing

## 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1 NONE	
ROUND 2 PICK 59	ROUND 3 NONE
ROUND 4 NONE	ROUND 5 PICK 155
ROUND 6 NONE	ROUND 7 PICK 219

# CAROLINA HURRICANES

## TEAM PROFILE

The Carolina Hurricanes have a good thing going. They're one of the NHL's credible long-term Stanley Cup contenders and somehow also boast one of the league's premier prospect pools. That's not supposed to happen.

It's a credit to the work of Hurricanes assistant general manager Darren Yorke and his staff that they've accumulated such an embarrassment of riches on the farm. Sure, some of that is a byproduct of their volume approach, but they've also made sound investments with nearly every bit of capital in their war chest.

Last year was a master class. The Hurricanes traded their way into 13 selections when it was all said and done, and most of them got the Elite Prospects stamp of approval. Scott Morrow, Ville Koivunen, Jackson Blake, Justin Robidas, and Joel Nyström are significantly outperforming their draft position, and they managed to turn Aidan Hreschuk into Max Domi at this year's trade deadline.

There are some relatively high-profile misses along the way too (Aleksi Heimosalmi was dreadful in his draft-plus-one), but that's bound to happen when you take that many cracks at the bat and always aim for the fences.

Overall, the Hurricanes are in as good a position long-term as nearly any team. If anything, they're getting to the point where they may be too prospect rich. Those 50 contract spots are going to be spent in no time at all, at this rate.

They'll add (at least) another eight players to the system by the time July 8th rolls around, too. If last year is any indication, I'd expect them to trade down to add at least another two or three picks by the time it's all said and done, though.

That's the best way for a team like the Hurricanes to compensate for a lack of high-end draft capital. This will be their second straight draft without a first-round pick and their third without their own first. Carolina will have to wait until 62nd overall, if not later, to make their first pick.

They're not likely to find much in the way of top-of-the-lineup talent available to them in that spot, but future depth contributors should still be available in that range. Someone like Michael Milne or Fraser Minten or Simon Forsmark or Ryan Healey would make sense in that range, but the Hurricanes tendency to shoot for the stars would lend itself to Alexander Perevalov or Elias Salomonsson or Cameron Lund in that spot.

They'll have options. Lots of them. And then they'll have some more as they accumulate picks and move down in the draft. And you can't go wrong with volume.

### GENERAL MANAGER

Don Waddell

### SCOUTING STAFF

Rob Beatty, Amateur Scout	Trace Linton, Pro Scout
David Burstyn, Pro Scout	Bob Luccini, Amateur Scout
Mark Craig, Dir. of Pro Scouting	John McNamara, Pro Scout
Daniel Eklund, Amateur Scout	Ian Meagher, Amateur Scout
Thomas Carlsson, European Scout	Jokke Nevalainen, Amateur Scout
Corey Crocker, Scout	Cody Nickolet, Amateur Scout
Bobby Jay, Pro Scout	Oleg Smirnov, Amateur Scout
Rhys Jessop, Amateur Scout	Ville-Valtteri Virta, Amateur Scout

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1  
NONE

ROUND 2  
PICK 60

ROUND 3  
PICK 71

ROUND 4  
PICK 124

ROUND 5  
PICK 156

ROUND 6  
PICKS 171,188

ROUND 7  
PICKS 205, 220

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

Their attention to detail on Day 2 is without equal. Where most teams go into cruise control from about the fifth-round on, the Hurricanes treat seventh-round picks with the same level of import as a first. And that's how they find Joel Nyström calibre players in that range.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

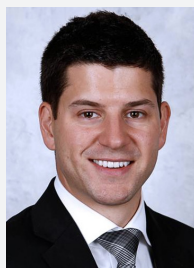
The Hurricanes have invested a preposterous amount of draft capital in their crease and have very little to show for it beyond Pyotr Kochetkov. All three of their goaltender picks from last season are trending in the wrong direction.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Left Wing, Left Defence, Centre



# CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS



## GENERAL MANAGER

Kyle Davidson

## SCOUTING STAFF

- Mike Doneghey, Interim Dir. of Amateur Scouting
- Mats Hallin, Dir. of European Scouting
- Niklas Blomgren, Head European Amateur Scout
- Rod Braceful, Amateur Scout
- Thomas Carlsson, European Scout
- Corey Crocker, Scout
- Dan Ellis, Goaltending Scout
- Rob Facca, Head USA Scout
- Colin Fraser, Amateur Scout
- Meghan Hunter, Amateur Scout
- Richard Kromm, Pro Scout
- Brigette Lacquette, Scout
- Don Lever, Pro Scout
- Mikko Luoma, European Amateur Scout
- Darrell May, Head Western Canada Scout
- Jim McKellar, Head Eastern Canada Scout
- Peter Nevin, Amateur Scout
- Andrei Nikolishin, Russia Amateur Scout
- Karel Pavlik, European Amateur Scout
- Anatoli Semyonov, Pro Scout
- Peter Sundström, European Pro Scout

## TEAM PROFILE

There's a new draft regime in Chicago and not a moment too soon. They've finally, reluctantly embraced the rebuild, and gone are the executives who helped put them in this precarious position in the first place.

One of Kyle Davidson's first moves when he took over as the Blackhawks general manager was to relieve Mark Kelley of his duties as the club's Dir. of Amateur Scouting, as his early success gave way to dreadful results at the draft from about 2014 onward. The damage was such that our scouts ranked the Blackhawks system as the 27th-ranked system in the NHL last offseason. In other words, the damage was done.

In his stead steps Mike Doneghey, a long-time amateur scout with the Blackhawks who ascended to the Dir. of Player Evaluation role during the 2020-21 season. He's charged with guiding this once mighty, now disgraced franchise at the draft on an interim basis.

Doneghey and his staff won't have many opportunities to reveal their quality. Far fewer than a team that just finished in 27th place and missed the playoffs for the fourth time in their last five seasons should have, anyway.

They're reasonably well-stocked in the middle of the draft with five selections through the second and third rounds but don't even have a first-round pick to call their own after parting with it last offseason in the Seth Jones trade.

Instead, they'll have to wait until the 38th pick for their first crack at the bat.

It's not the worst spot to be, all things considered. There's bound to be a few reaches in the first round, and if they play their cards right, they may well be able to walk away with an A-grade prospect in a B-grade position.

The question, ultimately, is whether they can identify that player or not when the time comes. They've actually made some fairly reasonable mid-round gambles in recent years, whether it was Wyatt Kaiser, Landon Slaggert, Philipp Kurashev, Michael Krutil, Victor Stjernborg, or Ethan Del Mastro. There's proof of concept there.

They'll have to draw on that mid-round success to make this a foundational draft for a team that's in desperate need of team-controlled, cost-controlled talent because they don't have the capital to make it happen elsewhere.



## WHAT THEY DO WELL

The Blackhawks work between rounds two through five have actually been pretty solid in the last few years, even if we haven't quite seen the payoff yet at the NHL level. They're resourceful that way.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

This team has never seen a tall, somewhat mobile defenceman that they couldn't overdraft by at least a round or two. Truly, they have a type.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Right Wing, Goalie

## 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1 NONE	
ROUND 2 PICKS 38, 57	ROUND 3 PICKS 81, 90, 95
ROUND 4 NONE	ROUND 5 NONE
ROUND 6 PICKS 167, 173	ROUND 7 PICK 199

# COLORADO AVALANCHE

## TEAM PROFILE

The Colorado Avalanche have a thinning prospect pool, but we don't suspect they're overly concerned with that. That's the cost of sustained success in the NHL, especially when you're graduating blue-chippers like Bowen Byram and Alex Newhook in the same season.

They won't get many opportunities to reinforce the farm either. Colorado has but four picks in the 2022 NHL Draft, the best of them occurring in the third round. It's going to be a boring affair for their fans, but they've already had enough fun this year with the Avs run to the Stanley Cup. They can sit this one out.

There's zero chance that the Avs can reprise their position as boasting the eighth-ranked prospect pool this offseason, but they don't have to plummet too far if they invest their limited capital with care. Some



good work late in the draft coupled with the addition of Ben Meyers in NCAA free agency could keep their prospect pool around the league average, which wouldn't be half bad considering.

The Avs have fared reasonably well in the mid-to-late rounds in recent years. Sean Behrens at 61st overall last year was a coup; we had him ranked in the middle of the first. Jean-Luc Foudy at 75th overall in 2020 is looking like a sound investment. Matthew Stienburg has played great hockey for Cornell in the NCAA since the team drafted him at 78th in 2019.

There aren't any real home runs there. Not yet anyway. But there's proof of concept that they can mine credible B-grade prospects in the middle of the draft or later.

Historically, this scouting group has zeroed in on players with a clear, easily identifiable separating skill or skills that they can form into a coherent NHL translatable package. With Foudy, it was his skating. With Ryder Rolston, his shot and skating combo. Behrens, his skill as a passer. Sampo Ranta, his straightaway speed. And on, and on.

That could lend itself to Ryan Greene, or Garrett Brown, or Jake Livanavage in the range of their first pick, and will probably inform how they approach the three that follow.

Whatever the case, the stakes aren't especially high for the Avs at this year's draft. They're playing with house money. And they've earned that right with the success they've had at the draft in years past that's helped fuel their Stanley Cup win this season.



### GENERAL MANAGER

Joe Sakic

### SCOUTING STAFF

Wade Klippenstein, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Garth Joy, Sr. Pro Scout
Joni Lehto, Dir. of European Scouting	Daniel Laperrière, Pro Scout
Brad Smith, Director, Reserve List Scouting	Curtis Leschyshyn, Pro Scout
Cody Bass, Pro Scout	Terry Martin, Pro Scout
Thomas Carlsson, European Scout	Jérôme Mésonéro, Amateur Scout
Corey Crocker, Scout	Jamie Porter, Amateur Scout
Henrik Gradin, European Scout	Neil Shea, Amateur Scout
Alexei Gusarov, European Scout	Lyle Wingert, Amateur Scout
Scott Halpenny, Amateur Scout	Miroslav Zalesak, European Scout

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

**ROUND 1**  
NONE

**ROUND 2**  
NONE

**ROUND 3**  
PICK 97

**ROUND 4**  
NONE

**ROUND 5**  
PICK 161

**ROUND 6**  
PICK 193

**ROUND 7**  
PICK 225

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

It may not seem that impressive, but this team just plainly doesn't make many mistakes with their high-end draft capital. There's Tyson Jost at No. 10 overall in 2016, and that's about it.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

They really haven't done that well when they've drafted goaltenders, other than Justus Annunen, but that's hardly a major quibble on our part. They're relatively well-positioned in their crease for the next little bit anyway.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Right Defence, Left Defence, Goaltender



# COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS



## GENERAL MANAGER

Jarmo Kekäläinen

## SCOUTING STAFF

Ville Sirén, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Mikko Mäkelä, Amateur Scout
Josef Boumedienne, Dir. of Pro Scouting	Dave Peters, Amateur Scout
Oscar Åkerlund, European Scout	William Rönholm, Amateur Scout
Mike Antonovich, Amateur Scout	Chris Shero, Amateur Scout
Thomas Carlsson, European Scout	Rich Sutter, Pro Scout
Corey Crocker, Scout	Milan Tichy, European Scout
Troy Dumville, Amateur Scout	Todd White, Pro Scout
Danny Flynn, Amateur Scout	Josh Weissbock, Hockey Analytic Consultant
Bob Halkidis, Pro Scout	Boris Yemelyanov, European Scout
Cam Lawrence, Hockey Analytic Consultant	
Stephane LeBlanc, Amateur Scout	

## TEAM PROFILE

The Columbus Blue Jackets performed miracles at last year's draft, improving their prospect pool from the 31st-ranked system in the league all the way to 16 in one fell swoop, according to the Elite Prospects scouts.

That's what a well-stocked war chest and investments in a data-friendly approach to the draft can do for a team. The Blue Jackets made more first-round picks in last year's draft than in the previous four combined, and the early returns on at least two of them are exceptionally strong. And the rest of their haul was nothing to sneeze at, either.

Another draft like that and Columbus will boast one of the league's truly elite systems, one that should set them up for a run of long-term success that has thus far eluded the Ohio-based franchise.

They've been served a pair of hanging curveballs in the form of the sixth and 12th overall picks to start the draft, and they just have to send them over the fence. They're likely to have a ton of great options available in both spots, and they could even be so lucky as to have one of Šimon Nemeč or David Jiříček available to them with their first pick. Either of those two would instantly become the best prospect in their system and a franchise piece for their blue line for years to come.

Then again, Blue Jackets general manager Jarmo Kekäläinen tends to march to the beat of his own drum with high picks, and that's worked out reasonably well for Columbus in past years. Whether it was Pierre-Luc Dubois ahead of Jesse Puljujärvi in 2016 or

Yegor Chinakhov in 2020 -- Kekäläinen is full of surprises.

Improved as their system may be, there's still plenty of work ahead in Columbus. Cole Sillinger exceeded all reasonable expectations last season en route to an everyday role in the Blue Jackets lineup, but it's fair to wonder if he can be the long-term answer as a first-line centre. We still view Kent Johnson as a winger at the NHL level, so don't count on him in that spot, either.

Centre is the one position you can never have too much of, so it certainly wouldn't hurt to continue investing in that part of the lineup until they're sure.

Similarly, it wouldn't hurt to take a swing on a goalie in the later rounds. There's a dearth of talent at that position in this class, but perhaps they can use one of their fourth-round picks on one of Tyler Brennan or Topias Leinonen if one of them is available.

No matter which course they chart, one thing is for sure. The Blue Jackets are sure to give us plenty to talk about in the coming months. They always do.



## WHAT THEY DO WELL

Painting with a broad brush here, but the Blue Jackets have done really well for themselves drafting forwards in recent years. There aren't many high-profile misses in the last few years, and they've punched way above their weight in later rounds.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

It's cool that Kekäläinen does so well going out on a limb at the draft, but let's not pretend the Blue Jackets haven't left a fair bit of talent on the board in the process. Live by the sword, die by the sword, and so on.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Goalie, Left Wing

## 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

<b>ROUND 1</b> PICKS 6, 12	
<b>ROUND 2</b> PICK 44	<b>ROUND 3</b> PICK 96
<b>ROUND 4</b> PICKS 109, 122	<b>ROUND 5</b> NONE
<b>ROUND 6</b> NONE	<b>ROUND 7</b> PICK 203





## TEAM PROFILE

When Jim Nill took the job as the Dallas Stars general manager, he did so with an extensive track record as an amateur scout going all the way back to his time with the Ottawa Senators in the early 90s. You just wouldn't guess as much based on the way the Stars have drafted during his reign.

All told, the Stars have five everyday NHL players to show for their eight drafts under his stewardship. Even if we only count the drafts between 2014-2018, you're looking at five hits on 39 picks or a 12.8 percent success rate. Simply put: The Stars just haven't drafted well enough during Nill's tenure.

Perhaps the most charitable way to frame the Stars fortunes at the draft in Nill's time at the reins is that they haven't made contact often, but when they do, it's a home run that sails into the parking lot. Between Miro Heiskanen, Jake Oettinger, Jason Robertson, and Roope Hintz, there's a new core emerging as Jamie Benn and Tyler Seguin age out of effectiveness, but not much else.

That could change with time, though. The Stars have made reasonably sound bets in each of the last three drafts, and last year's haul may be the best of the bunch. Wyatt Johnston, their first-round pick at 23rd overall, led the entire CHL in scoring, and Logan Stankoven already looks like one of the steals of the class as a second-round pick. Ayrton Martino put up points at a decent clip on a Clarkson team that didn't score much. And Conner Roulette broke the point per game mark.

Lord knows, Dallas is going to need all the cost-controlled talent they can find in the coming years. With more than \$19-million committed to Benn and Seguin for the next three seasons, they won't have much wiggle room to spend in free agency. Especially not with looming contract extensions for Robertson and Oettinger. Somebody who is good at the economy help me budget this, my hockey team is running out of cap space, and so on.

The Stars are relatively well-equipped to add to their stockpile of young talent at this year's draft, with nearly the full complement of picks at their disposal -- they dealt their seventh-round pick to the Buffalo Sabres to get out from under Ben Bishop's contract.

It starts at No. 18 overall, at which point there will be no shortage of high-end options to choose from. We've assigned an A-grade to 23 prospects, so they should be able to leave here with a first-round calibre talent without issue. Better still, more than a handful of high-end options on the blue line. Even with Harley at the top of their system, it's a part of their pool that's a little on the shallow side.

Otherwise, they're in pretty good shape, with talent at centre, on the wing, and a goaltender who's entrenched himself in the starter's crease for years to come.

### GENERAL MANAGER

Jim Nill

### SCOUTING STAFF

Joe McDonnell, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Mark Leach, Amateur Scout
Kari Takko, Dir. of European Scouting	Alex LePore, Pro Scout
Craig Bonner, Head Pro Scout	Sam Lites, Pro Scout
Dennis Holland, Amateur Scout	Paul McIntosh, Head Pro Scout
Jiri Hrdina, European Scout	Buddy Powers, Amateur Scout
Pär Johansson, European Pro Scout	Evgueni Tsybouk, Amateur Scout
Jimmy Johnston, Amateur Scout	Shane Turner, Amateur Scout
David Kolb, Amateur Scout	

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1  
PICK 18

ROUND 2  
PICK 50

ROUND 3  
PICK 83

ROUND 4  
PICK 115

ROUND 5  
PICK 147

ROUND 6  
PICK 179

ROUND 7  
PICK 211

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

The Stars have one of the lower success rates at the draft during Nill's time at the helm, but when they hit with one of their selections, it's a grand slam. In a strong link game like hockey, maybe there's something to it.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

They haven't invested a ton of draft capital in the position in recent years, but the Stars haven't exactly fared well when they've tried to find defensive talent outside of the first three picks in the draft.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Right Defence, Left Defence, Goalie



# DETROIT RED WINGS

## TEAM PROFILE

There's something special brewing (cooking?) at Little Caesar's Arena, and if the Detroit Red Wings aren't already one of the NHL's ascendant teams, then they soon will be.

Where his predecessor raged against the dying of the light in vain, Steve Yzerman has prosecuted this rebuild with a level of diligence and discipline that is sure to return this once-mighty franchise to the promised land.

The on-ice results aren't there yet, but the lagging indicators are all there. First came the high draft picks after this club accepted their fate. Next, a prospect pool that reflected their reality as a standings bottom-dweller. And most recently, a Calder Trophy winner in the form of Moritz Seider as proof of concept that all those picks are being well spent.

Give it a little time, and Red Wings fans will come to know spring as playoff season rather than a chance for draft prep.

For now, though, they're still a team with both eyes fixed on the future, so let's keep our eyes on the prize and focus on this upcoming draft in Montréal. The Red Wings are in one of the more interesting spots in the draft, sitting at eighth overall. That's right when a last-minute riser like a Cutter Gauthier or Marco Kasper or Jimmy Snuggerud or Jonathan Lekkerimäki could sneak into the top 10.

With a full-to-overflowing system at every position, Yzerman doesn't need to reach to fit the needs of their short- or long-term goals. They can just take the best player

available to them and call it a day.

They won't be able to rest on their laurels at that point, though. The Red Wings boast one of the more well-stocked war chests with mid-round draft capital in the form of two second-round picks, one third, and two fourths. Day 2 is going to be a busy one for their scouting department.

In a draft that's defined more by depth than star power, that's not a bad position to find oneself in. There are a lot of future stars either currently in the Red Wings lineup or making their way there, and at a certain point, finding depth contributors to insulate them in the long-term is going to be a priority.

For now, though, the plan is simple for Detroit: Keep doing what you've been doing for the last five years.



### GENERAL MANAGER

Steve Yzerman

### SCOUTING STAFF

Kris Draper, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Kirk Maltby, Pro Scout
Håkan Andersson, Dir. of European Scouting	Mark Mullen, Amateur Scout
Mark Howe, Dir. of Pro Scouting	Phil Osaer, Head of Goaltending Scouting & Development
Tommy Boustedt, European Pro Scout	Ryan Rezmierski, Chief Amateur Scout
Thomas Carlsson, European Scout	Antonin Routa, European Scout
Corey Crocker, Scout	Eric Soltys, Scout
Brendan Flemming, Amateur Scout	Bryce Thoma, Amateur Scout
Kevin Gibson, Amateur Scout	Nikolai Vakurov, European Scout
Kelly Harper, Amateur Scout	Jesse Wallin, Chief Amateur Scout
Vladimir Havluj Sr., European Scout	Ross Yates, Amateur Scout
Greg Hawgood, Pro Scout	Chris Yzerman, Pro Scout
Kyle MacKinnon, Pro Scout	



## WHAT THEY DO WELL

The Red Wings have done exceptionally well mining talent from Europe under the watchful eye of Dir. of European Scouting Håkan Andersson. Whether it was sticking their necks out for Moritz Seider in 2019 or betting on Simon Edvinsson's upside at last year's draft – they've done very well for themselves in that neck of the woods.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

This team has invested a not-insignificant amount of draft capital in goaltenders since Yzerman came back to town, and they have nothing to show for it. That's probably going to change with Sebastian Cossa, but then again... maybe not? Who knows!

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Right Defence, Centre, Left Wing

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1 PICK 8	
ROUND 2 PICKS 40, 52	ROUND 3 PICK 73
ROUND 4 PICKS 105, 113, 129	ROUND 5 PICK 137
ROUND 6 NONE	ROUND 7 PICKS 201, 212



# EDMONTON OILERS

## TEAM PROFILE

The Edmonton Oilers haven't exactly been a model franchise for drafting and developing homegrown talent, but they don't really need to be. Even an average performance in that realm should be sufficient with the players already on their roster. And yet...

You have to go all the way back to the 2015 NHL Draft to find the last Oilers haul that would earn a passing grade by most scout's measure (two hits for every seven picks), and that's not likely to change any time soon. There's some hope yet for their most recent classes (their work in 2020 looks especially promising), but they don't exactly get the benefit of the doubt there. Not with their track record.

You have to give the Oilers a little credit, though. They don't shy away from their evaluations, for better and worse. This group has consistently made among the riskiest picks in the first round and let the chips fall where they may. It's one thing to draft Ethan Bouchard in the first round back in

2018. It's another entirely to follow that up with Philip Broberg in 2019. The former has paid off exceptionally well for them, and the latter remains a bit of a mystery.

There's going to be no shortage of like options in their range when they step up to the podium with the 29th overall pick on July 7th. Players with a separating skill or skills but a whole lot of development in front of them. Hell, any one of Sam Rinzel, Lian Bichsel, or Michael Fisher would fit as a spiritual successor to the Bouchard-Broberg picks.

On the other hand, they could just play it cool and wait for a relatively safe pick to drop into their range and pull the trigger. You just know a player or two that we've assigned an A-grade to as a first-round calibre talent (there are 23 such players in our final ranking) is going to fall into their laps, and then it's on them to stop the slide and leave the floor with a building block for the future.

Whatever course they chart, they'll have to make their first-round pick count. It's going to be an exceptionally dull draft for their scouts and fans beyond that point. They won't step up to the podium again until the fifth round, at which point you're mostly slinging darts with a blindfold on.

You're not likely to see the Oilers leave this draft with a franchise player or even much depth, but they should be able to add at least one quality prospect to their system. Even that counts for something, especially on a team with so much money invested in the top-end of their lineup.



### GENERAL MANAGER

Ken Holland

### SCOUTING STAFF

Tyler Wright, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	John Hill, Amateur Scout
Keith Sullivan, Dir. of European Scouting	Brad Holland, Amateur Scout
Archie Henderson, Dir. of Pro Scouting	Joakim Holm, Amateur Scout
Mike Chiarelli, Amateur Scout	Mitch Holmberg, Amateur Scout
Chris Cichocki, Pro Scout	Paul Messier, Pro Scout
Jim Crosson, Amateur Scout	Alexander Naurov, Amateur Scout
Bob Green, Chief Amateur Scout	Andrew Shaw, Amateur Scout
Scott Harlow, Amateur Scout	Matti Virmanen, Amateur Scout



### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1  
PICK 29

ROUND 2  
NONE

ROUND 3  
NONE

ROUND 4  
NONE

ROUND 5  
PICK 159

ROUND 6  
PICK 191

ROUND 7  
PICK 223

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

The Oilers have done an excellent job identifying shoot-first wingers in the middle of the draft in recent years, whether it's Carter Savoie, Matvei Petrov, or Tyler Tullio.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

We just think it would be nice if they could maybe calm down a bit with their first-round picks. Maybe mix in the odd safe bet rather than taking high-risk, high-reward players at almost every turn.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Right Wing, Right Defence, Goalie



**GENERAL MANAGER**

Bill Zito

**SCOUTING STAFF**

Shane Churla,  
Dir. of Amateur  
Scouting

Jari Kekäläinen,  
Dir. of European  
Scouting

Dillon Donnelly,  
Amateur Scout

Patrick Eaves, Pro  
Scout

P.J. Fenton, Amateur  
Scout

Joakim Hedlund,  
European Amateur  
Scout

Les Jackson, Pro  
Scout

Josh Monk,  
Amateur Scout

Ken Morin, Amateur  
Scout

André Niec,  
European Scout

Maxime Ouellet,  
Scout

Jürgen Penker,  
Scout

Vadim Podrezov,  
European Scout

Dalton Prout, Pro  
Scout

Billy Ryan,  
European Scout

Petri Skriko,  
European Pro Scout

Brett Turner,  
Amateur Scout

Jeff Twohey,  
Amateur Scout



# FLORIDA PANTHERS

## TEAM PROFILE

The Florida Panthers have built a regular season juggernaut, their 201 points placing them in a tie with the Colorado Avalanche for the league lead over the past two seasons. And with the NHL's ninth-best prospect pool the last offseason, the good times are bound to keep on rollin',

Still, a pair of high-profile graduations in Anton Lundell and Spencer Knight are sure to drop them a few spots in this offseason's ranking. A dearth of ammunition at this year's draft means they won't be able to reinforce the ranks either. Florida has but six picks in their war chest, none earlier than the third round.

The good news is that this group has historically done reasonably well in the mid-to-late rounds of the draft. Their top prospect at this juncture, Justin Sourdif, was a third-round pick in the 2020 draft, and their top defensive prospect Michael Benning a fourth-rounder in that same class.

Whether or not those players will pan out isn't even of much consequence either. Bear with me. The Panthers are at a stage in their competitive arc where prospects are just as often trading currency as they are building blocks for the future. A third-round pick may not have much value, but a third-round pick that becomes a prospect of Sourdif's calibre could credibly serve as the centrepiece in a blockbuster trade at the deadline that puts this team over the top en route to a deep playoff run.

So, if the Panthers can keep punching above their weight, they'll bend the draft to the needs of this roster and come out

on top. It's a pretty sweet deal, this being a contender gig.

There's bound to be a fair share of players available to them in the middle of the draft who fit that profile, too. Maybe someone like Lane Hutson or Seamus Casey falls into their range in much the same way Benning did two years ago. Or perhaps one of the high-profile Russians like Gleb Trikozov will somehow plummet into their laps at 93rd overall. What I'm trying to say is that they'll have options.



## WHAT THEY DO WELL

The Panthers have quietly developed into one of the better teams at drafting and developing goaltenders. Spencer Knight appears primed to one day be a top-tier starter in the NHL, and though he's no longer in their system, Devon Levi is trending well, too.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

Does this team ever hone in on forwards with puckhandling skill as their defining quality. Henrik Borgström, Mackie Samoskevich, Grigori Denisenko, and on and on. So far? Not working so well for them.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Left Wing, Goalie

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

**ROUND 1**  
NONE

**ROUND 2**  
NONE

**ROUND 3**  
PICK 93

**ROUND 4**  
PICK 125

**ROUND 5**  
PICK 157

**ROUND 6**  
PICKS 186, 189

**ROUND 7**  
PICK 221



# LOS ANGELES KINGS

## TEAM PROFILE

The Los Angeles Kings went from Stanley Cup champions to rebuilding and back to the playoffs again in seemingly the blink of an eye. Three straight seasons without a playoff appearance, and then boom, back into the first round, pushing the Edmonton Oilers to seven games.

To say that this team is ahead of schedule would be an understatement. It's no accident, though. Since taking the reins from Dean Lombardi back in 2017, Kings general manager Rob Blake has guided this team with a sure hand, giving his amateur scouting department the ammunition necessary to get this team back to the promised land, one difficult decision at a time.

From there, Kings Dir. of Scouting Mark Yannetti and his team of scouts have produced among the best results at the draft in the entire league. Here's how their system has ranked in each of the last three seasons of Elite Prospects scouting work:



first in 2021, first in 2020, and second in 2019. Not bad.

If you don't find that convincing, consider this. The Kings have had three or more players suit up for at least one NHL game in all but three drafts since Yannetti ascended to the Dir. of Amateur Scouting position, and the three that failed to qualify all occurred in the last four years.

So you can just about rest assured that the Kings are going to add at least one future NHLer to their ranks long-term this July in Montréal. They're well-positioned to do so, with six picks total, and a staff that we've established tends to make pretty good use of them.

The fascinating thing to see will be just how they use those picks. Their NHL roster is relatively deep at every position -- though perhaps a bit thin on top-end talent on the wing -- and their system is an embarrassment of riches. What do you get the person who has everything they could ever want, and so on?

Perhaps the Kings could take a page out of last year's book and leverage some of those picks for improvements to their big league roster, a la Viktor Arvidsson acquisition. They've still got almost all of their picks in the next few drafts, and they have more prospects than they can probably accommodate at the NHL level anyway. They're set up perfectly to make a big splash on the trade market.

Then again, maybe the Kings will do what they always do and just clean up on the draft floor. That could work, too.

### GENERAL MANAGER

Rob Blake

### SCOUTING STAFF

Mark Yannetti, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Matjaz Kopitar, European Scout
Christian Ruutu, Dir. of European Scouting	Rob Laird, Senior Pro Scout
Chris Byrne, Dir. of CHL Scouting	Mark Osborne, Pro Scout
Niklas Andersson, European Scout	Ron Pyette, Amateur Scout
Ted Belisle, Amateur Scout	Scott Rex, AHL Scout
Blake Bolden, AHL Scout	Nick Sinclair, Amateur Scout
Bryan Denney, Amateur Scout	Jason Supryka, AHL Scout
Sebastian Elwing, European Goaltending Scout	Dave Torrie, Pro Scout
Tony Gasparini, Amateur Scout	Stephan Vigier, Amateur Scout
Jussi Kari-Koskinen, European Scout	Eric Weissman, AHL Scout
Yuri Khmylyov, Russian Scout	Peter White, AHL Scout

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1  
PICK 19

ROUND 2  
PICK 51

ROUND 3  
PICK 86

ROUND 4  
PICK 116

ROUND 5  
PICK 148

ROUND 6  
PICK 180

ROUND 7  
NONE

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

Just about everything, I guess? I mean, the results kind of speak for themselves here. It's hard to identify any one thing when just about everything they touch turns to gold.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

It's kind of funny, but for all their success in the mid-to-late rounds, the Kings have actually been pretty average-at-best with their highest picks. There's still plenty of time left for Alex Turcotte and Quinton Byfield to develop into impactful NHLers, but the early returns haven't been great.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Goalie

## GENERAL MANAGER

Bill Guerin

## SCOUTING STAFF

Judd Brackett,  
Dir. of Amateur  
Scouting

Ricard Persson,  
Dir. of European  
Scouting

Chris Kelleher, Dir.  
of Pro Scouting

Patrick Baum,  
Amateur Scout

Ladislav Benysek,  
European Scout

Matt Carle,  
Amateur Scout

David Chiarelli,  
Amateur Scout

Christopher Hamel,  
Amateur Scout

Brian Hunter,  
Amateur Scout

Max Kolu,  
European Scout

Guy Lapointe,  
Amateur Scout

Daniel LeBlanc,  
Amateur Scout

Mark Mowers, Pro  
Scout

Ivan Nepryayev,  
European Scout

Dan Palango,  
Amateur Scout

Richard Park,  
Pro Scout

J.P. Perpich,  
Scout



# MINNESOTA WILD

## TEAM PROFILE

The Minnesota Wild are in a tough spot. They've built one of the better rosters in the NHL over the last few seasons, but the cumulative costs of the Ryan Suter and Zach Parise buyouts threaten to undo a lot of that work in the coming seasons.

It's hard to keep the ship afloat with about \$12.75-million in dead cap dragging you down, much less go from an upstart team to a contender, but that's the challenge in front of Wild general manager Bill Guerin moving forward. This team is too good for a tear-it-down rebuild, and now they have to manage on expert difficulty. Good luck.

It's going to take a steady hand at the draft to pull this off. Luckily, that's just what Wild Dir. of Amateur Scouting Judd Brackett has provided this club since joining them ahead of the 2020 NHL Draft, mining two stellar hauls in his time with the club. The payoff is a system that's ranked in the top-five in each of the last two offseasons according to our Elite Prospects scouts.

They'll get another seven chances to build their system up in Montréal, starting with the 27th overall pick in the first round of the 2022 draft. At that point, you're hoping that the indiscretion of other teams lets an A-grade prospect fall into your laps. And with last year's draft fresh in mind, it's not a bad bet. They managed to snag a top-five talent in Jesper Wallstedt at No. 20, even if they had to move up to make it happen.

The big question then is what player might that be in this year's draft. One of the Russians who could see their stock artificially deflated because of the ever-fraught "Russia

factor?" Maybe Denton Mateychuk could be the player that plummets into their range? Half the fun will be finding out on draft day.

They've also added a pair of second-round picks in the last few months that are sure to make the early parts of Day 2 interesting -- one as compensation for letting Filip Johansson's rights expire, and another from the Jack McBain trade. They could move up with one of those picks or use it to move an inefficient contract or maybe even just stand pat and make another quality selection like Jack Peart at No. 54 last year. Options aplenty.

One thing's for sure. The Wild are going to be one of the more compelling teams to track at the draft. And that's likely to be the case for at least another two or three seasons almost by default.



## WHAT THEY DO WELL

This scouting group has put on a masterclass in identifying defensive talent through the middle of the draft. Jack Peart, Kyle Masters, Ryan O'Rourke, and Daemon Hunt all have legitimate aspirations to one degree or another of playing top-four minutes at the NHL level, and they were all drafted in the second round or later.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

Can't really pick out a tendency or an obvious flaw here. The Carson Lambos and Marat Khusnutdinov selections struck us as a bit rich, I guess, but that's about it for our quibbles with their work at the draft table in the last two seasons.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Right Wing, Left Wing, Right Defence

## 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1  
PICK 24

ROUND 2  
PICK 47, 56

ROUND 3  
PICK 89

ROUND 4  
PICK 121

ROUND 5  
PICK 153

ROUND 6  
PICK 185

ROUND 7  
NONE

# MONTRÉAL CANADIENS

## TEAM PROFILE

There's a new regime in La Belle Province, and they'll get to reshape one of hockey's most storied franchises in their image, starting with their pick of the litter in this year's draft. The Montréal Canadiens are on the clock.

How Kent Hughes and Co. handle this draft will determine the strength of their foundation as they rebuild this franchise from the ground up after finishing dead last in the NHL with a 22-49-11 record and 55 points. They've already laid the groundwork, parting with veterans ahead of last year's trade deadline for a bounty of picks and prospects, but now the hard part awaits -- drafting and developing NHL talent with those assets.

That task will largely fall in the hands of co-Dirs. of Amateur Scouting Martin LaPointe and Nickolai Bobrov. They head up a new look amateur scouting department following the dismissal of Trevor Timmins last November, and each will play a critical role in shaping this team's future.

They'll have no shortage of opportunities to prove their quality in this year's draft either. Montréal boasts an embarrassment of riches in their war chest, highlighted by six of the first 75 picks in this year's draft and 14 total.

LaPointe has been with the franchise since the 2012-13 season, and the hope is that he played a considerable role in the Canadiens improved fortunes at

the draft in recent years, the last one notwithstanding. The Habs farm system ranked 6th-highest in the league when our scouts last did our prospect pool rankings articles, and they featured four of the top 75 affiliated prospects outside of the NHL at that same time.

Bobrov only joined the club mid-season to ascend to the co-directorship after six-plus years with the New York Rangers as their Dir. of European Scouting. Now, assigning credit for good and bad results at the draft to individuals is always a fraught endeavour -- it's a group effort, any scout will tell you that -- but his work with the Rangers doesn't exactly leave one brimming with confidence. Most scouts view a passable draft as one that yields two NHL players for every seven picks, and the Rangers have gone two for 19 thus far in the 2016-2019 drafts with players from his region since he assumed the role of Dir. of European Scouting, with some pretty high-profile misses along the way (Lias Andersson, Vitali Kravtsov, etc.).

The Canadiens don't have any glaring needs in their system, short of a franchise centre, and they're uniquely positioned to find one without overextending themselves. They're one of the few teams you can take at their word when they say that they're drafting the best player available rather than chasing a positional need. And if they get it right, they've got this rebuild on the fast track.



**GENERAL MANAGER**

Kent Hughes

### SCOUTING STAFF

Nickolai Bobrov, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Tommy Lehmann, European Amateur Scout
Eric Crawford, Dir. of Pro Scouting	David MacLean, Pro Scout
Donald Audette, Amateur Scout	Vincent Riendeau, Goaltending Scout
Serge Boisvert, International Scout	Christer Rockström, European Scout
Nick Carrière, Pro Scout	Ben Shutron, Amateur Scout
Bobby Kinsella, USA Amateur Scout	Reid Simpson, Pro Scout
Michal Krupa, European Scout	Artyom Telepin, Russia Scout
Hannu Laine, European Scout	Matt Turek, Amateur Scout

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

**ROUND 1**  
PICKS 1, 26

**ROUND 2**  
PICKS 33, 64

**ROUND 3**  
PICKS 66, 75, 92

**ROUND 4**  
PICKS 98, 126, 128

**ROUND 5**  
PICK 130

**ROUND 6**  
PICK 162

**ROUND 7**  
PICKS 194, 216

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

The Canadiens failings in the drafting and development department are well-documented, but one area where this group has excelled is in mining blue line talent. Jordan Harris, Mattias Norlinder, Jayden Struble, and Kaiden Guhle are as formidable a stable of blueliners as you're likely to find not currently plying their trade in the NHL.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT* SO WELL

Development. This team has struggled in recent years to get players even close to reaching their potential, and that's a great way to undo a lot of good work at the draft. That Jesperi Kotkaniemi turned into a late first-round pick after three seasons with their organization just about says it all.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Left Wing, Right Wing



# NASHVILLE PREDATORS

## TEAM PROFILE



### GENERAL MANAGER

David Poile

### SCOUTING STAFF

- Jeff Kealty, Dir. of Scouting
- Martin Bakula, European Scout
- Lucas Bergman, European Scout
- Rob Cowie, Pro Scout
- Stan Drulia, Pro Scout
- Jean-Philippe Glaude, Amateur Scout
- Doug Janik, Scout
- Janne Kekäläinen, European Scout
- Tom Nolan, Chief Amateur Scout
- Glen Sanders, Amateur Scout
- Nick Vitucci, Pro Scout
- David Westby, Amateur Scout

The Nashville Predators are one of the more puzzling teams to observe from a management perspective these last few seasons. They seemed all but destined for a full-scale, tear-it-down rebuild as recently as February of last year, but Juuse Saros, Filip Forsberg, and Filip Forsberg had other plans.

Now they're stuck trying to serve both masters, remaining vaguely competitive thanks to a few elite performances and trying to find talent in the draft to push this team back into the contention they enjoyed through the mid-10s. In other words, a retooling.

Those don't usually pay off. It's just far too difficult to serve both masters at once and not find oneself stuck in the squishy middle-ground of the NHL's haves and have-nots long-term. The core you're trying to keep afloat ages out of effectiveness, and you don't get the quality or volume of picks necessary to replace them. Whatever one's feelings are on tanking, it's the best way to lock down top-of-the-lineup talent, and that's what drives results in the NHL.

Can the Predators be one of the exceptions to the rule? Well, they're better positioned than most who travel this path. They had the 10th-ranked system last offseason, according to our scouts, which isn't half bad considering they've gone eight years without a top-10 pick. It speaks to their amateur scouting department's ability to consistently punch above their weight at the draft.

The graduations of Philip Tomasino and

Tanner Jeannot are sure to hurt their stock a bit when we conduct that same exercise this year, but they can cushion the blow with a strong showing in Montréal at this year's draft.

Their complement of picks is about as average as it gets. They start at 17th overall and will make six selections total. Not the sort of stuff that augurs a haul for the ages, but maybe they can find one or two long-term contributors for the middle of their lineup. Even that would be pretty nice.

Ideally, the board will fall in such a way that allows them to add to their blue line. They've kind of neglected that part of their system for the last little while -- perhaps fairly given all the high-end talent entrenched on their defensive depth chart in recent years -- and they could stand to add to that part of their depth chart.

Maybe Denton Mateychuk falls to them? It seems more likely as we get closer to the draft. What about Owen Pickering? It's a long-term project, but the payoff could be well worth it. Lian Bichsel would work in that same sense.

This amateur scouting department knows what they're doing, though, so whatever decision they make, it'll probably be for the best.

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

When it comes to defencemen and goaltenders, you can't do much better than the Nashville Predators have historically. If nothing else, they've got those two positions down pat.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

They're not the most ambitious team when it comes to their forward picks, often going for high-floor, low-ceiling players when they draft for that part of their lineup. Maybe take the odd swing for the fences, would ya?

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Right Wing, Right Defence, Left Defence

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

<b>ROUND 1</b> PICK 17	
<b>ROUND 2</b> NONE	<b>ROUND 3</b> PICKS 82, 84
<b>ROUND 4</b> PICK 114	<b>ROUND 5</b> PICK 146
<b>ROUND 6</b> NONE	<b>ROUND 7</b> PICK 210





# NEW JERSEY DEVILS

## TEAM PROFILE

The New Jersey Devils have quietly amassed one of the more exciting, high-scoring collections of young talent in the NHL. This would be obvious to even the most casual observer with better injury luck and more stable goaltending.

Instead, try as they may, this young Devils core can't outscore their problems, and they've now sat on the outside looking in for four consecutive postseasons with the second-fewest points in the league during that span.

The best is yet to come, as evidenced by their 11th-ranked prospect pool in the last offseason, according to our scouts. They have blue-chip talent in all the positions where they need it most, and now it's just a matter of bringing them into the fold in the coming years.

Luke Hughes put up gaudy numbers on the Michigan blue line last season, and he'll immediately step into a top-four role after his sophomore season. Shakir Mukhamadullin took a slight step back this year, but he's still on track to be an everyday defensive contributor. And while Nico Daws and Akira Schmid struggled in limited samples of NHL action, it can hardly be said that they were thrust into the greatest evaluative environment; their work in the AHL to date still looks quite promising.

They've also got Lady Luck on their side, it seems, after the fates moved them up from fifth overall in this year's draft all the way to second. They could almost cer-

tainly get a Day 1 contributor in that spot, based on the conversations we've shared with industry sources. There's a real sense within the NHL that Shane Wright and Juraj Slafkovský will be able to step into an NHL lineup immediately.

Then again, there's a lot of chatter around the Devils doing something out of left field with this pick. They could move it in a trade for someone who's already in the prime of their career, like Alex DeBrincat, Kevin Fiala, or even J.T. Miller. What if the Devils want to add another high-end piece to the blue line of their prospect stable, like David Jiříček or Šimon Nemeč? Intrigue abounds at their spot, at that's good fun for everyone involved if you ask us. Certainly good for business.

They'll have another eight picks after that point, including a salvo of three fourth-rounders, so the fun won't end with their first pick. Especially not with this team's track record in the mid-to-late rounds, with players like Jesper Bratt (162nd overall in the sixth round) and Yegor Sharangovich (141st overall in the fifth round) drawn in the wee hours of the draft.

Devils Dir. of Amateur Scouting Paul Castron is one of the best in the business, and you just know the Devils are going to mine some high-quality prospects at this year's draft. It's an exciting time to be a Devils fan.

### GENERAL MANAGER

Tom Fitzgerald

### SCOUTING STAFF

Paul Castron, VP of Amateur Scouting	Lewis Mongelluzzo, Amateur Scout
Mark Dennehy, Chief Amateur Scout	Anders Nilsson, European Goalie Scout
Scott Harris, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Claude Noël, Pro Scout
Greg Royce, Dir. of European Scouting	Andrei Plekhanov, European Scout
Jim Mill, Dir. of Pro Scouting	André Savard, Pro Scout
Ryan Breen, Amateur Scout	Andrew Schneider, Head of CHL Scouting
Glen Dirk, Amateur Scout	Michael Sdao, Amateur Scout
Niklas Evertsson, Head of European Amateur Scouting	Tomas Sinisalo, European Scout
Joe Ferras, Amateur Scout	Vaclav Slansky, European Scout
Peter Horachek, Pro Scout	Steve Smith, Amateur Scout
Scott Lachance, Head USA Scout	Brian Strait, Pro Scout
Misha Manchik, European Scout	

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1  
PICK 2

ROUND 2  
PICK 65

ROUND 3  
PICK 78

ROUND 4  
NONE

ROUND 5  
PICK 142

ROUND 6  
PICK 174

ROUND 7  
NONE

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

The Devils don't draft with a measuring stick. They draft for high-end talent. And that philosophy allows them to find players like Jesper Bratt late in the draft where other, less progressive franchises might balk because of his measurables.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

The Devils have invested seven picks in their crease since 2015 and the closest they've come to finding an everyday goaltender, much less a quality starter is MacKenzie Blackwood. That's no good.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre



# NEW YORK ISLANDERS

## GENERAL MANAGER

Lou Lamoriello

## SCOUTING STAFF

Trent Klatt, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Steve Kariya, Pro Scout
Vellu Kautonen, Head Amateur Scout	Matti Kautto, European Scout
Ken Morrow, Dir. of Pro Scouting	Derrick Kemp, Amateur Scout
Jeremy Bachusz, Amateur Scout	Dennis Maxwell, Amateur Scout
Eric Boulton, Pro Scout	Greg Morrow, Amateur Scout
Paul Carlow, Amateur Scout	Jeff Napierala, Amateur Scout
David Conte, Special Assignment Scout	Chris O'Sullivan, Amateur Scout
Ken Gernander, Amateur Scout	Juha Riihijärvi, European Scout
Marek Hascak, European Scout	Mario Saraceno, Amateur Scout
Bob Hoffmeyer, Pro Scout	

## TEAM PROFILE

The New York Islanders have to start getting it right at the draft or they're not going to be able to capitalize on Mat Barzal's prime years. It's just that simple.

Though they've fared decently with their first-round picks, this group has failed to insulate the high-end talent they've mined at the top of the draft with quality support pieces on Day 2. You have to go all the way back to 2014 to find their last mid-round hits, a pair of home run swings in the form of Ilya Sorokin and Devon Toews. Since then? Nada.

This would perhaps be acceptable if the Isles always made contact with their firsts, but that hasn't really been the case. Outside of Barzal and Noah Dobson, it can hardly be said that the Isles have walked away with the best player available to them when it was their turn to make that call. And in Kieffer Bellows, Oliver Wahlstrom, Michael Dal Colle, and Josh Ho-Sang, you have some pretty high-profile misses at worst and a couple of singles at best.

Not to belabour the point, but that's how you wind up with the 31st-ranked prospect pool last offseason, according to the Elite Prospects scouting staff.

They won't be able to make up all that ground in one draft, but they can at least upgrade from a league-worst (non-expansion team division) system to a below-average one. Wouldn't that be nice? You know, not quite on the Los Angeles Kings level, but cause to expect the odd cost-controlled player in their prime to ascend to your lineup from time to time.

They'll be picking from an uncharacteristically high place in the draft after falling to 20th place in the league standings last season. It all starts at 13th overall, which is where they've done their best work at the draft in recent years -- Noah Dobson at 12th, Mat Barzal at 16th, and so on.

With players like Cutter Gauthier, Marco Kasper, and perhaps even Jimmy Snuggerud all earning acclaim as late-risers into the top-10 (we'll see how that plays out on draft day), someone has to fall. Maybe that someone is Frank Nazar, our fifth-ranked prospect that can't seem to quite draw the same level of enthusiasm from NHL teams as he has our staff. Brad Lambert would be the spiritual successor to Mat Barzal with his speed and handling combo, even if the sense lags far behind. Joakim Kemell would certainly fit the mould of an Isles-type pick, in the same vein as Wahlstrom and Bellows.

They won't pick all that often after that point, so they better get it right, regardless of which course they chart with their first pick. The Isles only have four selections after that point, the highest of which is the Colorado Avalanches' second-round pick, which may as well be a third. Not exactly what you'd call a full-to-overflowing war chest.

Volume may be the most advisable play at the draft, but it's not the only way to get it done. The Isles will have to make do with what they've got. If they can't, it could spell an early end to this contention window that they've opened in recent years.

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

This team has quietly done an excellent job of identifying defensive talent in the draft in past years. Ryan Pulock, Adam Pelech, Noah Dobson, and Devon Toews were all homegrown talent, half of whom were found past the first round. Wonder what that Toews guys is up to these days anyway.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

For the love of everything good, please stop evaluating forwards based entirely on their ability to shoot the puck. There's more to the game than finishing talent. We're begging you to recognize this.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Right Wing, Goalie

## 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1 PICK 13	
ROUND 2 PICK 65	ROUND 3 PICK 78
ROUND 4 NONE	ROUND 5 PICK 142
ROUND 6 PICK 174	ROUND 7 NONE



# NEW YORK RANGERS

## TEAM PROFILE

Four years ago, the New York Rangers issued a letter to their fans forecasting a lengthy rebuild to get this team back into Stanley Cup contention. And this spring, they made it all the way to the Eastern Conference Final.

It's a testament to how quickly a team can turn things around if they approach their rebuild with ruthless efficiency and discipline and get a little (a lot) of luck along the way. It doesn't hurt to get one of if not the best goaltending performance in the Salary Cap era, either.

Still, you finish with a prospect pool that rates in the top-five in back-to-back-to-back offseasons, according to our scouts, and that's the payoff. Eventually you wind up with a young core that can credibly compete with the NHL's best teams, especially if you insulate it with quality veterans like Artemi Panarin, Mika Zibanejad, and Chris Kreider.

The best part is that the Rangers aren't even close to getting the best out of their high picks and prospects yet. Not by a long stretch. Alexis Lafrenière and Kaapo Kakko took significant steps forward in the post-season, but they're barely scratching the surface of their talent. Adam Fox, K'Andre Miller, and Braden Schneider all played high-leverage roles on this blue line, and they are, to a man, on the right side of the ageing curve.

So, for a team like the Rangers, it's not a question of whether they can keep drafting high-end talent so much as whether they can get the most out of what's already in their system and their NHL lineup.

Which, well, how do we put this lightly... they've done a very bad job of that! Lafrenière is trending in the right direction after a slow start, but there are already questions about whether Kakko is going to go the Lias Andersson route. The same is true of Vitali Kravtsov, who wanted out of New York as recently as last season. If current trends hold, this team could wind up going one-for-four with top-10 picks in the previous five drafts.

It also means that the Rangers are going to need to find more reinforcements at this year's draft to make up for those misses. That's going to be tough to do at this draft. The Rangers only hold four selections, the highest of which is the 63rd overall pick in the second round. Not exactly what you'd call future core piece territory.

Perhaps the Rangers can find quality depth with what little ammunition is available to them, though. Their track record is pretty strong in that part of the draft, with Zac Jones (68th overall in the third round) as the best example of their ability to find talent in that range.

Time will tell, but as this franchise turns the corner from rebuilding to rebuilt, it's clear that the draft won't hold as much sway in the Big Apple as it once did. And that's a good thing.

### GENERAL MANAGER

Chris Drury

### SCOUTING STAFF

John Lilley, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Jan Gajdosik, European Scout
Jamie Herrington, Dir. of Collegiate Scouting	Kim Gellert, Amateur Scout
Chris Morehouse, Dir. of North American Scouting	Derek Ginnell, Amateur Scout
Larry Bernard, Amateur Scout	Oto Hascak, European Scout
Jeff Beukeboom, Amateur Scout	Patric Kjellberg, European Scout
Rich Brown, Amateur Scout	Sergei Kuznetsov, European Scout
Gordie Clark, Pro Scout	Shaone Morrisonn, European Pro Scout
Brendon Clark, Amateur Scout	Justin Sather, Pro Scout
Daniel Doré, Amateur Scout	Peter Stephan, Amateur Scout
Mikko Eloranta, European Scout	Al Tuer, Amateur Scout
Steve Eminger, Pro Scout	

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1 NONE	
ROUND 2 PICK 62	ROUND 3 NONE
ROUND 4 PICK 111	ROUND 5 PICK 158
ROUND 6 PICK 190	ROUND 7 NONE

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

This team seems to just about always get it right when they draft defencemen. K'Andre Miller, Braden Schneider, Nils Lundkvist, Zac Jones, and on it goes. The only problem here is that they've done such a good job in this realm that it's kind of a moot point.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

At a certain point, you have to wonder what exactly is going on with the Rangers player development department. How can so many high picks turn into almost nothing at all, and so quickly at that? It's the one thing holding this team back, as far as we're concerned.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Goalie, Right Wing



# OTTAWA SENATORS

## TEAM PROFILE



### GENERAL MANAGER

Pierre Dorion

### SCOUTING STAFF

Trent Mann, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Pierre Groulx, Scout
Mikko Ruutu, Dir. of European Scouting	Bob Janecyk, Amateur Scout
Steve Stirling, Dir. of Collegiate Scouting	Rob Murphy, Pro Scout
Jim Clark, Dir. of Pro Scouting	Anders Östberg, European Scout
Dan Boeser, Amateur Scout	John Perpich, Pro Scout
Don Boyd, Amateur Scout	Todd Stirling, Amateur Scout
George Fargher, Amateur Scout	Bobby Strumm, Amateur Scout

The Ottawa Senators are supposed to be in the thick of a five-year run of unparalleled success right now, spending to the cap and competing for the playoffs. Instead, they just missed the playoffs for the fifth straight season and continue to operate on a shoestring budget.

A few more drafts like last year's and they may never get to that place. It's early, but the Senators class of 2021 looks like one of the league's worst relative to the quality and volume of their picks. Tyler Boucher couldn't hack it in college and flew for the OHL, where he failed to score at even a point per game clip. Zack Ostapchuk actually produced less on a per-game basis this year. Ben Roger scored at a 0.23 point per game clip. And the late-rounders aren't exactly saving the day.

For many years, the Sens have marched to the beat of their own drum. Where Draft Twitter and the public sphere zigs, they zag. And it's worked. They've stuck their neck out and come out on top as one of the better groups at the draft. Last year, they suffered their stubbornness in a big way. Live by the sword, die by the sword, and so on.

Still, it would be foolish to let recency bias diminish the quality of this otherwise strong amateur scouting department. They've amassed a stable of prospects that are either in the process of developing into core pieces in their NHL roster or working their way up to that point in their system.

Now that Moritz Seider has graduated,

one could make the case that they boast the best defensive prospect in the sport in Jake Sanderson. A shoulder injury cut Shane Pinto's season short, but he's still someone you can earmark for a middle-six shutdown centre's role, and Ridly Greig is trending similarly. Roby Järventie and Yegor Sokolov could one day be NHL calibre finishers on the wing. In Leevi Meriläinen and Mads Søgaard, a pair of high-end goalie prospects. There's hope yet.

They'll get a chance to add another blue-chip prospect to the ranks at this year's draft with the seventh overall pick. Could one of David Jiříček or Šimon Nemeč fall to them? What about one of the late risers like Cutter Gauthier or Joakim Kemell? Hell, you can't rule out the chance that they trade the pick for instant help on their NHL roster either. There's definitely an opening in their division now that the Boston Bruins are in tough, and they have to turn the corner eventually right?

Senators general manager Pierre Dorion may have jumped the gun last fall when he suggested that the rebuild was over, but bouncing back from last year with a strong draft and some competent decisions in the executive suite could get them there.

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

This team doesn't give a damn what you or I or anyone else in the public sphere or even on the team side thinks. They have their own evaluations, and they stand by them, for better or worse.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

This team doesn't give a damn what you or I or anyone else in the public sphere or even on the team side thinks. They have their own evaluations, and they stand by them, for better or worse.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Left Wing, Right Defence

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1  
PICK 7

ROUND 2  
PICKS 39, 63

ROUND 3  
PICKS 72, 87

ROUND 4  
PICK 104

ROUND 5  
PICKS 136, 143, 151

ROUND 6  
PICK 168

ROUND 7  
PICK 206

## TEAM PROFILE

The Philadelphia Flyers are in a tough spot. They were supposed to contend this season or at the very least compete for a playoff spot; their dearth of cap space and draft capital speaks to that. Instead, they finished with the fourth-worst record in the NHL, and there's no telling what the future holds.

It's not like the Flyers got to this point with a poor draft record. They're one of the better teams in the league at identifying amateur talent and integrating them into their big league lineup by just about any measure.

The problem is that this year, many of those same players who were once thought of as franchise building blocks stalled in their development or took steps back. Travis Konecny had his worst season in three years. Ivan Provorov just plainly didn't perform at a top-four level. Joel Farabee produced fewer points in more contests. Meanwhile, Travis Sanheim performed at a decent enough level, and rumours abound last season that he may be on his way out via trade.

Suddenly, this group of supposed core players looks a lot more like a handful of support pieces. And without top-of-the-line-up talent, well, good luck competing in the NHL. With the 19th-ranked prospect pool the last offseason according to our scouts, and precious little cap space to play with this offseason, there aren't any quick fixes available to them either.

In all likelihood, they'll have to get this franchise back on track one draft pick at a time, over a handful of years rather than an offseason.

They're in a pretty good spot to start that endeavour at this year's draft, holding the fifth overall selection in the first round and nearly all of their picks in the ones that follow -- they dealt their second-rounder last offseason to get Shayne Gostisbehere off their books in a trade with the Arizona Coyotes.

There's almost always a surprise at the top of the draft, but it's hard to imagine enough of them for a Shane Wright or Juraj Slafkovský to be in that spot. It's a shame, because they could really use a left winger like Slafkovský in their system, too. Someone like Logan Cooley or Frank Nazar could be there, though, and either one of them would instantly be the best player in their system.

One thing that they can't afford to do is repeat the Nolan Patrick mistake. There were periphery factors beyond their control that limited the return on investment with that pick, but it can hardly be said that they got the most of their second overall investment. That can't be the case again if this team wants to get back into the playoffs.

### GENERAL MANAGER

Chuck Fletcher

### SCOUTING STAFF

Joakim Grundberg, Dir. of European Scouting	Mark Greig, Amateur Scout
Dave Brown, Dir. of Pro Scouting	Todd Hearty, Amateur Scout
Matt Bardsley, Amateur Scout	Al Hill, Pro Scout
Nick Beverley, Pro Scout	Ken Hoodikoff, European Scout
John Chapman, Pro Scout	Alyn McCauley, Pro Scout
Wade Clarke, College Scout	Dennis Patterson, Amateur Scout
Ross Fitzpatrick, Pro Scout	Richard Pracey, Amateur Scout
Shane Fukushima, Amateur Scout	Sami Sandell, Amateur Scout
Martin Gendron, Amateur Scout	Jan Slansky, Amateur Scout

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

**ROUND 1**  
PICK 5

**ROUND 2**  
NONE

**ROUND 3**  
PICK 69

**ROUND 4**  
PICK 101

**ROUND 5**  
PICK 133

**ROUND 6**  
PICK 165

**ROUND 7**  
PICK 197

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

There's a saying in scouting circles that goes something like if you can't skate, then you can't play. Generally, there's something to it. The Flyers have done pretty well for themselves by identifying the exceptions to that rule, players who outperform their artificially low draft position because of that deficiency.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

Ronnie Attard and Cam York are trending nicely, but drafting defencemen has been a real struggle for this franchise. They've invested a lot of draft capital in the position and have very little to show for it.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Left Wing, Right Defence



# PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

## GENERAL MANAGER

Ron Hextall

## SCOUTING STAFF

Nick Pryor, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Matt Mangene, Amateur Scout
Ryan Bowness, Dir. of Pro Scouting	Jay McClement, Pro Scout
Will Acton, Pro Scout	Dan McLean, Amateur Scout
Colin Alexander, Global Crossover Scout	Gilles Meloche, Special Assignment Scout
Brian Fitzgerald, Amateur Scout	Petri Pakaslahti, European Scout
Luc Gauthier, Amateur Scout	Craig Patrick, Pro Scout
Frank Golden, Amateur Scout	Kevin Stevens, Special Assignment Scout
Jay Heinbuck, Amateur Scout	Krissy Wendell-Pohl, Amateur Scout
Kerry Huffman, Pro Scout	Tommy Westlund, European Scout
Alexander Khavanov, European Amateur Scout	Warren Young, Amateur Scout

## TEAM PROFILE

The Pittsburgh Penguins have quietly produced exceptionally strong results at the draft with little in the way of pick volume or quality for years now. The closest they've come to getting their due is the Mark Donk, Buzz Flibbett tweet, and even that may sell their work short.

Many scouts think of two hits for every seven picks as a baseline for success at the draft, and the Penguins went 15 for 51 between 2010 and 2018. They cleared that mark during that span, and they did it with only five first-round picks at their disposal. And then they supplemented that work at the draft with their work in NCAA, CHL, and European free agency.

Even so, a depleted war chest and a lack of high-end capital have pushed the Penguins prospect pool to nearly the bottom of the league by our scouts' reckoning. They've pushed all their chips in on the Sidney Crosby, Yevgeni Malkin, and Kris Letang era, eschewing picks and prospects for help at the deadline and generating some fantastic results in the process.

But the bill has come home, and the Penguins long-term future is looking pretty bleak at this point. Malkin and Letang may well be on their way out, and Crosby is going to be 35-years-old by the start of next season.

Perhaps they can stave off the worst of it by channelling the same scouting work that kept this team in contention for a decade-plus at this year's draft. Pittsburgh

has their first-round pick for the first time since 2019, and it's in a relatively decent spot at 21st overall. They should be able to snag a middle-of-the-depth chart talent or better.

They won't need to worry about positional need either, insofar as they're so lean at every spot in the depth chart that you can't reasonably prioritize one ahead of the other. The only part of their prospect pool that's flush is their crease, and this may be the worst goaltender draft in the last decade.

It will be interesting to see what type of player the Penguins chase in that spot. Do they go for a long-term project with upside in the hopes that they can build a new core, or do they make safer bets on more NHL-ready prospects with not a lot of developmental runway in front of them? The former approach could lend itself to an Owen Pickering or Denton Mateychuk or Noah Östlund with their first pick, while a latter tact would lead to a Danila Yurov or Owen Beck-type.

The fun won't stop there, though. The Penguins will get a break through the early proceedings on Day 2 -- they lost their second- and third-round picks in trades -- but they hold their own picks in rounds four through seven. They've done a lot of good work in that part of that draft, too.

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

The Penguins don't really have a type, near as we can tell. They just like good hockey players. And that approach has done wonders for them, allowing them to consistently find contributors through the draft with scant few picks at their disposal.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

It's been a good, long while since the Penguins drafted a defenceman of any quality. The only two defensive prospects to crack their top 10 in our affiliated prospects ranking last year were a player acquired via trade (Pierre-Olivier Joseph) and one they signed as an NCAA free agent (Cam Lee). They could stand to fix that part of their approach.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Left Wing, Right Defence

## 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1 PICK 21	
ROUND 2 NONE	ROUND 3 NONE
ROUND 4 PICK 118	ROUND 5 PICK 150
ROUND 6 PICK 182	ROUND 7 PICK 210



# SAN JOSE SHARKS

## TEAM PROFILE

It's been three years since the San Jose Sharks last made the playoffs, and yet they continue to rage against the dying of the light. There just doesn't seem to be any appetite for a full-scale, tear-it-down-rebuild in the SAP Center, no matter how the losses mount.

The hope, it seems, is that the Sharks can draft their way out of this prolonged funk and find enough cost-controlled, top-of-the-lineup talent to compensate for the inefficient, big-money deals at the bottom of their roster. A retooling with rebuild characteristics, I guess you could call it.

We'll have to wait a few years before we can determine whether that plan worked or not, but there are already some promising signs to glean if you're a Sharks fan. Their system was the 14th-ranked one in the NHL last offseason, according to our scouts, with four of their skaters cracking our top 100 affiliated prospect rankings. There's high-end talent and depth there that could form the basis for a playoff-competitive roster two, three, maybe four years out.

The task this offseason is strengthening their ranks with another stellar showing at the draft. It's going to be hard to top last year's. I don't think anyone saw William Eklund being there at No. 7 as a possibility. But that's the path they've chosen. This group has to rely on outperforming their draft position and getting lucky along the way to make it happen.

They're not likely to find an Eklund-cal-

bre talent with their first pick in this year's draft, but maybe they can find a support piece that can act as his running mate in the coming years. Perhaps a high-end finisher like Joakim Kemell, Jagger Firkus, or Jonathan Lekkerimäki strikes their fancy; someone to finish their top prospect's brilliant passing plays.

The Sharks parted with their second-round pick to acquire Adin Hill last offseason, so they'll have to make that first pick count. No doubt about that. But that's about the only loss in their war chest going into the draft in Montréal. They're flush in rounds three through seven, with a pair of fifths and a trio of sevenths in the chamber.

The odds are what they are at that point in the draft, and they're not great, but there's cause for optimism if you're a Sharks fan that they can make something happen in the back half of the draft anyway. Kevin Labanc, Adam Raška, Santeri Hatakka, John Leonard, and Alexandar Chmelevski all went in the sixth or seventh round, and each of them played at least one game in San Jose's lineup at some point last season.

The challenge in front of the Sharks amateur scouting department couldn't possibly be any more daunting, but if anyone's up to the task, they just might be the group.

### GENERAL MANAGER

Vacant

### SCOUTING STAFF

Doug Wilson, Jr., Dir. of Scouting	Nikolai Ladygin, European Scout
Shin Larsson, Dir. of European Scouting	Bryan Marchment, Amateur Scout
Christopher Boucher, Pro Scout	Neil McKenney, Amateur Scout
Ned Colletti, Pro Scout	Ryan Russell, Amateur Scout
Dirk Graham, Pro Scout	Niklas Sundström, European Scout
Ryan Hamilton, Pro Scout	Ales Vladyka, Amateur Scout
Jon Hull, Amateur Scout	Mike Yandle, Amateur Scout
Tomi Kallio, European Scout	

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1  
PICK 11

ROUND 2  
PICK 65

ROUND 3  
PICK 78

ROUND 4  
NONE

ROUND 5  
PICK 142

ROUND 6  
PICK 174

ROUND 7  
NONE

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

Development. This group always gets the most out of their prospects, and that's how they're consistently able to outperform their draft position and mine everyday contributors in the later rounds of the draft.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

Their track record drafting defencemen isn't exactly stellar, but they've also done fairly well finding blue line talent in European free agency (Radim Šimek, Nikolai Knyzhov) and with players whose teams let their rights expire (Jacob Middleton, Nicholas Meloche, etc.). So, make of that what you will.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Left Defence, Goalie

# SEATTLE KRAKEN



## GENERAL MANAGER

Ron Francis

## SCOUTING STAFF

Robert Kron, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Tony MacDonald, Amateur Scout
Jeff Crisp, Amateur Scout	Tom O'Connor, Amateur Scout
Mike Dawson, Amateur Scout	Thomas Plante, Amateur Scout
Pelle Eklund, European Scout	Aleksandr Plyushev, European Scout
Marcus Fingal, European Scout	Trevor Stienburg, Amateur Scout
Sasu Hovi, European Scout	Darren Yopyk, Amateur Scout

## TEAM PROFILE

This is going to be the draft that the Seattle Kraken should have had last season. They finally have the war chest necessary to build a strong prospect pool, and now we'll get a real chance to see how this scouting staff hacks it.

Kraken general manager Ron Francis left no stone unturned in the pursuit of draft capital at this deadline, adding five picks into the chamber to pair with the seven already at their disposal for an even 12. In a draft with as much depth as this one, they'll have a real chance to add some NHL-level support pieces this July in Montréal.

So far, this amateur scouting group has done fairly well for themselves. The sample is small, but they've proven capable of mining value in every part of the draft to date. It ain't much, but it's not nothing.

Matthew Beniers joined the Kraken at the end of his sophomore season and produced at nearly a point a game clip with an about neutral two-way profile. So, full marks for getting the first pick in franchise history right. That's a hell of a start.

Everything that followed has aged relatively well, too. Ryker Evans appears to be on track, even if the decision to take him with the 35th overall pick struck us as far too rich for the player in question. Ryan Winterton took on a massive role with the OHL champion Hamilton Bulldogs and his scoring exploded to over a point a game. Ville Ottavainen stepped into an everyday role with JYP in the Finnish Liiga and acquitted himself well at that. Jacob Melanson scored at a slightly better than

a point a game rate. And Semyon Vyazovoy was stellar in the MHL. Justin Janicke played at Notre Dame.

They'll look to add another blue-chip piece to pair with Beniers at this year's draft, and they'll get an excellent chance to do it with the fourth overall pick. With all the noise about the top three selections and the potential for a real surprise move in that range, there's bound to be a player of that quality that falls to them at four.

They've got their franchise centre in Beniers in the fold, but they're still expansion-team level thin on the blue line. David Jiříček or Šimon Nemec would be a hell of a start, with either player instantly becoming the top defensive prospect in their system. Then again, maybe they'll look for a player like Logan Cooley or Frank Nazar to be the high-flying offensive pivot to anchor the second-line in their bottom-six? Time will tell!

But after a bit of a letdown draft last year just based on the lack of pick volume, this one is sure to deliver if you're a Kraken fan. Both from an entertainment perspective and in terms of what sort of players they'll get.

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

It's kind of hard to determine one's tendencies based on one draft, so let's hold off on this section for this year.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

See: Our answer for what they do well.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Left Wing, Right Wing, Goalie

## 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1  
PICK 4

ROUND 2  
PICKS 35, 49, 58, 61

ROUND 3  
PICK 68

ROUND 4  
PICKS 100, 117, 123

ROUND 5  
PICK 132

ROUND 6  
PICK 164

ROUND 7  
PICK 196



# ST. LOUIS BLUES

## TEAM PROFILE

The St. Louis Blues haven't drafted as well in recent years as they once did, but there's still every reason to believe in this front office's ability to identify young talent and develop them into everyday NHLers.

There hasn't been enough turnover in this front office in the last few seasons to believe that they just forgot how to draft. The more likely explanation is that their success in past drafts has built a contender, and they're picking less often and lower in the draft. The downstream effect is that they've now got one of the NHL's weaker prospect pools, with the 26th-ranked system in the league according to our scouts.

Still, they're going to need to find a way to channel the scout's acumen that fuelled drafts like their 2014 and 2017 classes to keep this ship afloat. That's how you hold the window open as a contender or better still put your team over the top. Just look

at what the addition of Robert Thomas did for their group in 2019.

They're in relatively good shape to do that going into this draft. The Blues hold nearly their full complement of picks after only parting with their second-rounder at last year's trade deadline in the Nick Leddy trade, starting with the 23rd overall pick in the first round.

They have a clear need on the backend and in-goal after the graduations of Ville Husso and Niko Mikkola, especially with Scott Perunovich set to follow in their footsteps. And this is especially true of their right side, which is incredibly lean once you get past Matt Kessel.

That puts them in a tough spot where they're picking. Any of the more obvious options in that range will be long gone by the time it's their turn to step up to the podium. They could reach for Sam Rinzel at 23, but there's a lot of risk with that sort of pick, and they can ill afford to miss with their firsts.

In reality, the Blues would probably be best-served moving down and loading more rounds into the chamber. If they can find a way to recoup the second-round pick they lost in the Leddy trade, all the better. But those trades happen far less often than one would think, so don't hold your breath.

You may just need to brace yourself for the usual if you're a Blues fan, which would be a garden variety, best-player-available pick at the top of the draft and with every pick that follows. And you know what? You can't go wrong with that either.



### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

**ROUND 1**  
PICK 23

**ROUND 2**  
NONE

**ROUND 3**  
PICK 88

**ROUND 4**  
PICK 120

**ROUND 5**  
PICK 152

**ROUND 6**  
PICK 184

**ROUND 7**  
NONE

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

This franchise has done pretty damn well when drafting goaltenders, with a pair of options in goal this season that were both drafted and developed in-house. Even Joel Hofer, their new top prospect in goal, looks like a solid bet to play games at some point.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

Their last few first-round picks have left a lot to be desired, going back the last three drafts specifically. They need to get more out of their top-end draft capital if they're going to get this prospect pool back on track.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Right Defence, Goalie, Right Wing

### GENERAL MANAGER

Doug Armstrong

### SCOUTING STAFF

Tony Feltrin, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Jeff McKercher, Amateur Scout
Jan Vopat, Dir. of European Scouting	J. Niemiec, Amateur Scout
Timo Blomqvist, European Scout	Garrett Peters, Amateur Scout
Troy Brouwer, Amateur Scout	Michel Picard, Amateur Scout
Stefan Elvenes, Amateur Scout	Carter Sears, Scout
Dan Ginnell, Amateur Scout	Jason Smart, Scout
Ian MacLellan, Amateur Scout	Alexei Starovoitov, Amateur Scout
Kevin McDonald, Pro Scout	Tim Taylor, Pro Scout

# TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING

## GENERAL MANAGER

Julien BriseBois

## SCOUTING STAFF

Al Murray, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Rob Kitamura, Amateur Scout
Brad Whelen, Asst. Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Gerry O'Flaherty, Pro Scout
Mikael Andersson, European Scout	Brian Putnam, Amateur Scout
Grant Armstrong, Amateur Scout	Antonin Routa, European Scout
Michel Boucher, Amateur Scout	Grant Sonier, Amateur Scout
John Burkart, Amateur Scout	Jeff Tambellini, NCAA Recruiter
Josh Dye, Amateur Scout	Jared Waimon, Goaltending Scout
Stephen Gionta, Pro Scout	Gord Weatherall, Amateur Scout
Tony Hrkac, Pro Scout	Yuri Yanchenkov, European Scout
Kari Kettunen, European Scout	

## TEAM PROFILE

The Tampa Bay Lightning have built an absolute juggernaut of a team on the cusp of achieving dynasty status if they're not already there, and they've done it largely through drafting and developing home-grown talent.

They treat their seventh-round picks with more diligence and care than most teams would their first-rounders, and the payoff is players like Ondřej Palát developing into top-of-the-lineup contributors. It's the reason they turn seemingly dubious decisions at the draft into everyday roster players.

About those draft decisions, though. It's been a good, long while since the Lightning produced a draft haul that earned any acclaim for our scouts. The result is a prospect pool that's atrophied talent and failed to find any credible reinforcements, with the Bolts system ranking 30th and then 29th in the last two offseasons, according to our scouts.

The other driving force of that relatively weak system is that the Lightning have been a contender for the better part of a decade, and they've operated accordingly. This isn't a team that makes many picks at the draft, and the ones that they do make aren't especially high either. Such is the cost of being one of the NHL's best teams.

On the bright side, the Lightning don't exactly have to be draft savants to keep this ship afloat. They just need to produce about average results and find a way to keep injecting young, cost-controlled talent into their lineup, even if it's in a depth role. Given their work at the deadline in recent years, just finding well-regarded players with some

currency around the league works, too.

They'll have their fair share of chances to find players that fit that billing in this year's draft, with seven picks total, including their first-rounder for the first time in three drafts.

The Lightning could do serious damage with that first-rounder too. Many in the industry anticipate that Russians will fall in this draft, well beyond where they should go, and there's historical precedent for the Bolts making out like bandits because of that in the past. For a team that once got Nikita Kucherov in the second round because of the Russian factor, all they have to do is go back to their roots and stop the slide for a player like Danila Yurov or Ivan Miroschnichenko or Gleb Trikozov and they'll immediately outperform their draft position.

They'll have to make that first pick count because it's all late-round picks in their war chest beyond that point. Then again, if any team has proven they can get a lot out of those picks, it's the Lightning, so don't go sitting out Day 2 if you're a Bolts fan.



## WHAT THEY DO WELL

Development. This team always gets the most out of every one of their draft picks and it's because they invest more time and effort into their late-rounders than most teams do with their firsts.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

For all the Lightning's success at the draft, not a lot of it has occurred in the first round. Sure, they get their lottery picks right, but not much else. It's genuinely bizarre how poorly this group has fared on Day 1 of the draft.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Left Wing, Right Wing, Left Defence

## 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

<b>ROUND 1</b> PICK 31	
<b>ROUND 2</b> NONE	<b>ROUND 3</b> NONE
<b>ROUND 4</b> PICK 103	<b>ROUND 5</b> PICK 160
<b>ROUND 6</b> PICKS 169, 192	<b>ROUND 7</b> PICKS 222, 224



# TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS

## TEAM PROFILE

They don't get a ton of praise for their work at the draft, but the Toronto Maple Leafs have quietly been one of the NHL's better teams when it comes to drafting and developing players in-house.

And with all the money they've invested at the top of their lineup, that's an absolute necessity for this team. The Maple Leafs can't afford to not consistently find young, cost-controlled talent to cycle through their lineup.

So, they've treated every one of their picks with the attention and care of a first-rounder and produced some pretty stellar results in the process. Just take the last draft, for example. The Leafs only had three picks, none higher than 57th overall in the second round, and they managed to grab a blue-chip piece in Matthew Knies and one of the OHL's more productive scorers in Ty Voit. Talk about efficiency.

They'll have to channel that same scout's acumen at this draft to keep their system afloat, with only three picks through the entire affair for the second straight year. On the bright side, one of those picks is a first-rounder, but the draft is a volume game, and they decidedly don't have that.

The fun starts at 25th overall if you're a Leafs fan, at which point they should have some pretty great prospects to choose from. There should be at least a handful of players available to them that we've assigned an A-grade going into this draft, and if any team can be trusted to identify those players, this is the one.

Unfortunately for the Leafs, who have a glaring need for more goaltending talent in their system (and at the NHL level, if we're being honest...), this won't be the draft to address that deficiency. Not in a way that will meaningfully change their outlook at the position, anyway. This is probably the weakest goalie class of the last decade-plus and is by far the worst one we've encountered during our time covering the draft at EP Rinkside.

Maybe the Leafs can justify taking a flier on one of Tyler Brennan, Topias Leinonen, or Thomas Milic with their third-round pick, but any of those options would constitute a slight reach in that spot. The problem, of course, is that if the Leafs don't grab one of them then, there's no telling if they'll be there when they pick again in the seventh round.

That's about it for intrigue in this draft if you're a Leafs fan, though. They've built one of the league's best regular season teams over the past few seasons, a legitimate contender for years to come. The catch is that the draft isn't as fun as it used to be in Toronto, but any fan base would take that trade.

### GENERAL MANAGER

Kyle Dubas

### SCOUTING STAFF

Wes Clark, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Jackson Maxwell, Pro Scout
Ari Vuori, Dir. of European Scouting	Réal Paiement, Amateur Scout
Eric Joyce, Dir. of Pro Scouting	Mike Penny, Pro Scout
Scott Bell, Amateur Scout	Richard Pollock, Pro Scout
Thommie Bergman, European Scout	Darren Ritchie, Amateur Scout
Victor Carneiro, Amateur Scout (Ontario)	Jim Roque, Pro Scout
Christoffer Hedlund, Amateur Scout	Chris Roque, Amateur Scout
Radim Jelinek, European Scout	Grigori Shafigulin, Amateur Scout
Olegs Koreskovs, Amateur Scout	Jim Vesey, Amateur Scout
Garth Malarchuk, Amateur Scout	Tom Watt, Pro Scout
Tony Martino, Amateur Scout	

### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1  
PICK 25

ROUND 2  
NONE

ROUND 3  
PICK 79

ROUND 4  
NONE

ROUND 5  
NONE

ROUND 6  
NONE

ROUND 7  
PICK 218

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

Development. This team gets the most out of all of their draft picks because they treat them with a diligence and care that is unique in this league.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

Really nitpicking here, but this group hasn't exactly done a great job of identifying goaltending talent in past drafts. Having said that, they haven't exactly invested a ton of draft capital in the position either.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Goalie, Right Wing, Left Defence



# VANCOUVER CANUCKS



## GENERAL MANAGER

Patrik Allvin

## SCOUTING STAFF

Todd Harvey, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Phil Golding, Amateur Scout
Brett Henning, Dir. of Pro Scouting	Ted Hampson, Amateur Scout
Ron Delorme, Chief Amateur Scout	Neil Komadoski, Pro Scout
Thomas Gradin, Associate Head Scout	Lars Lindgren, Pro Scout
Martin Bakula, Amateur Scout	Vincent Montalbano, Amateur Scout
Brian Chapman, Pro Scout	Wyatt Smith, Amateur Scout
Sergei Chibisov, Amateur Scout	Troy Ward, Amateur Scout
Lou Crawford, Pro Scout	

## TEAM PROFILE

The Vancouver Canucks are in a uniquely grim position, with among the worst records in the league the last half-decade-plus and little to show for it in their prospect, which is among the NHL's worst as of this writing.

It's not supposed to be that way. You're supposed to reward your fan base's patience through all that losing with hope in the form of a top-flight prospect pool, collecting picks at the trade deadline and then drafting high-end players that can one day get this club back to Stanley Cup contention.

The good news is that the Canucks have already found their core pieces, so they're not exactly starting from scratch here. In Elias Pettersson, Quinn Hughes, and Thatcher Demko, they've already found their top-of-the-lineup pieces at each of the sport's premium positions. Now they just have to find quality players to insulate them in support roles.

They're reasonably well-positioned for that endeavour at this year's draft, with nearly the full complement of picks at their disposal. The only one that's missing is a second-rounder that they parted with in last offseason's blockbuster acquisition of Connor Garland and Oliver Ekman-Larsson in the moments before the 2021 draft.

It all starts with the 15th overall pick in the first round, their first such selection since 2019. That's where the fun begins if you're a Canucks fan. And it's a super interesting spot to be in, too. There's a decent chance that a player we've rated in the top-10 like Frank Nazar or Denton Mateychuk falls to them, and either one

would immediately become the best prospect in their system with a bullet. If that's not to their fancy, maybe they take on a high-upside project player like Owen Pickering or Kevin Korchiński.

Whatever course they chart, this is an opportunity to change the complexion of their prospect pool in a significant way. They just have to make the best of it.

Then, of course, they have to follow that up with sound decisions in rounds three through seven. That hasn't always come easy for this franchise in recent years, with countless picks that looked bad at the time only looking worse as the players' careers have progressed. Aku Koskenvuo and Jackson Kunz come to mind.

Canucks general manager Patrik Allvin came to the franchise with an exceptionally strong track record as an amateur scout though, so perhaps those days are behind them. That's the hope in Vancouver, because they can't afford any more weak draft hauls. Not after the last two.



## WHAT THEY DO WELL

This group has done reasonably well drafting out of Sweden the last few years, turning seventh-round picks into a pair of quality prospects in Viktor Persson and Lucas Forsell. That's no small feat in that part of the draft.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

Development. It's pretty telling that the crown jewels of this team's development program are Zack MacEwen (a fourth-line forward on one of the league's worst teams last season) and Jonah Gadjovich (also a fourth-line forward on one of the league's worst teams). Something is wrong on the farm.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Goalie, Right Defence

## 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1 PICK 15	
ROUND 2 NONE	ROUND 3 PICK 80
ROUND 4 PICK 112	ROUND 5 PICK 144
ROUND 6 PICK 176	ROUND 7 PICK 208



# VEGAS GOLDEN KNIGHTS

## TEAM PROFILE

The Vegas Golden Knights need to start generating better results at the draft, and then they have to let those homegrown players ascend to their lineup without trading them. This team is in far too precarious a salary cap position not to have cost-controlled talent cycling through their roster.

It's early in this franchise's history. The Golden Knights have only been around for five drafts total, and you don't usually see the results from any given class until three or four years after the fact. But it's nonetheless concerning that the only homegrown everyday contributors in their lineup are Nic Hague (a second-round pick in 2017) and Zach Whitecloud (an NCAA free agent).

There should be some help on the way soon. Brendan Brisson just finished a stellar sophomore season at Michigan and scored at nearly a point a game clip in the AHL

to close out the year. Zach Dean is starting to produce results on the scoresheet that reflect his ability. And they have a pair of mid-round pick defencemen in Lukas Cormier and Daniil Chayka trending in the right direction.

Then there's the players that they'll add in this draft. The Golden Knights are without their first-round pick after moving that in the Jack Eichel deal, but they've still got six selections to make on Day 2 with what's left.

It all starts with the 48th overall pick. It's not the best place to be in this draft, but the Golden Knights should be able to find a quality prospect to add to their system all the same. It's hard to imagine a scenario where Danila Yurov falls into this range, but the especially fraught nature of the Russian factor in this year's draft could cause someone like Ivan Miroschnichenko or Gleb Trikozov to fall in their range. That's one way to get a first-round talent without owning a first-round pick.

Otherwise, they'll be looking at players who project as depth pieces or long-term, high-risk, high-reward-type projects. That's hardly the worst thing to get out of a second-round pick. In fact, that's probably a high-end outcome if you look at the data concerning the draft historically.

So, keep your expectations in check if you're a Golden Knights fan. This isn't likely to be the draft that changes the complexion of their prospect pool too significantly. But they just might be able to mine some cost-controlled depth, and even that would be a pretty swell outcome.

### GENERAL MANAGER

Kelly McCrimmon

### SCOUTING STAFF

Scott Luce, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Keith Hendrickson, Amateur Scout
Mike Levine, Dir. of Collegiate Scouting	Anders Johansson, European Scout
Vojtech Kucera, Dir. of European Scouting	Kelly Kisio, Pro Scout
Peter Ahola, European Scout	Jim McKenzie, Pro Scout
Bruno Campese, Amateur Scout	Raphaël Pouliot, Amateur Scout
Erin Ginnell, Amateur Scout	Mike Rosati, Goaltending Scout
Alexander Godynyuk, European Scout	Vince Williams, Pro Scout
Kent Hawley, Amateur Scout	



### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1  
NONE

ROUND 2  
PICK 48

ROUND 3  
PICK 94

ROUND 4  
NONE

ROUND 5  
PICKS 135, 145

ROUND 6  
PICK 177

ROUND 7  
PICK 209

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

If you just forget about the Cody Glass pick, this team has done exceptionally well identifying centre talent in the draft.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

Their track record in Europe leaves an awful lot to be desired. They've invested a ton of draft capital in that neck of the woods, and they have nothing to show for it on their NHL roster.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Right Wing, Left Defence, Goalie



# WASHINGTON CAPITALS



## GENERAL MANAGER

Brian MacLellan

## SCOUTING STAFF

Ross Mahoney,  
Assistant General  
Manager

Peter Ihnacak,  
European Scout

Rich Alger, Scout

Ali Laaouan, Scout

Darrell  
Baumgartner,  
Amateur Scout

Matti Lamberg,  
European Scout

Evan Marble, Scout

Steve Bowman,  
Head Amateur  
Scout

Martin Pouliot, Pro  
Scout

Matt Smith, Scout

Matt Bradley,  
Scout

Bretton Stamler,  
Scout

Danny Brooks,  
Scout

Karl Stewart, Scout

Jeremy Browning,  
Scout

Brian Sutherby, Pro  
Scout

Jason Fitzsimmons,  
Pro Scout

A.J. Toews, Amateur  
Scout

Alan Haworth,  
Scout

Daniel Vukovic,  
Scout

Phil Horner,  
Scout

Mats Weiderstål,  
European Scout

## TEAM PROFILE

The Washington Capitals are in a tough spot. They have an ageing roster that barely qualified for the playoffs this season, and some of their best players are going to miss significant chunks of the next campaign recovering from offseason surgery.

Years of Stanley Cup contention have come at the expense of their system, be it trading picks or prospects, and they don't have enough young talent on the way to weather the storm either. At least, barring some surprises, that would seem to be the case.

It's not like this group can't scout though. On the contrary, this is one of the best, most resourceful amateur departments in the sport. They get a lot done at the draft, often with very little in their war chest. It's just that you can only get so far by outperforming your draft position and volume; there's a limit to how much ground you can cover.

They're tasked with pushing the limits on that front again in this draft, with six picks total, the best of which is their first-rounder, slotted at 20th overall.

It's an interesting spot in the draft, to be sure. They'll be faced with no shortage of worthy options, perhaps even choosing from a surprise faller from the top 10 -- you can count on the draft to produce something along those lines almost annually. Such a player would almost certainly be the best player in their system from the moment they were drafted now that Connor McMichael has graduated, too.

If there's any one part of their system that could use the most help, it's probably on

the wing. Which presents a few interesting candidates to them, should they look to go that route with their first pick. We've got Jagger Firkus, Gleb Trikozov, and Jimmy Snuggerud right in that range, all of which would offer unique skill sets relative to one another but are similarly valuable.

From there, it's on to Day 2, where the Capitals are relatively flush with picks. It would be prudent to maybe take a late-round swing for a goaltender, but that's about it for needs once you get past their deficiencies on the wing. It's not exactly a great year in goal, so emphasis on late-round, too.

It's hard to imagine that the Capitals can stop the bleeding next season or in the ones that follow with their ageing core and limited cap flexibility at this year's draft, but perhaps they can get started on finding the next wave of talent around which to build a contender. And you know what, this Capitals amateur scouting staff just may be able to pull that off.



## WHAT THEY DO WELL

The Capitals have done exceptionally well drafting out of Russia, the Ilya Samsonov pick notwithstanding.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

Credit to the Capitals scouting staff for not hyper fixating on skating, but this system could really use an injection of speed at some point. That's the direction the league is heading in, so they'd be wise to keep up on that front.

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Right Wing, Left Wing, Defence

## 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

ROUND 1  
PICK 20

ROUND 2  
PICK 46

ROUND 3  
PICK 85

ROUND 4  
NONE

ROUND 5  
PICK 149

ROUND 6  
PICK 181

ROUND 7  
PICK 213

# WINNIPEG JETS

## TEAM PROFILE

It's a tough time to be a Winnipeg Jets fan. They just missed the playoffs for the first time since the 2017-18 season, and it sounds like many of their core pieces are already on their way out the door. If this team isn't rebuilding yet, they may well be by this time next year.

The good news, if you're a Jets fan, is that letting general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff and his scouting staff build this team up again through the draft is a pretty exciting prospect. This group has produced pretty damn good results there since the Jets returned to Winnipeg. Everything else? Well, that's a mixed bag, but they've got the draft down pat.

They'll get more than their fair share of opportunities to prove their quality again at this year's draft, with a full complement of picks highlighted at the top by a pair of first-rounders. Their first selection is at 14 overall, at which point they're likely to have at least one top-10 talent (by our reckoning) available to them with all the talk of late risers.



### 2022 DRAFT CAPITAL

**ROUND 1**  
PICKS 14, 30

**ROUND 2**  
PICK 55

**ROUND 3**  
PICK 77

**ROUND 4**  
PICK 99

**ROUND 5**  
NONE

**ROUND 6**  
PICK 175

**ROUND 7**  
PICK 207

With all the chatter concerning the status of Pierre-Luc Dubois and Mark Scheifele's future with the team, one player to keep an eye on in this spot is Frank Nazar. We've rated him as a clear-cut top-five talent in this draft, with some in our staff holding him in even better esteem than Logan Cooley, but the league doesn't seem to share our enthusiasm for the player. If you want a potential franchise centre in that spot, you're not going to have any better options than that.

Alternatively, they could go for a shutdown centre to pair with Cole Perfetti (assuming he can hack it as a centre in the NHL long-term...) and draft Conor Geekie out of their backyard from the Winnipeg Ice.

Whichever player they choose, let's hope it's a centre. We're generally of the mind that you should take the best player available, regardless of one's positional need, but there's just such an apparent hole in that part of their system. It's a premium position and one that their future seems to lack much talent in at present.

After that, knock yourself out elsewhere because it's not like the rest of the Jets system is in solid shape. They've been rated as the 20th- and 18th-ranked systems in the NHL by our scouts' reckoning, and they're going to have to take a few steps up from that spot if they're to start a rebuild in the coming years.

This scouting staff has proven they're up to the task, and they have the ammunition to get things started at this draft. It's going to be an exciting one to follow if you're a Jets fan.

## WHAT THEY DO WELL

Their results when they draft out of the United States have been nothing short of spectacular. They've mined six full-time NHLers (eventually that number will reach seven when Tucker Poolman gets to 200 games) out of 16 picks, meaning that they hit on more than a third of their picks in this region.

## WHAT THEY DO *NOT SO WELL*

Please, we're begging you to stop drafting forwards with shooting as their sole dimension. Sure, scoring goals is the most valuable thing you can do in the sport, but maybe aim for more well-rounded players moving forward,

## SYSTEM NEEDS

Centre, Left Wing, Right Wing



### GENERAL MANAGER

Kevin Cheveldayoff

### SCOUTING STAFF

Mark Hillier, Dir. of Amateur Scouting	Vladimir Havluj, Amateur Scout
Yevgeni Bogdanovich, Dir. of European Scouting	Yanick Lemay, Amateur Scout
Peter Ratchuk, Dir. of Pro Scouting	Drew MacIntyre, Goaltending Scout
Jack Birch, Pro Scout	Brian Renfrew, Amateur Scout
Ryan Caldwell, Pro Scout	Danny Richmond, Pro Scout
Pat Carmichael, Amateur Scout	Scott Robson, Amateur Scout
Jeff Finley, Amateur Scout	Scott Scoville, Amateur Scout
Max Giese, Amateur Scout	Chris Snell, Amateur Scout
Jari Grönstrand, European Scout	Mark White, Amateur Scout



1  
Rank

6  
Skating

6.5  
Shooting

7  
Passing

A  
Grade

6  
Puckhandling

7.5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

1st  
Best Problem Solving Skills

2nd  
Highest Ceiling

1st  
Highest Floor

4th  
Best Vision

4th  
Best Transition Forward

1st  
Best Two-Way Forward

# SHANE WRIGHT

C | KINGSTON FRONTENACS

HEIGHT 6' 0" D.O.B. JAN. 5, 2004  
WEIGHT 198 SHOOTS RIGHT

"I take a lot of pride in doing everything right and being able to play in all situations. Just overall being reliable. Go wherever the coach wants to put me and that's been a strength of my game. Doing everything right. I like the center position and the defensive part of that." - Shane Wright, March 2022

SHADES OF: Patrice Bergeron, Mika Zibanejad

79%	61%	57%	1.94
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	63	32	62	94

## Scouting Report

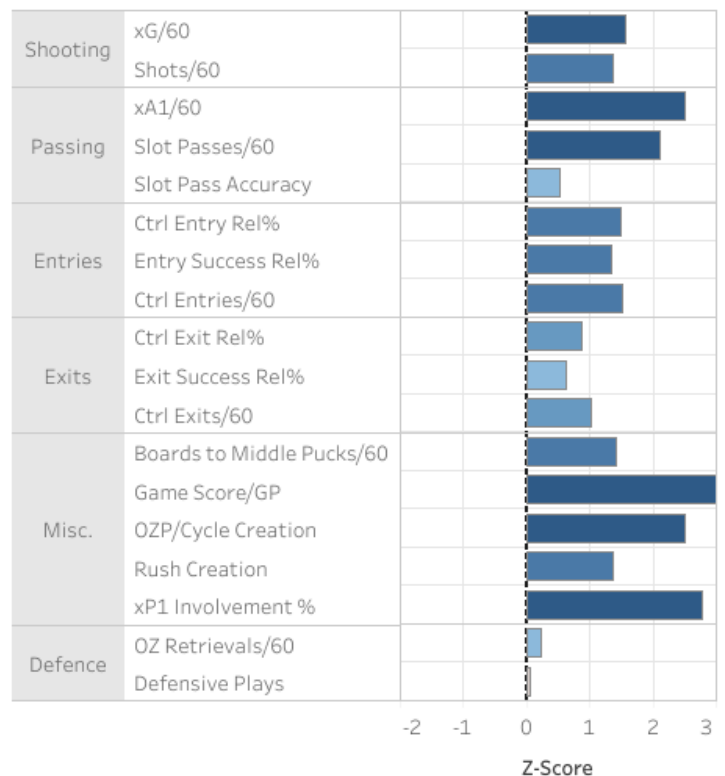
In a draft year shaped by substantial depth rather than overwhelming star power, it's almost fitting that the least exciting option at first overall is the right one. Better still, the Shane Wright one, if you'll allow us that clunky pun.

That Wright would end up in that spot may have seemed like a foregone conclusion a year or two ago, but the gap year that the OHL's lost 2020-21 season forced on Wright (and countless others) left him slow out of the gates. Two months of good-not-great production was enough to make the question of the first overall pick an open one for many in the industry, with new answers emerging first in the form of Logan Cooley and then later in Juraj Slafkovsky.

In time, though, Wright reminded the scouting community of his quality, ending many (not all...) of those conversations emphatically. The 1.15 point per game clip that he ran through October and November turned to 1.36 by the end of the calendar year. From there, it just kept climbing until Wright had amassed 94 points in 63 regular season contests by the season's end, good for a 1.49 point per game clip.

It's still the lowest draft year points per game mark of any first overall pick out of the CHL this side of Rick Nash

Games Tracked: 13 | Minutes Tracked: 236.1  
Data tracked by Mitchell Brown (@MitchLBrown) | 5v5 only





in 2001, but a more selective and perhaps representative sample from December onward gets Wright to 1.63 points per game. That's more than Nico Hischier in 2017 and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins in 2011, for context.

Shifting our focus from the question of how many to how, Wright is this draft's premier play-connector; an on-ice administrator through which his team's offensive and defensive sequences flow.

By constantly surveying the ice, Wright maintains a mental map of his surroundings with a downright topographical level of detail. He knows the position of his teammates like they're a long-established fact rather than a dynamic, changing set of options on the playing field, and moves the puck to them with a matching level of confidence.

Look-off passes, the give-and-go, one- and two-touch passes, reach-adjusted passing -- Wright mastered every one of these tools en route to becoming one of the game's best playmaking centres not currently in the NHL.

Not content to be a one-dimensional scorer, Wright pairs

his cunning as a distributor with a high-level shot (even if it's a little peculiar from a mechanical perspective) that's especially potent off of the pass and some of the best hands in the class. He's the complete package offensively.

We would, of course, feel better about Wright's shot if he used it a little more judiciously rather than settling for low percentage attempts under pressure, but that's a minor quibble for as scalable an offensive toolkit as you'll find in this class.

Then there's his play in the defensive zone. Wright's defensive reads, angles, and support play are beyond reproach. There may not be an Art Ross in his future, but the Frank J. Selke seems well within reach. We don't make the Patrice Bergeron comparison lightly, after all.

All of these factors combined to make Wright the consensus first overall pick for the Elite Prospects scouting staff. You just don't come across many players this polished or this well-rounded at 18-years-old, and that's too much to pass up on if you're holding the first pick in this July's draft.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Kyle Wellwood YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 92%	2 Eric Himelfarb YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 90%	3 Bobby Ryan YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 89%	4 Tyler Seguin YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 88%	5 Stephen Weiss YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 86%
6 Patrick O'Sullivan YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 86%	7 Matt Duchene YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 86%	8 Jeff Skinner YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 85%		

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 12th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

I can see why the lack of urgency in Wright's game would annoy some people. There were moments in this game where Wright could have been of more defensive help. I don't mean that he was, himself, out of position, just that his teammates got beat and he was there, in a position to repair the play for them and didn't take the extra stride. This kind of misstep will have an impact on this series, but they don't change his projection. Many, most even, top-end NHL prospects, who have the hockey sense, significantly improve their motor in the professional game. They just have to and they do. And Wright has shown a capability to put in the effort over the season. The more concerning thing about his game is his inability to create plays, to find solutions to defensive pressure when he doesn't have any good option at first look. It's not something we expect out of most prospects, but the No. 1 overall pick? These kinds of elite players usually find ways to create out of nothing. Wright rarely does. What he can do is link plays all over the ice, position himself well,

protect pucks (he created a breakaway for himself by slipping in front of a defender, cutting him at the hands), use teammates for give-and-goes, anticipate their position (he has almost a sixth sense for them), and control his skating to create space and keep space open for himself. Is it enough to make him the top pick in this draft? Probably yes, but again it's also because no one else has shown a more complete game than him, a creation game that is so advanced that they have to move up ahead of him. I have my doubts with Shane Wright, but I also think that, when it comes the NHL game, when not talking about the unicorns of the game, the Connor McDavid and Auston Matthews, the players who are not good a representation of the game in general, but uber-special, we overestimate the importance of skill, and underestimate the kinds of abilities that Wright can bring. They matter more and Wright has a chance to use his current talents as a platform to develop the manipulation game that would make him a top-end No. 1 centre.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

**Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL**

Wright did the Wright stuff. The off-puck game remains the selling point. But it's not just defence. It's how he uses give-and-gos, off-puck skating, and positioning to obtain and then extend offensive zone time. The early passes that he makes really pop. Where most players try to beat the defender, he simply passes to the open teammate and lets them manage the space. He's probably the best runway manufacturer I've ever seen at this level.

Now, the shooting decisions are a bit concerning. He doesn't manipulate defenders or consistently play off their heels. When he has opportunities to take the inside, he angles his feet towards the net and shoots. There's nothing wrong with low-percentage shots, but he needs to move parallel to the boards or cut inside to move the goaltender – right now, he's shooting based on the goalie, instead of dictating the terms of the exchange.

That will hinder his shooting effectiveness a bit in the NHL. Clean it up, and he's an easy No. 1 centre.

**David St-Louis: March 25th, 2022****Mississauga Steelheads vs Kingston Frontenacs - OHL**

Wright had a lot of occasions to make plays in this game and we saw a bit more of his playmaking potential. He identifies teammates quickly and feeds the puck to them. I also wonder how far his anticipation "extends", as sometimes it seems like he is just throwing pucks to areas, expecting teammates to be there.

There were a few hope plays that were counterbalanced by the other sequences where he leveraged a good opportunity for himself into an even better one for a teammates.

He was still the same off-puck threat, showing an ability to position himself at the right angle, at the right speed to get pucks. He scored. He was left alone in the slot, but also controlled his skating to remain there, free of coverage.

**Mitchell Brown: March 16th, 2022****Kingston Frontenacs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL**

More incredible plays from Wright in this game, including of the coolest give-and-gos I've seen in a while. On an interception, he dropped the puck back between his legs to a teammate, then turned his head to watch the puck carrier while turning over his inside leg, his preferring shooting leg. The puck came back, he fired immediately off the pass. If it wasn't for the block, it was a goal.

Some classic Wright plays, too: slip passes to get teammates with speed in transition, combining off-puck skating with playmaking, and cutting back to wait for better options. Sometimes, he'd benefit from exploding out of his cutback and cutting inside himself, rather than extending the cycle. Still scored off the latter play, however. His shot's better off the pass than when he's winding up and ripping – hands in

front, elbow up, generating downforce, comfortable shooting with his feet and body misaligned. The form will improve and he already has impressive power and control for a shot with such shoulder lean. There's nothing really more to say about Wright. He's one of the most intelligent, scalable prospects we've seen in the past few years.

**Mitchell Brown: February 23rd, 2022****Kingston Frontenacs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL**

This was the standard Wright performance: choosing the best play, but executing in the subtlest way possible. At 5-on-5 alone, he took 10 shots, set up seven more, gained the offensive zone seven times, and pickpocketed the opposition six times. There were a couple of ways he could've improved the looks he created: cutting inside earlier to get a better angle on his shot and delaying a second longer before passing. But nothing major. This was a strong performance, and a much more aggressive one than normal. Combination of off- and on-puck skills created two dominant shifts, where he created multiple looks as the puck flowed through him every other touch. Sometimes, Wright needs to keep the puck on his stick and make it happen on his own. But he plays a highly projectable, adaptable game with some many details that it's tough to see him becoming anything less than a top-six forward.

**David St-Louis: February 12th, 2022****Mississauga Steelheads vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL**

This was one of the better performances I've seen from Shane Wright. Again, I didn't necessarily see any kind of dynamic ability from him, but he got rewarded for his style of game. He created space for himself by controlling his speed off the rush, linked plays together (give-and-goes), and reloaded above the play, making it hard for the opposition to organize a clean attack, especially at the end of the game when Kingston was leading. Puck management can improve (forced passes, too slow on the execution at times), but also some nice, quick, and precise feeds to set up others. This is the game to watch if you want to understand Wright's strengths and weaknesses. It reassures me a bit about his potential.

**Lauren Kelly: February 12th, 2022****Mississauga Steelheads vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL**

I think this was the strongest viewing I've had of Wright all season. Yes, he wasn't on the line that contributed most of the offence tonight, but he still had a very respectable four points (and all primary points, too). Had a great feed on the opening goal, where his shot was looking for the tip the whole way. There was an aggression to his play that I hadn't seen before prior to tonight and it nearly resulted in several breakaways because he was pressuring puck carriers and stealing pucks off of them.

## Shane Wright 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 8 || Base XLS: 79% || Impact XLS: 73% || XPR: 57.9 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



Another sequence he stickhandled through three Steelheads players with another player draped on top of him, and he still managed to get a high velocity shot off. Buried the rebound on the doorstep for Kingston's fourth goal, and then had two solid assists in the seventh and eighth goals to cap off his night. His positioning all game long was solid, his awareness on the ice continues to impress and he was making smart defensive reads as well. I'm hopeful that this level of play can continue from him and silence his (many) detractors, because this is exactly what I was hoping to see from him.

**David St-Louis:** February 9th, 2022

Peterborough Petes vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Wright showed his handling skills in tight spaces a bit more in this game, but he's still play-shy, missing occasions to cut inside, attack the net, use his physical potential and physical skills (which are there). He lacked a bit of urgency to repair defensive mistakes. He has the right ideas but can't execute sometimes, too. The story continues with Wright. I don't see any real improvement in his game since the start of the season and the low-pace is starting to annoy me. He could crush teams and he doesn't do it. I'm starting to have some hockey sense doubts, too, with the infrequent scanning and the same patterns repeated every shift.

**David St-Louis:** February 3rd, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

I still don't know what to make of Wright's shot. I really don't like his form, but maybe it's a good one, a potentially effective one against NHL netminders and I'm just not seeing it. There were more instances of manipulation from Wright in this game, off the rush and in the offensive zone, look-offs and weight shift fakes. I'm always surprised at how little Wright scans, like he always has the game in his mind already and he knows where teammates are. It's probably a good sign as he's still aware. One thing he has to work on: cutting in the space of defenders to attack the slot; he doesn't see his occasions to do it or chooses to not do it.

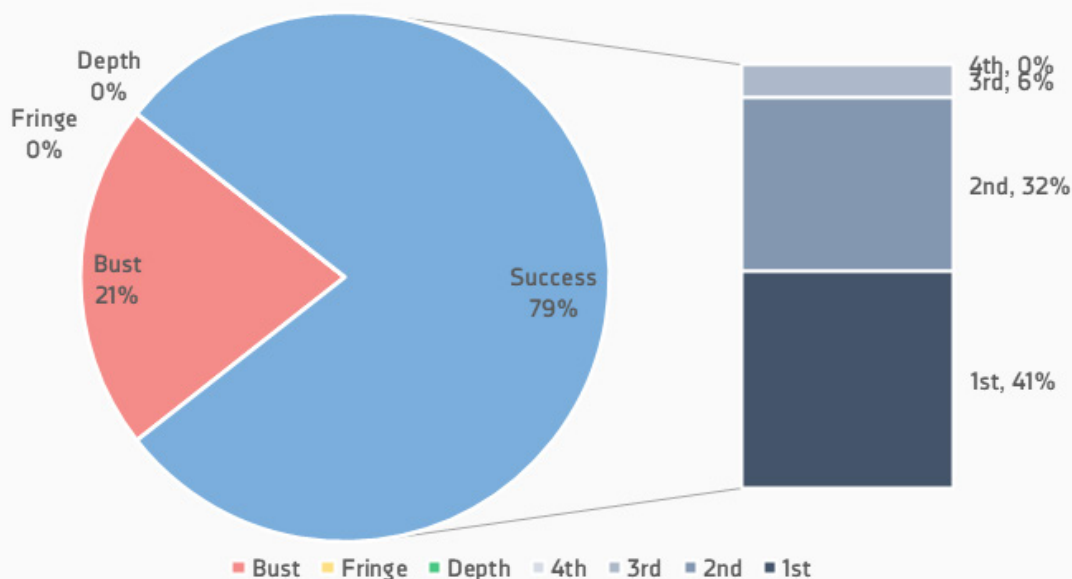
**Lauren Kelly:** February 3rd, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Wright's line was dominant all game long, and their efforts were finally rewarded with Wright's goal in the second period. It almost looked like he intentionally adjusted the power and velocity of his release to fool the goalie (sort of like a changeup pitch in baseball?). When Wright would rush the puck up the ice, he had a tendency to drive wide and then pass off, but when he didn't, he would skate straight up the middle and I liked that he wasn't afraid to act as the screen on some shifts.

## Shane Wright 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



His puckhandling and awareness were far beyond pretty much everyone on the ice, he was stealing pucks, pressuring puck carriers, forcing turnovers, creating shorthanded chances (including a give-and-go one-timer in the slot he got off on one knee). He picked up a secondary assist on Kingston's second goal and probably could have scored more than once, too (he had four shots on goal).

**Mitchell Brown:** January 28th, 2022

Oshawa Generals vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

This was the perfect game to summarize Wright's season thus far: impressive, but could've been better. His strengths remain the off-puck game: finding ways to get open in every possible scenario, supporting the puck perfectly, and leveraging those two abilities to link defensive stops into offensive chances. Subtle body positioning plays like picks and nondescript off-puck stick lifts to disrupt defenders and create space for his teammates. Fast release, even for inside leg wrister standards, but it comes at the expense of actual power on the shot. And without diversifying the timing of his release (like how Elias Pettersson does), he'll struggle to make that shot work consistently in the NHL. Not a big deal.

But, I question Wright's effectiveness as a playmaker at times. He's always in the right position to make the next play, and he's clearly a skilled down-low playmaking. But, he fails to identify passes to the trailer and he unnecessarily delays with possession on breakouts, but doesn't show that same desire to delay in the offensive end. The most concerning sequence was a normal rush: Wright obtained the puck with a teammate in the slot and in front of him on the strong side

rushing the net. He looked away then threw a pass into the slot - but no one was there. That also highlighted the poor off-puck skating of his linemates, a consistent theme, but a high-level playmaker manipulates the nearest defender to hit the through pass. Will this even really matter in the NHL, a league where players finish their routes? Probably not. His road to a top-six C role in the NHL might as well be an empty 10-lane highway. Could be a 1C? Absolutely, but he'll need to add a better delay game, diversify his shot, and deviate from the script more often.

**David St-Louis:** January 27th, 2022

Peterborough Petes vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Wright's off-puck game is still the best part of it. He makes runs to get himself open, slows down, and also moves to areas purposely to drag defenders away from the path of teammates; he's another football player, just like Matvei Michkov, except not as smart or skilled. His spacing is great all over the ice. Defensively, he doesn't overextend, but waits for the right moment to engage, to aggressively go into battle. In breakouts, he draws the right arc to give the largest passing windows to teammates, and he in transition, he looks to involve teammates at every occasion. Unfortunately, this reduces the pace of his game a bit too much.

He was generally low-paced in this game, a bit nonchalant again. We know that motor is the thing that improves the most in prospects in general, so I'm not too worried, but still, a little more energy would go a long way sometimes, without killing his "spider" mentality. With the puck, he passes quickly. He's aware of the next play, of the position of his teammates.

He can't really open lanes and his retrievals have to improve. He fails his escapes because he doesn't prepare them well enough. Some creative plays, like a lob net-front when too far from the net and no clear lane to fire. The lob deflected, just like he intended, and luckily, ended up behind the goalie. I've never seen a player do that.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

Solid, but a wildly inefficient performance from Wright. Failed to connect on a bunch of passes to the inside lane, but it was the ones that he failed to identify altogether that were more concerning. He kept the puck on his backhand to throw a puck into the slot when he should've either move it to the forehand first or gone for a spin. Passed into areas where teammates weren't (and yes, his teammates probably should've been in those areas). Later on, he missed a pass on the backhand to the inside to extend the cycle needlessly. Forced passes through a defenders, and several times, took low percentage shots instead of cutting inside, delaying, or trying to do, well, anything else. There was the usual great stuff from Wright: the off-puck offence, the defence, the ability to get pucks off the boards in transition. And it's easy to see how his game will scale to the NHL. But will he be a true play-driving 1C? Not sure anymore.

**David St-Louis:** January 21th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

The fan base of the team that drafts Shane Wright first overall will be disappointed. There is no flash to his game, no dynamism, no pace, no motor, no significantly high-end technical ability, nothing really interesting to grab on to, except the weird shot. Wright might be effective in the NHL, even next year (I doubt it), and he might become a good second-line center due to his habits, but he won't contribute to making the sports more exciting, to give hope to a fan base, or fuel their imagination. He is quiet. Not much more to add about this performance. He made the good play most of the time; I like the non-forced plays and the high delays when he has nothing open. He was there in the right position. He played defence, but had one really weird angle on a close-out that cost a goal. I mean, get it. I get him. I'm just disappointed that there is not more growth in his game and I'm really checking to see if I'm not keeping him first overall based on imagnated stuff, based on my love of the off-puck offensive game (which he is great at), something that I'm not sure holds as much value as I want in the NHL.

**David St-Louis:** January 18th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

More of the same. Most of Wright's plays failed in this

one, but he faced overwhelming pressure most of the time. His line-mates aren't all that good at drawing defenders to themselves, which makes it very hard for Wright to sneak in open areas. He showed some interesting rush patterns, he's clever about his movements, but his wall-play needs work. He can't seal pucks or shake defenders all that well at the moment, but you see the start of a good technique (tries to cut at the hands, turns back...). With the puck, Wright uses a lot of the same patterns in games. The lack of creativity is a bit concerning.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 14th, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

This was Wright's first game back in Kingston in over a month, and his first since returning from the World Juniors. He looked rusty. Bobbled a couple of passes early on, and his timing on set plays was just off. He settled in a little more as the game continued, with strong reads off the boards, just pure dominance with puck protection and control on a few sequences where he was impossible to push off the puck or strip possession of. On one instance he stickhandled through the offensive zone with a player on top of him without losing possession, drawing more defenders to him to get his linemates open before passing off.

For what might be the first time this season, Wright was driving play in this game, whether it was carrying the puck over the blueline on zone entries or breaking the puck out of his own end. He was constantly on the puck in the offensive zone and showed off some beautiful vision on passes.

It's unfortunate it didn't end up resulting in any production (the score was woefully lopsided in Sudbury's favour by the end), but this was exactly the kind of performance I was hoping to see from Wright after a couple of quiet games at the World Juniors.

**David St-Louis:** December 26th, 2021

Czechia vs. Canada - WJC-20

A quiet game from Wright. Once again, he isn't showing anything exceptional in terms of creation abilities, but he is the same possession-driving, supportive forward. He constantly cuts opponents at the hands to seal possession.

I like how that is first goal in puck races. He doesn't gun for the loose disc; he adapts his speed to slip in front of opponents and really make sure he gets first touch. Otherwise, he made a couple of crafty passes through opponents and drove the net. I would have liked him to be a little more fierce in those drives, to really battle for positioning.

**David St-Louis:** December 5th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

The effort, the engagement, and urgency were a bit better

in this game, but he wasn't scanning as much as I remember defensively and he was not pressing checks as fast as he could. His game really lacks the intensity that makes good shutdown players. I do like his engaging habits though, his desire to establish body positioning, cut opponents at the hands, the way he leads with his stick in battles. He definitely understands the positioning and gap game. It's just a matter of increasing the motor to go along with it all...Not sure it's really in his nature.

Wright is a passive game reader, but the intensity will be drilled into him by a couple of coaches at the higher levels. Wright also scored a couple of points off some clever passing plays. He knows where the puck has to move next and how to move to open the lane and when to feed it. His timing, deception, and precision as a passer are some of the best in the draft. I'm mostly disappointed in my viewings of him overall this season, however. I expected more.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 2nd, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

Wright was impressive this game, probably the best player in this game. He showed more creativity in the NZ than in previous viewings, beating defenders before even engaging with them through eye deception, weight shifts, and changes of pace. In the NZ, he consistently attacks the inside and changes lanes to get his teammates involved. The shot's one of his many quirks. Shows a strong preference for shooting off his inside leg, almost exclusively by dropping his shoulders over top of his stick. He's very deceptive within that posture – he fires out of quick stickhandles, keeps his blade closed, and uses his hand positioning (unique: very close to his body while setting up the shot, then suddenly drives both hands forward and pulls back; in full speed it almost looks like he's firing from his hip) to mask his release. It's powerful and he has a shocking amount of control over his shot, in a posture that usually reduces both.

Rarely shoots off his outside leg and when he does, it's weak and requires a lengthy set up because he defaults to tilting his shoulders for downforce instead of kicking out his rear leg. Wright's involved so involved because of his combining of scoring movements, supporting reads, and rate of threat/option identification. He's an elite connector who doesn't force many plays, but it often feels like he's playing below his actual skill level. He had opportunities to cut inside in the OZ and didn't take them. He didn't look for teammates through layers, preferring to make the simple pass. Wright clearly has 1C upside, but I don't see him as an elite player.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 28th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Just because Wright isn't producing doesn't mean he's

struggling or even under-achieving. He may not have picked up any points in this game (and took a holding penalty), but Wright was still finding space, connecting plays with his teammates, closing off players from pucks, and winning key faceoffs. When Wright senses a puck carrier's hesitation, he's able to strip them quite easily and turn play up the other way immediately, and he did it multiple times in this game. He and Ludwinski were back on the same line for parts of this game (likely with multiple teammates at the Capital City Challenge, the team is trying different combinations to find something that works), and I thought that they looked better on separate lines than together. They didn't seem to have much chemistry together and sometimes got in each others' way on the ice. Still Wright seemed to have no problem taking control of the puck himself and firing shots (some of which went wide, two registered as shots on goal). His off-puck play was especially impressive in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Additional viewings of Wright seem to generate more questions than they answer. He has several obvious high-end prospect details: the off-puck movement and timing, the puck protection, the quick-possession playmaking and rapid option ID'ing, and the well-timed defensive reads. This was a more aggressive game from Wright than I've seen this season, looking to beat players with individual skill, attacking the inside, and winning battles through assertiveness over positioning. There were several awful plays: several breakout passes to no one (failure to scan), a failed deke in the NZ (poor set up), and missed defensive opportunities. He scored with a wicked inside leg wrister – significant lean (bad) but his control of the puck and quickness of his hands inside the shot seem to defy most shooting conventions.

Outside leg shoot looked rough. While he kicks out his back leg, the downforce comes from the dropping of his chest and angling of his hips towards the puck – limiting power, control, and, well, the shot's effectiveness. Nonetheless, he transitions from crossovers and strides into the shot quickly, far faster than the average player. Passed for deflections on the PP, but gets too reliant on the same play to the net (still resulted in 2 goals tonight). Missed some better passing opportunities at 5-on-5, and passed when he should've extended possession. He'll raise his level to his teammates around him (as off-puck, exchange-focused players often do), but the key to Wright reaching another level will be how much more daring he gets with the puck. He often has the right set-up to put himself in a favourable position (give-and-go, delay with the puck), but doesn't make the best play with the advantage he just created.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 13th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Wright started off slow at the beginning but got a lot better as the game wore on. He had a pretty bad giveaway early trying to clear the puck that went across the ice to an opposing player. He also got walked around by DelBelBelluz on the first goal against. That seemed to wake him up a bit, because he was a lot stronger afterwards. There were several instances where he was stickchecking in the offensive zone and forced turnovers, and another great steal in the neutral zone to get off a shorthanded scoring chance. Wright showed off some good stickhandling under pressure and was creating in transition, including a nice pass to Hache for the 3-3 goal. He was dominant in overtime, showing off great passes with more space, had a good backcheck on Hardie to prevent a scoring chance, and was stopped on the backhand at the end of the extra frame before scoring the shootout winner.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 7th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

Watching Shane Wright on video really doesn't do justice to how truly good he is. The details of his game, which were already quite impressive, stood out even more in person. He was actually really elusive in the offensive zone in this game - you'd think he'd draw most of the attention on the ice, but he was able to find the holes in the offensive zone to create scoring chances, and it paid off with four assists in this one. Wright's vision is incredible to watch - he was finding teammates passes through skates, and if there wasn't an option to pass then he was firing high-danger shots himself (and if the Petes goalie hadn't been so good in the first half of the game maybe he would've scored on one of his seven shots on goal).

His defensive play was equally solid; he read plays well and was never out of position or at fault on goals against. The one thing to note was a slowish backcheck - where someone like Paul Ludwinski is charging back to his own end like there's no tomorrow, Wright was a lot more casual and calm in his retreat back to his own end. But where that behaviour would seem questionable for other prospects, Wright's slow pace seemed intentional and he was never too far behind the play for it to become a problem.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 3rd, 2021

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Wright looked like more of a connector than a true creator in this game. An elite connector, mind you. He delivers the puck to his teammates at the right time in the right area. Deceives, but never too much, timing his passes immediately with the reaction of the defender.

Never seems rushed into making decisions. Fills space at the right times -- a rare player who consistently occupies dangerous

space accessible with an easy pass for his teammates. The shot's weird but explosive, generating downforce by dropping his shoulder over his inside leg instead of generating force with the distance between his feet.

His hands are usually very tight to the body, but he pushes them forward and back inside extremely fast during the release -- weird quirk. He wasn't particularly interested in engaging defensively this game, but was strong in support as usual.

Biggest issue is his lack of dynamic qualities. Several times, he could've changed pace to pull in defenders, and then find the open teammate. Instead, he just dumped the puck in. Sometimes, he had easy options but was so locked into playing a simple game that he failed to spot them altogether. I question the ultimate play-driving upside here, but he looks like a 1C who thrives with a pair of creative linemates.

**J.D. Burke:** October 22nd, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

Wright managed to play as unremarkable a game of hockey as I've seen from the year's prohibitive favourite for the No. 1 overall pick in the midst of a commanding 6-1 victory over the Petes. He didn't register a single point, only had two shots on goal, and left with an even goal differential in about 14 minutes of mostly toothless hockey. The skill level is undeniable, and there were flashes. Skated into numbers on one entry into the offensive zone, then violently shifted his weight outside to create a shooting lane and must've left three defenders in his dust in the process. Didn't really make much of that opportunity, though. Drew a penalty by keeping his feet moving going for a puck retrieval. His defensive work in this contest was unbelievably strong. Great reads, perfectly timed interventions, and a high work rate. It's only one game, but the lack of any creativity here left a bit of a bad taste in my mouth. Then again, only one game.

**David St-Louis:** October 10th, 2021

Ottawa 67s vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Wright understands the game at a deeper level than everyone else on the ice. He doesn't rush himself if not needed and doesn't fall behind the play. He's right where he needs to be most of the time, if not all the time. He foresees the formation of pockets of space and calculates how the play is likely to unfold. He is right more often in those guesses than most. Defensively, he is there. Perfect positioning, above the puck, in support. He connects plays all over the ice. With the puck, he doesn't force passes if something is not open; he knows his options ahead and behind him. And he understands game concept like changes of side and turning feet to create space for the attack and teammates. His pace is medium, but like I said, it is probably a consequence of not having to rush himself. I still want more out of him. He failed most of his

one-on-one in this game, lacking the manipulative skills in those situations that usually characterize number one overall picks. He didn't create lanes for shots, but fired at shin pads. I want to see more dynamic qualities. Not sure they are needed to make him an NHL No. 1 C, as teammates could fill that gap, just like Patrice Bergeron (Rachel Doerrie's comparison and a fitting one for me) receives creative help from Marchand and Pastrnak.

**EP Rinkside Staff:** October 10th, 2021

Ottawa 67s vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Tonight was a shining example of why Wright will be successful at the next level. Fatigue was clearly an issue given 3 games in 2.5 days, and his details were spot on. He wasn't offensively great, but defensively, he was top notch. He consistently is in the right spots to support the puck all over the ice, made excellent plays to jump start the breakout and won a lot of puck battles by getting low and digging the puck out to move to a teammate. When his defenceman turned the puck over, he made a diving play to break up what was a 2on0 in his own end. Those are the types of things that win games and his details on the defensive side stood out. Offensively, he generated 5 scoring chances, 3 in the third period - including a great release off the post. On the PP, he used good speed to beat the penalty killer to the outside and get a chance off the rush. He scored right at the net front while falling down and managed to get his stick free through 2 bodies and the goalie - impressive. He set up chances for his teammates as well, with his line leading the way creating 11 chances. Overall, a good two-way showing, which I expect will lead to more crooked numbers on the scoresheet.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 10th, 2021

Ottawa 67s vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Fatigue seemed to be an issue in this game, not just for Wright but for the Frontenacs as a whole (understandable given this was their third game in three nights). Wright still landed on the scoresheet with a goal, managing to get off a one-timer at the top of the crease while he was falling.

He was still trying to set up teammates when he did have the puck, but either they couldn't receive them properly, or his passes were intercepted (the 67s definitely learned from the season opener because they were much more effective at shutting down Kingston's offence). He drew opponents to him when he had the puck and maintained control. Wright was still effective and honestly quite impressive off the puck, though. He was a fierce competitor in puck battles, using both his stick to free the puck and body to pin others to the boards. He used his stick to force turnovers, and came back

to support the play when it was necessary.

As a penalty killer, he used an active stick and was positionally sound, disrupted passes and blocked shots. This was a really solid showing for Wright as far as his defensive contributions and strengths go.


**Lauren Kelly:** October 8th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Ottawa 67s - OHL

Wright's on-ice habits are just so mature - he's constantly active in the neutral zone, looking to force turnovers. He shoulder checks in the defensive zone and comes back deep to help his defensemen - his second assist in this game came from an outlet pass where he was below the hash marks in his own end. Wright senses openings and opportunities far before they appear. He's always the last forward into the offensive zone if he doesn't have the puck, in case play gets turned over, but he's also unafraid to drive to the net without the puck if he's confident his teammates will maintain possession. His lone goal in this game was just a wicked snipe, and he had all the time in the world to adjust his angle and load up to shoot. Having Wright on the ice is almost like having a third defenseman on the ice at times, especially when it comes to breakouts. If there's a defenseman who's jumped up or just out of position, Wright will recognize that and come back to help fill that open gap on the ice. Even as the game grew out of reach, Wright never took his foot off the gas pedal. His ability to maintain control of the puck in such small spaces and evade defenders is quite impressive.

**David St-Louis:** October 8th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Ottawa 67s - OHL

I don't think I've ever seen such an elite Junior player so willing to include his teammates in the attack. Wright always looks for the one-touch plays, the give-and-gos, the drop passes...He builds scoring chances as a team. His skills and approach to the game are quite complementary. He is a passer first and foremost in transition and an off-puck threat/shooter in the offensive zone. I don't think he will ever be a "carry" type of player in the NHL due to his lack of dynamic qualities (although his tools project as quite above-average), but he will fit any combination of lines and blend with high-skill teammates, higher-event ones well. One surprising element: the lack of scanning. Wright's shoulder-checking rate is quite low. He anticipates the game so well that sometimes it doesn't matter and the low head movement give him deceptive qualities, but still. I think he will benefit from even more awareness. He made a couple bad decisions this game because his mental map of the ice wasn't updated properly. His effort on a few plays was also questionable, but it's early in the season. 





2  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

6.5  
Shooting

6.5  
Passing

A  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

6.5  
Hockey Sense

7.5  
Physical

5th  
Highest Ceiling

2nd  
Highest Floor

1st  
Best Neutral Zone Defender

3rd  
Hardest Hitter

4th  
Best Transition Defenceman

3rd  
Best Offensive Defenceman

1st  
Best Defensive Defenceman

# DAVID JIŘÍČEK

D | HC PLZEŇ

HEIGHT 6' 3"

D.O.B. NOV. 28, 2003

WEIGHT 190

SHOOTS RIGHT

"The creativity with the puck and the shot are both really high-end. I don't know if he defends well enough to be a top pairing defenceman, but he's still the best defenceman in this class." - Eastern Conference executive, May 2022

SHADES OF: Moritz Seider

12%

2022 XLS

8%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

0%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

1.92

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
Czechia	29	5	6	11
WC	3	1	1	2

## Scouting Report

David Jiříček finishes the year as the highest-ranked defenceman for Elite Prospects after a year-long dogfight with Šimon Nemeč for the distinction.

This endorsement, of course, marks something of a departure from the industry consensus, but it's a position we've arrived at confidently. The more eyes our group set on Jiříček, the more we came to admire the way he plied his trade. There were even some in our ranks who were so bold as to float the possibility of Jiříček at No. 1 overall.

The book on Jiříček is a tome at this stage. He's already played two full years of professional hockey in the Czech Extraliga with HC Plzeň, and he has a wealth of international experience that would be the envy of most 10-year NHL veterans. We're talking about close to 10 separate appearances in his country's colours the last two seasons, including a pair of trips to the World Juniors and a tour on the Czech blue line at this year's World Hockey Championship.

And for the most part, Jiříček handled each assignment admirably. His creativity at the offensive blue line, coupled with a constant drive to push the boundaries of his skill set, made him this draft's most compelling offensive defenceman.

Not content to unleash his cannon of a slap shot from

the furthest recesses of the offensive zone, Jiříček sought to create advantages in the attacking third with every touch. He would use the threat of his shot to open up passing lanes or skate into space to draw in defenders before sending the puck elsewhere. With natural agility and elusiveness as a skater, some skill as a handler, and an understanding of how to leverage his 6-foot-3 frame to protect the puck, there isn't any reason we can't expect this to continue to at least some degree in the NHL.

Now, there is some room for improvement there. Jiříček doesn't settle for low percentage shots at the point, but that doesn't mean that the Czech blueliner hasn't stepped into a few attempts that go off of a defender's shinpads and escape his team's possession from time to time. His handling mechanics have proven inconsistent this season, too.

The big question here, though, is whether an NHL coach will give Jiříček the freedom to play his sometimes freewheeling style. It's going to play a critical role in determining his developmental arc. Time will tell.

There needn't be any concern over whether Jiříček's going to be able to hang in a high leverage role at the NHL level, though. There's a durable defensive foundation in place that

will carry him to a top-four role at a bare minimum, even if his play with the puck doesn't come along for the ride.

The 18-year-old Czech blueliner plays a tight gap through the neutral zone, deploys sound footwork defending the blue line, and contains exceptionally well in body-on-body defensive scenarios. Few players in this draft can match Jiříček as a play-stopper.

You need to be able to move the puck in the contemporary NHL, and Jiříček is up to that task, too. You'd like to see a

little more scanning pre-touch on defensive zone retrievals, and maybe a little more patience with the puck sometimes, but we still view his transition game as an NHL-level part of his profile.

In Jiříček you're looking at a 6-foot-3, right-shot defenceman who can do just about everything at a low-end top-pairing level through the height of his career, and that's a hell of a return on one's investment at the top of the draft.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 15th, 2022

Sweden vs. Czechia - World Hockey Championships

One thing is for sure, Jiříček is not intimidated by the competition here. He constantly tries plays, even more than with his home club, pulling many of them by the skin of his teeth. The skating grade is going down to a 5 for me, an average grade, but there is still an innate quickness and an ability to transfer momentum laterally that is enough to support to his offensive game, especially as he develops his manipulation. His timing and deception is getting better and so are his activations. His plays still have some awkwardness, but I'm sure it will go away when he settles into a structure and knows what to expect and what he can and can't do.

**Lassi Alanen:** May 14th, 2022

Great Britain vs. Czechia - World Hockey Championships

Jiříček's start to his first career World Hockey Championships game was brutal. He turned the puck over at the point by shooting it to a block, resulting in a breakaway against. In the second shift, he turned it over at the point yet again by mishandling the incoming puck - yet another breakaway for the opposition. The first period overall was rather bad, including some other defensive misreads. Things started to pick up in the second half. Jiříček scored his first career World Championship goal with a booming one-timer on power play. He's going to be a very legit shooting threat at the next level. His breakouts were mostly good, simple yet effective puck-moving by passing. His handling looked a bit awkward at times, which has been a trend with him. His innate quickness and long reach do allow him to recover in most situations, though.

**David St-Louis:** May 14th, 2022

Great Britain vs. Czechia - World Hockey Championships

Shaky first few minutes where he received pucks at the blue line and promptly turned them over, which forced him to skate back, which showed some of the mechanical problems with his skating (high-stance, incomplete extensions..). But, his performance picked up massively as the game went on. Still the same aggressive defender who shadows and moves

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Ondrej Nemeč

YEAR: 2002

SIMILARITY: 85%

2 Radim Ostrčil

YEAR: 2007

SIMILARITY: 65%

3 Ladislav Smid

YEAR: 2004

SIMILARITY: 61%

4 Petr Horava

YEAR: 2004

SIMILARITY: 58%

5 Petr Puncochar

YEAR: 2002

SIMILARITY: 58%

6 Michal Barinka

YEAR: 2003

SIMILARITY: 56%

pro-actively on check, who supports his partner pro-actively, too (moves ahead of the play in pockets to give passing options). He found solutions to forecheck pressure and showed some creativity offensively; good decisions with the puck, passing it instead of firing it mindlessly on net. He has a great shot, however: He attacks space to use it and there is a lot of power behind the release, both of his wrist-shot and slap-shot. He scored in this game. An all-around pretty good showing from him for his first game. We have to remember that Jiricek was off the ice for months. The skating is a bit worrying, however. I will monitor it.

**David St-Louis:** May 8th, 2022

Switzerland vs. Czechia - EHT

The skating, with that high camera, becomes a bit more worrisome. Jiricek gets around; he has agility and quickness and a high stride-rate, but the straight forward and backward skating poses problem, a bit. It could improve, as of it just comes down to a bit more flexion and completing strides. Otherwise, the rest of the game is there, offensively and defensively. The transition game shines especially: fast processing of forecheck and options, knows where to look for options, urgency in puck movements, can stretch pucks, slip or sauce pucks, adapt to plays (seems to hold these multiple options in his head)...He communicates with teammates defensively and is pro-active. He also activates ahead of the play. Pace, hockey sense, aggressiveness, puck-moving abilities...A lot to like even if it's not all clean right now.

**Lassi Alanen:** May 1st, 2022

Austria vs. Czechia - EHT

A lot of power play time for Jiříček in this one. His shot from the point is real cannon, once again scoring with a low-to-high one-timer near the point. He's not the most creative passer on PP and could benefit from more lateral movement and deception, but he still gets the job done pretty well. There were some shaky moments early on: a pretty telegraphed d-to-d pass, gets intercepted and results in decent chance against. Another similar turnover a few shifts later. Improved as the game progressed, though, showing more carefulness with his puck management. The activation at 5-on-5 was still there in the few shifts he played, received a good pass to the slot after a great sequence but whiffed on the shot. Good communication on rush defence with his defence partner.

**Lassi Alanen:** April 30th, 2022

Sweden vs. Czechia - EHT

Jiříček's looking very promising considering how much time he missed with an injury. He's still a premier playkiller who utilizes his mobility, reach and physicality to create routine stops at the blue line. He also made some good pinches in the OZ and even turned those stops into passes to dangerous areas. Sure, Jiricek's execution is not super consistent, but the ideas and the willingness to try to make plays is there. His transition game looked a bit better, too, at least compared to some of my league viewings. Scored with a booming one-timer from the point on PP.

**Cam Robinson:** April 28th, 2022

Finland vs Czechia - EHT

All in all, this was a nice performance from Jiříček. He wasn't shy at all to play his game. Very active defensively - using his stick, tying up bodies, engaging physically, clearing the net front, and getting out high to block shots. He jumped up into transition when the opportunity presented itself and even hung around to cycle on one shift and walked out and sent a grade A pass cross-slot that should've been a tap in. On the PP, he was fairly stagnant at the top of the umbrella, but did get open to blast big one-timers. One led to a rebound goal that was called back. Really impressive outing at this level especially considering all of the time he missed.

**Marek Novotný:** April 15th, 2022

Czechia vs. Germany - Friendly game

The second match was not so good for Jiříček, but it is true that the match the next day must have been difficult after a long break. He was not very involved in the offense, which was demonstrated by only one shot compared to the five he

took the day before. Jiricek worked mainly defensively, had no problem clearing the defensive zone, and under pressure from forecheckers he was able to bring calm even in a very difficult situation. He used his range again in battles for loose pucks or battles along the boards. His constant scanning minimized the danger in the defensive zone, which was his biggest strength in this game. Coach Jalonen also trusted him in the final minutes to try to equalize and control the blue line to keep the puck alive.

**Marek Novotný:** April 14th, 2022

Czechia vs. Germany - Friendly game

Jiříček came back after a long break and immediately played a friendly double-header against Germany. He was in the third line but was part of the PP unit. He was great in this game, despite such a long break he was visible, very aggressive in the offensive zone, where he shot very dangerously from the blue line. His movement and puck control was effective, he projected deceptiveness in his game and even took the puck deep into the offensive zone and tried to flip it into the crease area. Aside from the assist he notched during the power play, he came close to scoring a goal, but only hit the crossbar. Jiricek also took care of the work in the defensive zone, he was physical and exiting the zone was not a problem for him thanks to skating or accurate passing. It was a very successful return.

**David St-Louis:** December 26th, 2021

Czechia vs. Canada - WJC-20

What a performance. It's too bad Jiříček got injured in the second period because he was already playing like a tournament veteran in his first few minutes. His net-front defence could have improved (but we know this will be a strength of his later in his career as he has both the size and the physicality) and some of his passes were a bit risky, but besides that, I saw everything I love about the defenceman: offensive activations, forecheck evasions, passes through opponents, aggressive neutral-zone pinches and gapping, physicality, sealing mechanics and awareness on retrievals. Jiricek was engaged in the game and performed very well against a difficult Canadian team.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 26th, 2021

Czechia vs. Canada - WJC-20

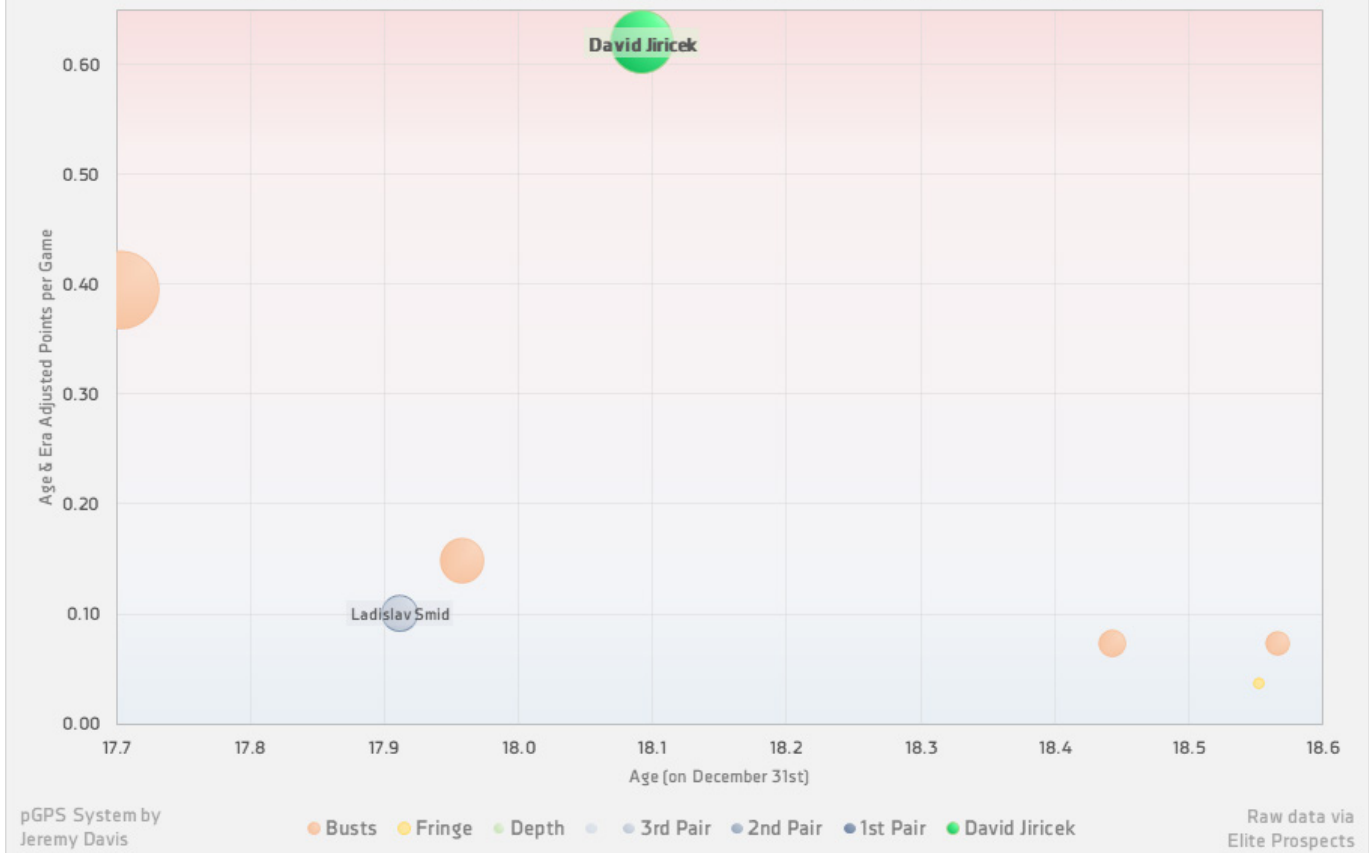
Jiříček was injured half-way through the game and ended up missing the rest, but he was still one of his team's best players. Some difficulty on exits, no doubt. But he got hammered once, saw the forechecker coming for a second round, and still made a clean exit and took the hit instead

## David Jiricek 2021-22 Czech pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 6 || Base XLS: 12% || Impact XLS: 0% || XPR: 11.2 || Drafted Pct: 83%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



of panicking.

He continually stepped up and looked for opportunities to engage, perhaps a bit recklessly. Mostly strong, tight gap control especially after the red line, which he used to force dump-ins. Grabbed a fair of clean steals with well-timed poke checks with no over-extending. As usual, activation, passing, pushing pucks to the inside lane – and chaos. He lacks major refinement, but the aggression, confidence, and skills make it worth the investment. He has top-pairing upside, especially if he goes to a team that really focuses on skill development and space-reading.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 12th, 2021

Ocelari Trinec - HC Plzen - Extraliga

Jiríček played a lot in this one, being used a lot on the penalty kill. Really liked his defensive game. He covers ground so quickly due to his athleticism, good quickness for his size and his long reach. Made a very good block on a 3-on-2 situation where just few players could have been quick and active enough to pursue it. Made another strong defensive read earlier, shoulder checking quickly to identify his man and quickly getting in the way of the pass for an interception. A bit overly aggressive in one pinching sequence, but mostly played fine in the offensive zone and neutral zone without the puck. Breakouts were a bit of an issue. The opposition

played a lot of passive neutral zone trap and he could just bring the puck near the defensive zone blue line and make a simple pass or often make a drop pass. But when he was pressured, he had some trouble connecting with his passes or using his mobility to get his stick open. Didn't get many puck touches in the offensive zone.

**David St-Louis:** December 12th, 2021

Ocelari Trinec vs. HC Plzen - Extraliga

There is still a bit too much chaos in Jiríček's game, especially in pressured breakouts. He does find a solution to forechecking pressure. He plays with confidence and tries even on his backhand, but he also misses some easier one. He doesn't use his skating and doesn't fake opponents, other than through his posture (inherent deception). The lack of intentional manipulation and planning in his game hurts his projection a bit. He is so engaged defensively and aggressive and confident that it might not matter too much, however. I really liked his defence in this game: his tight gaps through the neutral-zone, his pinches (good timing), his defensive reads (preemptive switch to the attacker about to receive the puck), his motor, physicality, and long range. He is more frenetic than controlled at this stage, but on the smaller ice, with a tight system, he could really shutdown the opposition

and then make the first pass to a teammate into space. His shot is a real menace at the offensive blue-line, both his one-timer and wrister. His posture and skating helps him create some lanes.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 7th, 2021

Dynamo Pardubice vs. Hc Plzen - Extraliga

Jiríček has all the tools to become a defensive monster at the NHL level. He was very impressive on the defensive side of the puck, which is very rare to see from a defenceman his age. He's got the mobility, quickness and reach to become a high-end rush defender. Kept a tight gap in the neutral zone and engaged physically multiple times at the blue line, once laying a big open-ice hit to separate the puck carrier. Even if you gain the zone and outside lane against him, there's a good chance he's going to recover and get his stick in the way of a possible pass or shot. During his best sequence of the game, he read the incoming cross-ice pass in the neutral zone, stood up and intercepted it, turned on the jets and gained the offensive zone before dishing an accurate cross-ice feed for a decent shooting opportunity. My concerns about Jiricek are regarding his transition ability. His passing on the breakout can be hit and miss, and there were times where just threw the puck away prematurely before scanning.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 3th, 2021

Karlovy Vary vs. HC Plzen - Extraliga

Jiríček had some really good offensive zone sequences in the first period. Once he did beat the forechecker outside with his mobility and found an open target in the slot as one of the defencemen had to move to him. Another time he went all the way behind the net and threw a pass (at least it looked like one) towards the net-front and it ended up bouncing in from the defender's feet. It's plays like that which makes you believe in Jiricek having decent upside offensively. He's not the most deceptive or manipulative playmaker, but does clearly show some skill and playmaking ability. And he's got a cannon of a shot from the point, too. Transition is the biggest hole in his game. He's just not making advanced plays on the breakout while pressured. Recorded one controlled exit and three failed ones at 5-on-5 while pressured. Defensively, he did get beat inside once off the rush where he had to cover for his partner and ended up overcommitting and the opposing player scored. Other than that, he was still really good defensively. There's times in the defensive zone where he positioned too aggressively, but he's also making a lot of stops, especially in the neutral zone. That long stick and reach are serious weapons combined with his skating and playstyle.

**David St-Louis:** November 28th, 2021

HC Plzen vs. Rytiri Kladno - Extraliga

I was getting a bit excited about Jiríček's game, but this performance was the cold water I needed. There are a lot of mechanical failures in Jiríček's game. He doesn't have the fluidity of a Mintyukov or a Nemeč when handling, and especially when activating feet and hands at the same time. He tries plays all the time still, but he can't pull off complex maneuvers, like two-zone rushes with a weight shift fake to beat a defender. His passing ability projects as above-average, however, due to his constant use of the hip pocket, his pace, and his precision. I like how he uses the middle on breakouts when he can. He's aware and confident there, too. Defensively, another strong performance. Even when he's late on a race, he still battles for the puck, going shoulder to shoulder. He's violent net-front... A lot of things that NHL coaches will consider qualities.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 26th, 2021

HC Plzen vs. Bili Tygri Liberec - Extraliga

Apart from a few handling-related turnovers, this was the best Jiríček's puck skills have looked in my viewings. Early in the game, he looked up the middle, saw a teammate, then looked away and passed just as the lane opened. It wasn't perfect, but that deception set the stage for the rest of the game. He consistently deceived in transition to hit his targets, connecting through multiple defenders twice. Threw away the puck too easily on retrievals, even with open teammates on the middle, but I wonder if these are related to structure considering how regularly this issue occurs in his game. In a different system, he'd definitely get more touches. He activates at the right times, fills pockets of space, and shows an advanced understanding of how to get open deeper in the zone. Set-up a goal while falling after activating inside and getting into support position. A slick pass back through the player he just stole the puck from and a forehand cross-ice saucer pass over a stick for an entry on the PK were other notable transition plays. More consistent lateral movement before shooting would limit the number of poor shots he takes. Defensively, he's an easy top-3 projection, with timing, physicality, mobility, communication, and consistency. Any team that takes him will likely get a top-three NHL defender, but an intelligent development staff and a modern system could probably elevate that to top-pairing.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 21st, 2021

HC Vitkovice vs. HC Plzen - Extraliga

Jiríček has play connection issues. Many, if not most, are linked to mechanics. On retrievals, he deceives with shoulder



shakes, but rarely with his feet – that led to a pair of turnovers. When carrying the puck, he widens his stance and tilts his weight onto his heels. Several inaccurate passes, a mixture of poor timing and an inability to access the passing lane when he saw the option. Additional strength and skating refinement will likely keep the turnovers lower, especially because he’s so focused on making the best play. He always uses the inside, understands how to manipulate the feet or defenders when carrying the puck, and activates at the right times before delaying and looking for a passing option. Immediately looks inside before shooting. There are minor things, like blasting shots into defender instead of pump-faking and cutting behind their heels, but the solution to that already exists in his puck-moving game. Twice, he baited defenders to the outside lane, waited for their reaction, then cut inside. Twice, he beat defenders with the pump fake before going wide. Despite his turnover-prone game, he’s never shy about trying again. Defensively, he’s a highly projectable play-killer combining aggression, mobility, and timing. Sometimes gets too aggressive, but his tools help erase some of those mistakes. Clearly wants to be a physical defender, but his legs straighten as he enters battles. It requires lots of work, but Jiříček clearly has top-pairing ability because of his defence, desire to make the best play, and manipulation potential. I wonder how different his game looks playing in the same structure as Nemeč, where activation is mandatory.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 19th, 2021

HC Mountfield vs. HC Plzen - Extraliga

Jiříček’s pairing got caved in super hard, harder than in any of my previous viewings. Part of the fault also goes to

him as he made some questionable defensive reads along the way. He once left the net-front open as he anticipated a puck battle win/pass behind the net, but when his partner lost the battle, the forward had an open target in the slot. Another time he was defending the rush too wide and didn’t cross towards the middle quickly enough, leaving extra space for the blitzing forward. He even lost a footrace after an aggressive pinch that turned into a scoring chance against. Jiříček also passed a lot into pressure on the breakouts. He’s always looking to move the puck up the ice fast, but as a result misses the windows where a slower breakout would be a better option. Could be systems related, though. No contributions in the offensive zone at 5-on-5 aside from a couple of pinches. Got some shifts on the power play where his shot is legit weapon and he’s got decent playmaking ability. He could be a second-unit power play type, but not sure about a top unit quarterback. Overall, probably the worst performance I’ve seen from Jiříček this season.

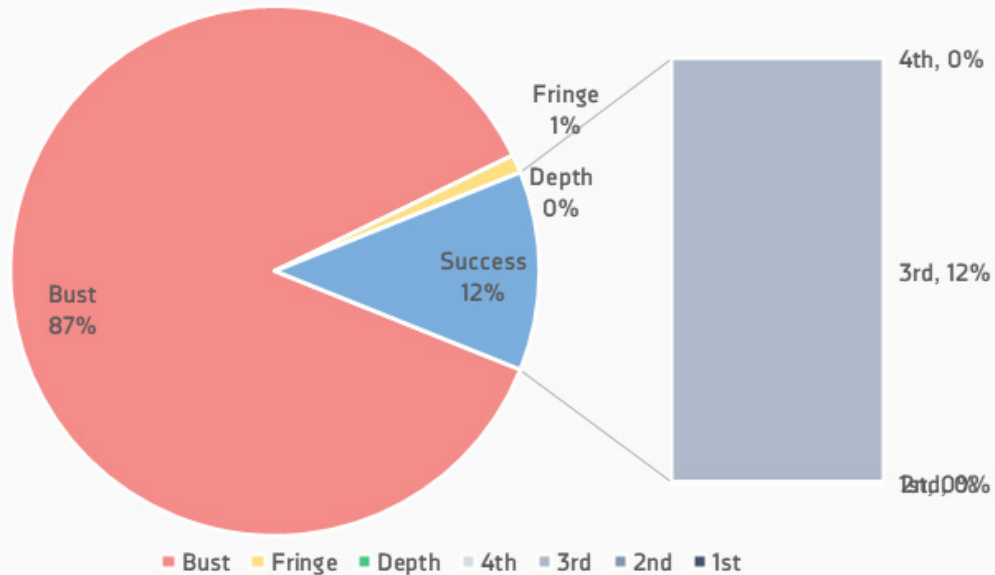
**Mitchell Brown:** November 17th, 2021

HC Plzen vs. Vitkovice - Extraliga

Jiříček’s game has plenty of inefficiencies, but he also shows a deeper understanding of the game than most defencemen in this draft class. It’s visible defensively, where he’ll miss the odd check or commit too early, but he manages to react fast enough to fix the play. And that’s with the physicality, engagement, and desire. He clearly wants to be a defensive force out there, and does everything in his power to win battles and eliminate threats. I like his defensive timing, too. On retrievals, he establishes body positioning, angles his toes in the direction the puck’s headed and tries to prepare

## David Jiricek 2021-22 Czech pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



space and deceive. First touch of the puck with backpressure was consistently poor in this game, but he tries to use the middle. Really, he tries to use the middle in every situation: OZP, transition, breakouts. It seems less like a play selection issue and more like he takes too long to get the puck to his intended destination. Activates regularly in the play, but he doesn't finish some of his routes or seem to expect the puck. Once he gets the puck in deep, his default play is throwing the puck into the slot, even if no one's there. More patience would help him create, especially because he clearly understands how to manipulate pressure. Jiříček's definitely an NHLer. I think he's most likely a capable No. 3. A smart development staff that could increase his awareness of space, activation, and decision-making could help him become a top-pair defenceman.

**David St-Louis:** November 17th, 2021

HC Plzen vs. HC Vitkovice - Slovakia

Jiříček started the game slow, by being a bit too loose defensively and by rushing himself a bit too much on backwall retrievals. But then, he started flashing every great elements of his play. Jiricek has great skating habits to find lanes; he receives every puck in movement and he tries to create passing lanes with quick, adaptative handling moves. With his options in front of him, he is one of the best puck-movers in this class: movement, deception, technical ability... Everything is there, even the range to slip passes around forecheckers if he wants. His activations were better timed; he recognized his opportunities to jump up-ice even more. He can absorb the momentum of forecheckers, turn skates, and

escape. He moves North fast. He seemed to know the best play in this game and didn't defer as much. There is just a high confidence to him that a development team will love. So much to work with. For me, he is a top-5 pick in this draft.

**David St-Louis:** November 14h, 2021

Russia vs Czech Republic - Karjala Cup

Best game I've seen from a prospect this season, at least that I remember. Aggressive defence (to a fault, sometimes, but generally well-timed with anticipation): constant pinches and tight gap through the neutral-zone. If he misses, he can recover quite quickly with his skating, although I thought his posture was a bit higher and his skating less explosive in this game. He was engaged and active defensively, closing hard and fast, using his length, and winning battles by establishing body positioning, cutting at the hands. Poise and awareness on breakouts; manipulates the forecheck, looks to use the middle, shows himself adaptable (not hitting too many closed plays, scans the ice for the best one and do so quickly). A lot of preemptive scanning defensively (to locate the next play of the puck carrier) and on breakout. Offensively, he tried plays! Which is rare in this draft class. Tried to manipulate and beat high-defenders, freeze them to create shooting lanes. He beat more than one opponent sometimes, but failed to complete the play afterward. The anticipation and planning parts of offensive hockey sense aren't fully there, but he processes fast and can fake opponents one-on-one. Jiříček has a ton to offer. Yes, he's a bit awkward at times and his offensive moves require a lot of refinement and yes he's overly aggressive, but confidence is

important in a prospect, a huge part of the projection and he has it in spades. This is the world-stage. It doesn't matter. He performs.

**Daniel Gee:** November 13th, 2021

Finland vs Czech Republic - Karjala Cup

Jiríček looked the part of top prospect in this game against Finland. While he's overaggressive to a fault at times, it's hard to deny the incredible package of his size, mobility, and tools.

Jiríček flexed his plus four-way mobility this game, pushing neutral zone and blue-line aggression while defending transitional attacks. He disrupted multiple entries, charging into physicality. It's a bit of give-and-take with Jiríček -- one one shift he made an uber-aggressive launch in the offensive zone and was beaten. Jiricek was able to lengthen his stride and rough up the threat getting back in coverage in time -- will he be able to play this way at a higher level? Probably not, but this is an adjustment period. When he is more measured, he has some great suffocation ability. In the third he raced to establish a gap, rubbed out an attacker trying to slip him on the perimeter and then supported a battle on the end boards. Jiricek's anticipation also stood out; he hunted neutral zone passes, attempting to step up, swoop into pass lanes and start a counter attack. He missed the pass on one sequence in the second, but it was an insane proactive play. In sustained pressure, Jiricek faced little

pressure in this game. He scans occasionally, not enough to fully mental map everyone. He was typically locked to the net-front, laying punishment on screens. Had some issues with containment on the perimeter -- would like to see him leverage his size to pin and halt cycling attackers.

Jiríček's transition game was hit-and-miss in this viewing. He does some cool edge-to-edge maneuvering on wheel outs, popping into the mohawk to gain some lateral movement, but he needs to pass in-motion more often. He's always slowing down as he releases, a habit that permeated throughout his touches. Attempted a myriad of high-difficulty layered attempts that were turned over. I liked how he passed into space however; he's crafty and uses board banks and some limited hesitations to create deception. When Jiricek was able to leverage movement on the offensive blue-line, he showed some really interesting things against Finland. He absolutely broke a high-defenders ankles with a shoulder-stutter-hesitation, allowing for a clean shooting lane. What's surprising is how often he was able to rotate depending on teammates movement; his sense stands out in these sequences, activating into open space, looking to magnetize defenders and open lanes up for his on-puck teammates. Took multiple point shots -- mechanically he is very down-force centric. He overrotates his entire body to push as much force onto his stick. It's apparent there's work being done on it. Looks like a top of the draft pick -- maybe even top-5. Tools, size,







and some projectable habits -- could boom.

**Marek Novotny:** November 10th, 2021

Czech Republic vs Sweden - Karjala Cup

It was a big game for Jiříček, who was on the first line for the national team on the opening night of the tournament. Jiříček played a solid game based on how young he is and the quality of this tournament. This first thing he did really well and is a part of his game was his sense to cover an opponent so his linemate can get out of the zone. The way he plays under pressure still remains a question, because there were a couple of turnovers he made when there was a player chasing him down in the defensive zone. Jiříček also had a chance to play on the PP unit, but there wasn't too much to see, because of bad plays and minimal chances from the team. The Czech defender was also on the PK unit and did his defensive job. He was aware of the situation around the net and used his physical strength to fight for loose pucks. He was also really active and involved in the action overall.

**David St-Louis:** November 2nd, 2021

CEZ Motor Ceske Budejovice vs HC Plzeň - Extraliga

The breakout ability that I saw previously has all but disappeared or at least it wasn't there in this game. Jiříček panics on every retrieval. It's all rims and glass-and-out plays now. He had one great backhand saucer pass to allow his team to win the offensive zone, but it again comes down to the same theory: Jiříček is comfortable attracting and beating the opposition when he has his options in front of him -- he uses his skill then -- but when he faces back pressure, it all goes out the window. Is it a coaching directive? Not sure, but you can't project something that isn't there. The lack of comfort

level is concerning, even if he plays in a professional league at this stage. We will have to see how he plays against his age group. Right now, Jiříček has all the tools and potential to use them. He remains a high pick for sure, but I still want more control in his game, even defensively. He tries. He plays with energy and, at his age, it's commendable, but there was a lack of refined engaging techniques and some half-a-step late rotations, too. He scored at the offensive blue-line by getting the puck off a faceoff and stepping around his man to fire. Again, there are flashes and those will be taken into account as they could turn into consistent skill showing, but I'm less confident.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

HC Plzeň vs. BK Mladá Boleslav - Extraliga

Jiříček's all over the place. He's overly aggressive and overshoots some engagements, but he's mostly a very sturdy defender already. Drives play to the outside, gets a ton of stops across the ice, and brings plenty of physicality. Blows up the cycle, kills plays off the rush, and eliminates net-front threats. Awareness plus aggression usually bodes well for the future. With the puck, he's a bit more complex. I like how he activates, tries to make some more advanced reads, and uses his teammates. He understands how to fill space at the right times. And I like how he doesn't just make the simple play once he gets the puck. He beats defenders, looks for teammates cross-ice, and uses space before shooting. In transition, he regularly uses the inside with a bit of deception. Generally, he's a high-pace player who makes positive reads, with the potential to create the best play. The stride's short and upright, and while he can juke opponents, it's often the puck between his feet on his inside edges. I think

he has middle-pairing or even No. 2 upside, depending on development.

**David St-Louis:** October 22nd, 2021

HC Dynamo vs Pardubice - Extraliga

Jiříček's game lacked control, especially on retrievals. He mishandles one early in the game and seemed to have lost confidence in his ability to move the puck for the rest of the game, defaulting to a lot of rims and chip outs (maybe it was a coaching directive?). This showing clashes with the previous one I had and, for the moment, I still think his breakout ability is a positive in his game. His scanning is inconsistent and generally the main reason he fails plays, in transition and in the offensive zone. He sets his mind on a pass or a shot or a move but doesn't look to see if it's a good choice. I like his aggressiveness off the rush and the desperate defensive plays. He cares about defence, and with his tools, I think he becomes a positive possession player in the NHL.

**J.D. Burke:** October 10th, 2021

HC Plzeň vs. Berani Zlin - Extraliga

So, here's the thing: David Jiříček doesn't connect on a lot of his plays -- the stretch passes, the activations off of the blue line and the deceptive feeds into the slot, and the pacy efforts to move the puck -- but he's trying them, and that counts for a lot. One play in particular really stands out. Jiříček picks up the puck in the neutral zone, drives the centre lane, and alters his speed to give the trailing forward time to charge into the opening on his flank, hoping for a half-ice 2-on-1. One of the defenders opposite him just catches on at the last second and recovers or that's a breakaway setup for his teammate. Moved the puck with calm and poise for the most part on the breakout. Was durable in body-on-body defensive scenarios. Needs to scan far more often in the defensive zone. There was one play in the first period where he was so god damned lucky not to get burnt, just totally missing an opponent parked out front that should've been his man.

**David St-Louis:** October 8th, 2021

HC Plzeň vs HC Rytíři Kladno - Extraliga

This was a great performance from the defenceman, who held down the fort defensively. He played most of his one-on-one engagements well, showing controlled footwork and good stick placement. Jiříček scanned a lot during the whole game and, as a result, had no problem cutting passing lanes.

He also held his own physically despite playing against much older opponents. In breakouts, Jiříček rushed himself a bit against back pressure, but mostly, he found solutions to the forecheck, evading it by using the net and changes

of speed. He moved with the puck to find passing lanes and generally found the best outlet.

Offensively, Jiříček had a couple of great passes. He knew his next play before getting the puck and deceived the defence to make it happen. He has to improve his shot selection, however; he fired at shin pads a bit too much in this game. He has to learn to use his skating and handling skills to create better shooting lanes.

**David St-Louis:** October 3rd, 2021

HC Plzen vs Bílí Tygři Liberec - Extraliga

Jiříček is going high in the draft. His tools clearly project as above-average (he's a 6-foot-3, mobile, righty) and he cares about the defensive game, showing active footwork, aggressive posturing in zone and off the rush, and constant stick repositioning to deny the middle. The gap is tight through the neutral-zone and he can match shifty attackers with his four-way mobility. He is also physical, able to pin even pro attackers already. Impressive. Offensively, the hockey sense gets exposed a bit at times. Not sure how well he would fare against tighter checking pressure, but he has great moments: cross-ice passes inside seams, manipulation one-on-one to create shooting lanes, and an ability to go through options on the breakout and pick the right one. The shot is hard; he makes sure to position and surround the puck before every release, unloading his full weight on the stick. He doesn't really know how to move in the offensive zone; there is no purpose to his footwork; he goes through scripts without adapting to the environment all that well. He tries to gain the middle to improve the location of shots, but doesn't really check if he could do something better or if he is closing his shooting lane. He did score by taking the puck in movement back to the blue-line and firing top-corner from distance.

**David St-Louis:** April 29th, 2021

Finland U18 vs Czech U18 - U18s

Hit and miss. Some great passing awareness and also some panic moves from Jiricek. He misses occasions to do more with the puck, but can also make plays through opponents. Handling skills are about average for me and skating posture is high, but he kills rushes with backward skating and has some lateral mobility. He is physical. Very. Finishes every check. He scans well, makes good rotations off-puck, and knows his options from the system. Off the rush, he supports and doesn't close his own space, understands the offensive gap. He's an interesting player for sure.



3  
Rank

5  
Skating

6  
Shooting

6.5  
Passing

A  
Grade

7.5  
Puckhandling

6  
Hockey Sense

8  
Physical

3rd

Best Problem Solving Skills

3rd

Highest Ceiling

3rd

Highest Floor

5th

Hardest Hitter

2nd

Best Power Forward

# JURAJ SLAFKOVSKÝ

LW | TPS

HEIGHT 6' 4"  
WEIGHT 218

D.O.B. MAR. 30, 2004  
SHOOTS LEFT

"You don't often see a player his size handle the puck as well as he does. His wall protection is some of the best you'll see from a kid. Still has some hiccups in his own end and isn't the most gifted skater but the upside is as big as he is."

-Western Conference scout in March 2022

SHADES OF: Valeri Nichushkin

71%

2022 XLS

66%

3Y REGR. bXLS

34%

3Y REGR. iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-S.	11	6	12	18
Liiga	31	5	5	10
WJC-20	2	0	0	0
WC	4	1	2	3

## Scouting Report

Nothing brought out Juraj Slafkovský's draft year best quite like the opportunity to wear his country's colours and represent Slovakia in international competition. He's the ultimate patriot.

Slafkovsky started the scouting season off as if shot from a cannon, putting up nine points in five games en route to a silver medal at the Hlinka-Gretzky in August. Next up, seven goals in seven games and MVP honours as he led Slovakia to the bronze medal at the Beijing Olympics. Then, lastly, a point a game clip at the World Hockey Championships in Finland. All this in his age-17 season.

It's not like he was chopped liver in the Finnish Liiga either. Ten points in 31 games is hardly anything to scoff at from a first-time draft-eligible skater in one of Europe's more challenging professional leagues, after all.

The appeal with Slafkovský is obvious: He's a 6-foot-4 playmaking power forward with soft hands, shooting skill, and the sort of wall game that would already rate as an above-average quality in the NHL.

The first thing you notice is just how easily he retains possession under duress. It's like watching a bully play keep

away, one hand stiff-arming his victim out of reach and the other one waving their stolen item to mock them for good measure. If Slafkovský wants the puck, then he takes the puck, and good luck getting it back.

That we've mostly seen this from the Slovak winger in professional settings this season just makes it that much more impressive. It's one thing to ward off physically undeveloped 17-year-olds in the WHL; it's another thing entirely to swat away seasoned veterans in Finland's top men's league like they're mosquitos.

Slafkovský brings a lot more to the table than just brute force, though. What makes him a unique prospect is how he turns those extended possession sequences into legitimate scoring chances. Sometimes, it's a drive to the net-front for a chance of his own; other times, he'll handle his way into a passing opportunity and send the puck to his linemate to finish the job.

Where Slafkovský often leaves our staff wanting, though, is with his footspeed. The deficiencies are many, whether it's his posture, a heel kick out of recoveries, or a hop in his crossovers. He just cannot separate from opponents in space.

To Slafkovský's credit, we've already seen considerable growth from him as a skater this season, and there isn't any reason to believe he won't continue on that path as he rises up the ranks. It's probably an about-average tool at this point, which is a pretty big step up on where he started the season.

Don't be surprised if you hear Slafkovský's name called as

high as first overall in July's draft. Players with his skill set are so rare. Teams guard these players closely when they have them, and they move heaven and earth to find one when they don't. I mean, who wouldn't want a high-scoring top-six winger with a physical side? That's the upside with Slafkovský.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Tuomo Ruutu  
YEAR: 2001  
SIMILARITY: 96%

2 Joel Armia  
YEAR: 2011  
SIMILARITY: 67%

3 Petteri Nokelainen  
YEAR: 2004  
SIMILARITY: 57%

4 Lauri Tukonen  
YEAR: 2004  
SIMILARITY: 52%

5 Jesse Joensuu  
YEAR: 2006  
SIMILARITY: 45%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 17th, 2022

Canada vs Slovakia - WC

This was an amazing performance from Slafkovsky. Not a perfect one -- some turnovers and rushed decisions -- but a really impressive showing considering the opposition. Slafkovsky looks like an NHLer already. I have no concern about his skating anymore or his pace of play. He links plays quickly, makes a ton of one-touch plays, can adapt to closed lanes with his handling, fire in stride, rush the puck up-ice, and get off the wall after protecting the puck to attack inside. He did that all season long and again at the World Championship. I don't expect him to end up the best player in the draft, but he's both a safe and very high upside pick. It's top-3 for me, probably even top-2, and some first overall thoughts.

**David St-Louis:** May 14th, 2022

Slovakia vs Germany - WC

Another impressive international tournament from Slafkovsky. The skating continues to look better. He has not problem following the play at this level. I understand that much of that effect of "skating improvement" is probably due to a change of camera angle from my last viewing but I'm a bit more confident in his mobility at this end point of the season than at the start. A bunch of impressive, difficult, under pressure plays from him in this game: establishing body positioning before a catch and quickly redirecting the puck to a teammate with one-hand without breaking stride, slip passes after creating a 2 vs 1 off the rush, fast backhand passes out of tight spots...So much talent in his game and confidence, too. He plays like a ten-year NHL veteran going to this tournament in between seasons. The defensive engagement was there in this performance, too. An easy top-3 guy in the draft. We might not have him there but he has that kind of value for sure.

**Lassi Alanen:** May 13th, 2022

France vs. Slovakia - WC

Slafkovsky played good minutes in his first career men's WC game, receiving notable power play time, rotating between the right half wall and the net-front. He was credited with two assists, though neither was particularly noteworthy. Slafkovsky wasn't quite as effective in this one compared to the pre-tournament they played against the same opponent. He was overhandling at times or failing to execute on his dekes. His board play continues to be elite, though, and it'll serve him extremely well in the NHL. Multiple times he was able to take a hit, spin off of it and make a play towards the middle. I always appreciate how inside-driven he usually is, always looking to bring pucks to the middle from the boards.

**Lassi Alanen:** May 7th, 2022

Slovakia vs. France - Friendly

Slafkovsky skated in Slovakia's top-six and received power play time on the right half wall in their friendly match against France before the World Championship. Especially the first half of the game was electric from Slafkovsky. He was making plays left, right and center, utilizing his high-end hands and physicality. He was dominating along the boards, initiating contact and bumping defenders off of him before making passes or advancing towards the middle himself.

A highlight reel assist where he received the puck in a tough spot during 3v2, but managed to pull it near himself, protecting it and make a cross-ice backhand feed to the back post for a tap-in. Turned the puck over twice in bad spots in the DZ in the second period, but the coaching staff continued to have trust in him and even used him when France was looking to score without a goalie at the end. Skating has improved over the course of the season and it projects at least average at this point and you could make a case for even slightly higher grade.

Starting to use more and more linear crossover while

rushing the puck. I think he's my top European player this year and a contender for our top-2.

**Lassi Alanen:** April 3rd, 2022

HIFK vs. TPS - Liiga

Slafkovsky's handling was the highlight of this one. He was pulling some impressive dekes; going between the defender's legs on a PP entry and setting up a scoring chance with a pass under another defender's stick. He can definitely try to get too cute at times, but I wouldn't call him a chronic overhandler. It was the first round of the playoffs and the game was noticeable tighter compared to a regular season game, which limited Slafkovsky's puck touches. Aside from the formerly mentioned sequences, his line wasn't able to get much done in the OZ. He could scan a bit more defensively and same thing could be said about exits, but I think he's got the awareness to become a competent defensive player in time.

**David St-Louis:** March 20th, 2022

TPS vs. Karpat - Liiga

I think Slafkovsky does become a better defensive player, in time. Right now, he's overaggressive (too committing) and puck focused. He also doesn't always make the best decisions on breakouts. The skating looked like a below-average grade in this game: hopping crossovers, poor three-step acceleration, poor crossover acceleration, shorter forward strides. He looked more fatigued. I like how he finds pucks in small-areas, finds options, dangles through feet, how he plays the net-front game. By now, I think I have a pretty good picture of his game, the strength and the weaknesses. He should be a top-4 pick in this draft and a challenger for number one overall if a team REALLY believes in their ability to develop him for a specific role.

**David St-Louis:** March 15th, 2022

TPS vs. KalPa - Liiga

Slafkovsky is just extremely well-suited for the roles he will fill anyway in the NHL: net-front, board, and small-area creators. The vision remains somewhat questionable sometimes, but I think it might be a lack of scanning and anticipation, the first part being somewhat fixable. The handling skills are still quite ridiculous: can adapt to bad passes, slide the puck through defenders, and make plays with one-hand. He will be extremely annoying to deal with in the NHL if he reaches his upside, which is top-6 forward. The skating looks to be improving but he still hops in crossovers.

**David St-Louis:** March 12th, 2022

TPS vs. Lukko - Liiga

Slafkovsky has some interesting rush patterns in his game. He processes lanes, seams, and vulnerable defenders fast; he recognizes advantages and knows how to take them, how to win one-on-one, create 2-on-1s to generate space for teammates. The net-front game stands out; he looks for inside positioning, blends in fighting for positioning and retrieving pucks on the backwall...A lot of translatability.

**David St-Louis:** March 9th, 2022

JYP vs. TPS - Liiga

The hockey sense concerns are back a bit. Slafkovsky is not reading the play all that well, missing pockets of space, teammates, not anticipating defensive rotations...Of course, I'm judging him more harshly on that aspect than other top prospects as I see him as a potential number one overall candidate. He can't compete with Shane Wright in hockey sense, but he beats him in handling, physical game, and even, arguably, NHL translatability. He's more confident than Wright and the physical skills will be appreciated by coaches from day 1. Still an incredibly skilled handler, too.

**David St-Louis:** February 19th, 2021

Sweden vs. Slovakia - Olympics 2022

I liked Slafkovsky's rush patterns in this game, the way he cut across to involve teammates, to create pockets of space for them to catch a drop a pass and attack the pushed back defence and the way he cut the recovery route of defenders after skating past them. Skating still projects as average, maybe slightly below average. Slafkovsky isn't always aware of the positioning of defenders. They surprise him sometimes. He still attacks inside, takes the puck in movements, spins off defenders... Lots of projectable habits like this. Top-5 in this draft despite the concerns.

**David St-Louis:** February 15th, 2021

USA vs. Slovakia - Olympics 2022

I feel dumb for not understanding Slafkovsky's projection earlier. The hockey sense doubts are back a bit; he can't process complex situations, doesn't really aim for the best play, doesn't really see a play in advance, but...does he really need to? Skating looks like it will end up close to NHL average, hands are significantly above-average, there is the physical game, and the ability to rotate to the right areas at generally the right time and some scoring instinct. It's A LOT in a draft where every player is hard to project. Slafkovsky becomes a known quantity. He's either Joel Armia or a skilled, physical, inside-driven top-six forward.

## Juraj Slafkovsky 2021-22 Liiga pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 5 || Base XLS: 71% || Impact XLS: 48% || XPR: 41 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**Cam Robinson:** February 15th, 2021

USA vs. Slovakia - Olympics 2022

Slafkovsky was dangerous throughout in this one. The Yanks gave him a mile of space in the slot and he burned them on a nasty wrister - leg lift, weight transfer, downward force, eyes up. Really just a gorgeous shot but it was silly that he had that time of time. Rang off the bar, was showcasing the excellent puck-protection throughout. Now, the skating is still just 'okay' and it's that way due to his strength as the mechanics and form are subpar. But my goodness does he have excellent hands in tight and great scanning habits.

**Cam Robinson:** February 14th, 2021

Slovakia vs Germany - Olympics 2022

Scanning, pre-scanning, planning his routes, utilizing a lot of directional changes in-flight and along the wall. Had a nice scoring in the first where he fully loaded up a shot only to fake it, make a quick move and then snap off a quicker release. It was swallowed up but demonstrated some advanced planning. He really utilizes his big body exceptionally well along the boards and is a handful to contain. Impressive stuff in 15 minutes of ice tonight.

**David St-Louis:** February 14th, 2021

Slovakia vs Germany - Olympics 2022

Well this game goes counter to my evaluation of Slafkovsky hockey sense. There he was, planning a lot of moves, with and without the puck, scanning for his space and options and defenders before getting the puck, and holding the puck, challenging defenders to create switches and space for teammates with it. This is 7-grade hockey sense stuff. Maybe he develops it. And since I'm an evaluator who values flashes of high-end abilities more than consistency, I will have to bump his HS grade up a bit. The competition was good enough for me to reevaluate that grade.

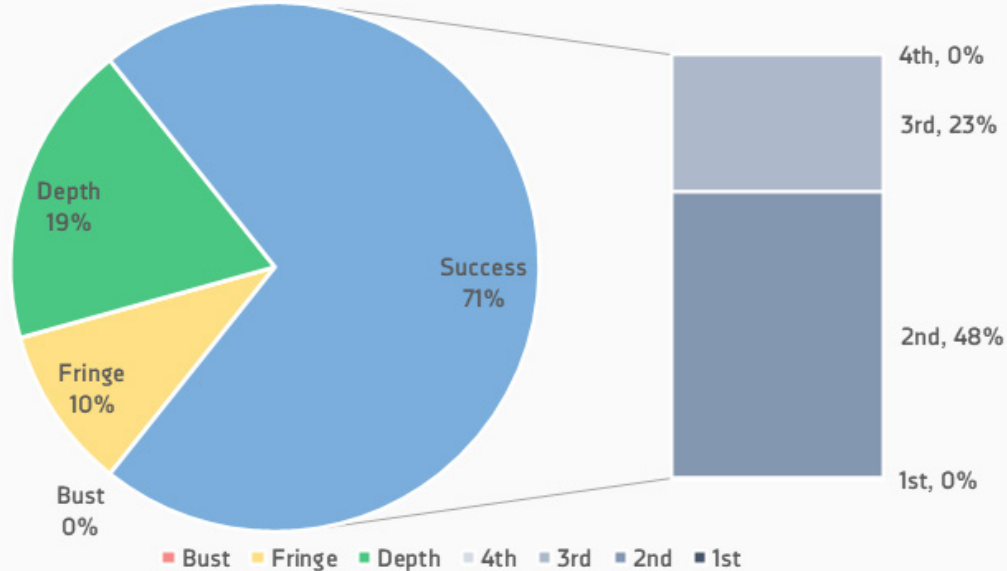
**David St-Louis:** February 11th, 2021

Slovakia vs Sweden - Olympics 2022

Slafkovsky scored a pretty insane goal, a catch and bat-out-of-mid-air shot in two motions. The handling skills are probably a 7.5 to 8. Skating looks like a 5 (potentially). Passing is a bit above-average. Shooting is not really a strength of his game, in terms of getting to spots to use it and I'm not sure about the mechanics either because of the lack of opportunities created. Physical skills could become an 8, too... The decision-making problems stem from a lack of scanning on the breakout, but everywhere else, Slafkovsky

## Juraj Slafkovsky 2021-22 Liiga pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



is looking for options. He doesn't anticipate defensive rotations or which lane will be open a second in the future, but awareness and decent processing is there. He's competitive, urgent, plays with pace (even if he tends to hold the puck a bit long sometimes), and he can make more of difficult wall situations than most prospects in the draft who would simply not even get the puck out. So, yes, Slafkovsky might not complete a lot of plays, but the ideas are generally good, the awareness is generally good, and the skill is more than interesting. The confidence will keep him scoring.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 10th, 2021

Finland vs. Slovakia - Olympics 2022

Slafkovsky was skating on Slovakia's fourth line in his olympic debut and managed to be one of the best players on the ice, at least offensively. He scored two goals, one was a slick top-shelf finish from in tight and another was Slafkovsky's typical cut to the inside from OZ cycle into a shot, getting some help from the referee who blocked the player who was shadowing Slafkovsky. He managed to be consistently dangerous in the offensive zone, aggressively pushing the pace and taking every chance he could to take the puck inside. Drew a penalty after some tenacious puckhandling and set up his linemates for shots from good spots multiple times. Pushed the pace quite a bit more than in most of my Liiga viewings, which was impressive to see.

**Cam Robinson** - February 10th, 2021

Finland vs. Slovakia - Olympics

Hard to argue with this performance from Slafkovsky.

Skating on the team's fourth line, he was the most dangerous forward for the Slovaks. He grabbed two goals, one showing the quick and dangerous hands in the paint, and the other where he collected the puck on the cycle, saw some space, curled and buried it top corner. He was constantly pushing the pace while in transition and focus much of his attention on the middle of the ice. However, his stride keeps me up at night. It's not bad, but it needs cleaning. He doesn't extend fully, leaving that range wasted. He has this rolled shoulder look at times, and is often failing to bend the knees to 90. And yet, even at this level, it doesn't hold him back. He should some nice hands to create little pockets of space and then the usual soft touch to move it around to mates.

Big time showing on a big stage.

**Cam Robinson:** January 22nd, 2022

TPS vs Karpat - Liiga

Skating on the fourth line right wing, Slafkovsky was engaged early when he saw the ice. He made a nice move in-flight where he took the puck wide with speed and sent a backhand, cross-slot dish for a HD chance. He threw a puck away trying to quickly centring it later in the frame in what must be considered a poor decision with a lack of scanning. Showed some soft hands when he took the puck off the wall in the ozone and made a quick move to slip a checker and start walking to the inside. Coughed it up afterwards. The play of the game of him though came early in the second frame when he got his hands up high on a hit in the corner. He was assessed 5+10+10 and got the boot. Subsequently suspended for six games.

Very tepid 6 minutes of ice where he showed a couple of flashes but was mostly an afterthought during most plays.

**David St-Louis:** December 27th, 2021

Slovakia vs Sweden - WJ20

Decision-making problems here. I like the tools; they shine in interesting ways, in transition, in the offensive zone, along the walls, and the manipulation scripts; Slafkovsky knows how to fake defenders one-on-one, but there are some hockey sense concerns. Slafkovsky doesn't search the right areas on the ice for plays. He gets puck focused and tunnel vision on the puck; he doesn't scan the ice ahead to know his space and doesn't seem to know what play is best in what situations. For someone who made such poor decisions in this game, he also seemed to get a bit too frustrated at teammates who had the same issues (like Filip Mesar). His speed and overall skating doesn't seem like an issue -- or at least it won't be in the next few years.

**David St-Louis:** December 26th, 2021

Slovakia vs USA - WJ20

Slafkovsky killed many transition plays because he didn't move quick enough or the puck

quick enough. His skating got exposed...a bit. It doesn't seem like a huge issue overall, especially because he uses a ton of crossovers. I think his high skill-level will shine a lot more against weaker formations. He needs to improve his awareness of space and of next plays. He often received and then decided on a play. His best chance came off a spin pass from Mesar. Slafkovsky received it and immediately attacked inside.

**David St-Louis:** December 2nd, 2021

Saipa vs. TPS - Liiga

Slafkovsky is an aware forward, but he clearly doesn't plan his next move. He just reacts. But he does it well, especially because he can protect the puck with his frame and his handling skills, and because he has the passing ability to find solutions to intense defensive pressure. At the next levels, the system will likely dictate where he moves and he's going to act according to his skill when he gets there. I don't expect any creative patterns, even if his game against his age group is based on them a bit right now. His puck protection skill sequence is good: turns on first touch, keeps back to opponents, avoids pin, spins on defenders, finds teammates with rims and puck placements, attacks inside when possible, uses his range and one-hand to handle away from opponents... There is skill refinement in his game already but way more is possible. I still see him as a complementary middle-six

forward in the NHL, not really a top-scorer, but the link between two other teammates who lack his special skill-set.

**Cam Robinson:** December 2nd, 2021

Kärpät vs. TPS - Liiga

The monkey is off his back now as Slafkovsky nabbed his first-career Liiga goal after showing good strength on a nice stick lift, stealing the puck and curling out of the cycle to burying it with an against-the-grain wrister. He was moving his feet well in this game, anticipating lanes and jumping into them to transition and force his way to the inside. He was extremely hard on the puck tonight - forcing defenders into bad spots and leaning on them, lifting sticks, hard along the boards. It's more of what we've seen from him at the U20 level but now in the pros.

I clocked him with a whopping 12 attempts on goal in this one to illustrate just how engaged he was in the offensive end.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 2nd, 2021

Kärpät vs. TPS - Liiga

This was probably the most aggressive version we've seen of Slafkovsky in Liiga this season. Just constantly looking to bring the puck to the middle off the cycle. It wasn't a coincidence he managed to score his first career Liiga goal, too. It came off of an identical play he made a few shifts earlier, scooping the puck along the board and cutting to the slot between the defender and the winger to shoot. Slafkovsky also logged nine(!) shot attempts at 5-on-5, which is the highest I've tracked from him this season. The shot is legit and dangerous. He jumps on his inside-leg wrists hard, getting a ton of stick flex and power for a rather quick release. It was also the best game I've seen from Slafkovsky in terms of recovering or stealing loose pucks in the offensive zone. Good usage of his size and frame combined with good work ethic.

**David St-Louis:** December 2nd, 2021

Kärpät vs. TPS - Liiga

There is an issue or multiple ones in Slafkovsky's game-reading. He doesn't scan all that much, which slows down his decision, not sure how fast he processes gaps, too, and he has trouble knowing which gaps he can attack and take advantage of and which he doesn't have the skill or the time to hit. He lacks adaptability (he hits the first open play he sees under pressure) and he clearly doesn't plan any of his moves. He misses occasions, off the rush, to cut laterally to manipulate gaps... At this point, I'm not sure I can give his hockey sense more than a 5. He has the tools, great tools, and so, if he can learn to follow the game, to make the right rotations and use his size to protect the puck, attack inside,



and go to the net, he will still be an effective player, but I'm afraid some of his poor decisions might sink his team, and as those seem to come from multiple different problems, I'm not confident he will become all that smarter about his puck management. I liked his inside drives in this game, with and without the puck. He tried to take the puck from the wall to the middle, at first, because he looked and saw an opening, and then he just automatically did it after it worked one time. He scored that way. He's both a safe pick, due to his tools and his skating that looks to be improving, and also a risky one, as you might end up with a bottom-six wing with specific usage.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 1st, 2021

TPS vs. Ässät - Liiga

Slafkovsky only played under eight minutes at 5-on-5, but his line outshot the opposition 17-4 and out-xG'd them 0.88 to 0.03 – pretty dominant stuff if you ask me. Slafkovsky's capabilities as a playmaker were very apparent on multiple occasions. He often pre-scans before receiving the puck to identify open targets, which allows him to complete HD passes with more consistency compared to many of his peers. He can act fast once the lane is open, too. He does throw quite a few pucks towards the slot even without a clear open target, but in this one, TPS was able to sustain pressure despite that and the times he clearly turns the puck over are few. We also got a good example of Slafkovsky's wrist shot shooting mechanics: elbow elevated, quick weight shift and a lot of downward force applied.

**Cam Robinson:** November 20th, 2021

TPS U20 vs Lukko U20 - U20 SM-sarja

Oh boy. Talk about a man amongst boys. Slafkovsky was manipulating all over the ice in this one. He basically handled possession whenever he had the puck, weaving into the middle of the ice through a sea of sticks and bodies. I counted 11 shot attempts with at least 5 high danger chances. His hands and puck control were on full display. He sent a pretty backhand slip pass for an A1 to tie the game in the middle frame. He was using his physicality more at the U20 level than I've seen in the liiga - which isn't overly surprising. Generally, he was engaged and was clearly the best player on the ice. Yes, the skating posture leaves a lot to be desired, but I can't help but wonder what he'll be able to grow into if/when he cleans that and his mechanical issues. There is massive potential for a high-impact, top line winger here.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 19th, 2021

TPS vs. Tappara - Liiga

Slafkovsky played around 13 minutes in this one, also getting a few shifts on the power play. There were some usual highlights, like generating a couple of nice chances off the rush. His puck skills in tight are impressive, being quite shifty with his handling. Slafkovsky's awareness in the OZ was also notable. His head was constantly spinning and he shoulder-checked a lot to recognize any possible opportunities. I liked his effort on the forecheck, making one nice OZ retrieval after dump-in and some powerful hits along the boards. The biggest issue was probably his decision-making on the breakout, as the play died multiple times when he got the puck along the blue line.

**Marek Novotny:** November 19th, 2021

TPS vs. Tappara - Liiga

Slafkovsky is back in Liiga starting as a 3rd line winger. Right away he made a nice cross-ice pass in the neutral zone in a tough position. He lost the puck in the corner when he was under pressure but fought back and thanks to his reach and physical element he gained it back. He put himself in a good scoring chance but his backhand shot was stopped. This was a good example of how he can skate fast and protect the puck at the same time to get past his opponent. He, again, worked well along the walls where he looks confident and where he can protect the puck very well. The Slovakian winger was also part of the PP unit. There was a nice effort where he was looking for a passing lane to send his teammate in a breakaway situation, but unfortunately it only led to a turnover. He laid out a couple of huge hits. He works hard and looks confident in the circle area from where he can either send a precise pass or shoot the puck.

**Daniel Gee:** November 6th, 2021

TPS vs Tappara - Liiga

Really strong effort for Slafkovsky, who saw the majority of his shifts in the first and second before a three shift third period.

Probably the most apparent aspects of Slafkovsky's performance in this game was his puck-protection and supporting habits. He's huge at 6-foot-4 and even against men, simple pivots to place his back/body between forecheckers and defenders makes him a difficult player to check. Obviously this is most noticeable in sustained offensive zone sequences, where Slafkovsky looks extremely projectable. In the second, he supported a battle on the end-boards, working the puck free behind the net. He then pulled off a wonderful bank pass to himself off the back of the net, completely tricking a tight-checking defender, only to pivot to place his back in the way of the same defender while completing a low-to-high

pass to the right point. He has some really positive puck carrying habits -- on one sequence, as Slafovsky picked up a puck won by a teammate in the neutral zone, he wheeled around Tappara's net, manipulated with a fake cut back, before dropping off the puck to a teammate in pressure. If he can string passes or shooting opportunities out of these supporting and puck-protection plays at a higher frequency he will be a monster.

Slafkovsky's skating is a major deficiency -- his forward stride has inefficiencies; heel kicks out of recoveries, inconsistent stride length. Crossovers have a very rough hop as he initiates, upper body actually shooting back like he is walking on steps. Regardless, he was able to leverage other tools to put together a successful transition game. In the first he had a hilarious play where he supported a breakout, executed a stick check, stringing a deke to the inside as he carried up the ice. He actually took one arm and absolutely slammed/out-muscled a back pressure threat to the ice on the entry. Slafkovsky also had a really nice drive wide, pivoting to protect the puck to wait for some support. If the skating was better he probably would have been able to take the puck to the net. Same manipulation is present -- uses stop ups, cutbacks, to mess with gaps. Execution out of these possessions waned. On one carry he drove around the net only to be cut off, unable to make a pass. He really only had one shot in this game, an off-balance, slot shot on his outside edge -- top-arm was fairly locked to hip.

Scanning habits in the defensive zone are present but somewhat inconsistent -- a habit that seems to be in the formative stage. When he does scan, there is proactiveness -- he read a ring in the first, intercepted the puck and started an uncontrolled exit with a dump pass. Clogs lanes fairly well; could leverage frame more -- I'm sure it will come. Looks like a top guy from a projectability standpoint in this draft.

**Marek Novotny:** October 31st, 2021

TPS vs. Ilves - U20 SM-sarja

Slafkovsky made a good impression. He is dominating on the ice in the U20 category in Finland. He has such a great skill set. He was amazing regarding puck protection. He is huge and also has a great reach with his stick. Well, Slafkovsky was part of the PP unit and he was amazing in the circle area from where he was trying to find his linemates with passes. He is also strong along the walls, where he activates his physical ability. He has great hands which he demonstrated with a pass between his legs and with a beautiful toe drag. Slafkovsky played with great poise and was a really confident player on the ice. He scored a beautiful powerplay goal from a one-timer and collected a helper as well. It was clear that

he is the best player out there.

**David St-Louis:** October 27th, 2021

TPS vs. JYP - Liiga

Slafkovsky doesn't get many chances to make plays. His puck touches are limited, partly due to a few weaknesses: a lack of quickness, a lack of ability to hold on and win battles along the wall (his high-stance limits his puck protection), and his only decent off-puck instinct. His passes were slow sometimes in this game, but in other instances, he scanned for the next option before getting the puck and sent it in the direction of teammates quickly. He got an assist by making the classic goal-line to bumper pass on the powerplay. He can layer deception in some of his feeds even at this level. He got a few chances to carry the puck in the offensive zone, but couldn't do it. Not enough speed and he handles the puck way in front, making it easy for defenders to threaten poke checks and control him. Slafkovsky is a skilled big-man, but will require a lot of projections. Will his tool and habits limitations improve as he fills his body? Is he already relatively physically mature?

**Lassi Alanen:** October 26th, 2021

TPS vs. Jukurit - Liiga

Slafkovsky played quite a bit in this one and was responsible for most of his line's offence. He had especially nice moments as a passer, showcasing creativity and decent execution on most attempts. There was a sequence where he entered the zone, circled from behind the net, made a quick turn to separate and made a hook pass to an open player in the slot. Another time, he tried a backhand feed off the rush which got blocked, but he recovered the loose puck and went for a spin pass cross-ice. Nothing came of it, but it was a good example of his willingness to try stuff out even at this level. There's reasonable concern about what he's going to be at the NHL level, though. I don't see high-end off-puck reads that often and I don't think that he's a rush threat with his current skating projection. Though his puck protection can be limited due to lack of depth, he was pretty oppressive along the boards in this game and I can see turning into a power forward who can utilize his huge frame and string together passing plays in the OZ with his vision.

**David St-Louis:** October 23rd, 2021

TPS vs. HPK - Liiga

Slafkovsky always seems on the verge of making a good play. The flashes of hockey sense are there; he looks to the right areas to make plays. He still needs tool development before he can make an impact at this level. He tries to shield the

puck, and does so semi-successfully with his large frame, but lacks the proper mechanics to truly keep pro defenders at bay (no knee extension and high stance). He also has trouble separating from opponents, lacking the speed and explosiveness to do so, although his skating stride looked better in this game.

**David St-Louis:** October 22th, 2021

Assat vs TPS - Liiga

Slafkovsky has trouble working his hands and feet together. His acceleration from a spot is problematic, as he lacks flexion in his stance (typical for such a long-limbed player). Will all of those elements improve? Probably not significantly. BUT. There is the hockey sense. And it's impressive. Slafkovsky scans for his receiving space (although he did get hammered at center ice once because he hadn't seen an incoming defender) and anticipates plays well. He made a precise pass from the wall up to a teammate in the slot in the third period. He didn't look for him, but he knew he was there, and he had the processing speed to execute the pass instantly after evading the defender on his back. The timing of his spin and turns along the boards is not on point, but close to, so he still manages to escape the back pressure of defenders. He doesn't force plays, but holds on to the puck for a viable one (even when pitted against multiple defenders). All in all, Slafkovsky has many NHL elements and his size is attractive, but he also has some pretty significant flaws, too, like his lack of mobility and his lower pace. He misses some offensive opportunities as he doesn't have the explosiveness and the agility to take them. His skill-level is already capped in this league; the advantages he creates are pretty small; and so I worry, even with skill development, about his ability to create consistently in the NHL.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 16th, 2021

TPS vs. JYP - U20 SM-sarja

Slafkovsky added a 5-on-3 power play goal in TPS' 1-6 win over JYP in the U20 league in my first live viewing of him this season. After a long sustained possession, Slafkovsky was able to receive the puck in the slot and he fired a hard and quick wrist shot through the defenders to score just when JYP was getting their fourth player on the ice. It was a solid showing from Slafkovsky overall. His size is a massive benefit at this level. He's able to bully players in the corners and protect the puck quite easily, paired with his stickhandling in tight. Slafkovsky's stride has improved since last season. He's now sinking more deeply into it, resulting in a better posture that still could be improved further. He's also skating with a pitchfork quite often, swinging his shoulders rather

inefficiently. He's a bit heavy on his feet, but showed that he can burst through the outside lane at this level with solid explosiveness through the acceleration. Slafkovsky's handling was pretty good throughout the game. He had some good moments off the rush, cutting to the middle before shooting hard wrists. I'm not sold on his playmaking yet. He can make the obvious feeds and his passes have a ton of power behind them, but I'd want to see more give-and-go sequences and clever little feeds to create space.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 29th, 2021

TPS vs. KooKoo - Liiga

Probably one of the better showings from Slafkovsky I've seen this season at the Liiga level. He was creating stuff offensively both in rushes and in cycles. I liked his positioning in rushes, often supporting the puck carrier and being a reliable target for passes or taking the puck if the initial carrier got stripped, getting a few chances this way. He had some good OZ playmaking sequences, showing better touch to execute subtle slip passes than I've seen before. The puck protection ability is there given his frame, even if he could be more aggressive in how he uses it. He did fine off the puck on the forecheck and in NZ defence, creating a couple of breakups. He could be more aware in the defensive end by scanning more.

**David St-Louis:** September 29th, 2021

TPS vs. KooKoo - Liiga

This was one of the best games I've seen from Slafkovsky this season. He flashed his skill almost every shift. We saw his passing ability, his talent for threading the puck through and around opponents, and we also saw his puck protection skills. While Slafkovsky lacked the acceleration and the agility to truly separate from defenders on his back, he managed to manipulate their feet and buy time to find a play by making some well-timed turns and by protecting the puck with his reach and body. I liked his awareness of the play. He scanned the ice multiple times before getting the puck, to see his space and potential options, and after getting the puck to hit the right one. Although he missed a couple plays, his decisions with the puck were good in this game. Defensively, Slafkovsky did his part. He communicated with teammates and adequately took care of his own coverage. Based on this game, I would project his hockey sense and handling skills as above-average. His skating is an issue, but considering his mechanics are better than most players his size, I think his mobility will rate as close to NHL average in a few years, with specific work on his stride and strength training.



**Lassi Alanen:** September 17th, 2021

TPS vs. Pelicans - Liiga

Decent outing from Slafkovsky who had his moments and created a couple of chances for himself. He can bulldoze his way through players at times in this level, too. One time he got the puck in the corner and pretty casually was just able to cut to the middle and draw a penalty with two guys in his back. Mostly good decision-making in transition, though he had trouble turning those controlled entries into much meaningful offence. Off-puck instincts are a bit of a question mark based on these few viewings. Sometimes he's floating too much and not determined to push to the net or adjust his pace to make himself an option. His vision on the power play has been pretty good, though I haven't seen much deception behind his passing. Once he made a nice cross-ice feed off the rush on PP, but he was looking the target the whole time and turning his body into a form where there wasn't any other choice. Not sure how the defenders didn't read that pass.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 15th, 2021

TPS vs. JYP - Liiga

Slafkovsky was skating on TPS' second line in his first career Liiga regular season game. He also saw time on the power play, gathering around 14 minutes of ice time total. Slafkovsky is just built like a tank. He still has a lot of work to do in the weight room to get stronger and he lost his balance quite easily in few battles, but there were also a couple of instances where he was able to dispossess opponents with his size and firm stick. He forechecked the puck once from the lowest defenceman, getting a partial breakaway that he failed to convert. There were also scenarios in the corners where he was able to protect the puck well and then quickly cut towards the slot. There's a pretty unique physical tool kit already for a 17-year-old and he's still very much developing. There were some junior level habits visible, like overhandling in a few scenarios and missing effective passing windows as of result. We'll have to see how things will look after he gets more games under his belt at this level.

**David St-Louis:** September 11th, 2021

KooKoo U20 vs. TPS U20 - SM-sarja U20

Impressive performance from Slafkovsky. The limitations are pretty evident: He has trouble mixing handling and skating moves together; he attacks mostly with forward stride while shuffling the puck at the rhythm of his footsteps, and he lacks both speed and explosiveness. He protects the puck in tight well due to above-average feel for where pressure is coming from, awareness of outlet, and an ability to instantly receive and place the puck away from defenders. His passing and playmaking skills are also above-average; he can slip the puck under or around sticks quite easily, and prepare those passes by faking other plays; not just simple fakes, but more elaborate ones. He can fully commit to another move, draw defensive attention to buy long seconds for a teammate to get in position. He was manipulative both on the walls and in open ice in this game, turned feet and went counter to them. He is so far above this level of play that it was a bit amusing at times. He needs a bigger challenge, but unfortunately the mobility limitation might prove to be too large at this stage for him to make an impact in Liiga. His pace is low because he can't really increase it, but it doesn't hurt his defensive engagement. Slafkovsky did great work as F1 to catch up to escaping attackers. His hockey sense will certainly receive a high grade, just like his passing skills, and maybe even his physicality if we project it enough.

**David St-Louis:** September 10th, 2021

Sport vs. TPS - U20 SM-sarja

Slafkovsky is allowed to show his skill at this level. His range is so impressive and his stature, too, that he can toy with opponents at times, shielding the puck with his body, with his arm and knee extended, and by extending it out of range. He stays away from the boards (where he could be at a disadvantage as it cuts his handling range) and turns and turns until a teammate gets in scoring position. His puck battles aren't as great, however, as he lacks quickness and the balance to establish body positioning and win them outright. His decisions with the puck were good and bad in this game, some he rushed, others he took too much time. Overall, he is an impressive creator at this level, but there are some red flags in his game: his lack of balance, his aforementioned lack of quickness, his view of himself as a skill-first player (he looks to dangle and go wide on defenders

with teammates in better position off the rush), the way he handles the puck in front of him at all times, and his lower pace of play, both due to his lack of quickness, but also because he is clearly more comfortable with a lot of space to deploy his full range.

**J.D. Burke:** September 5th, 2021

HC Sparta Praha vs. TPS - CHL

Not the flashiest performance from Slafkovsky, but nonetheless effective. Made smart plays with the puck, and almost always with pace, including a nifty bit of one-touch passing from below the goal line and into the slot for an assist in the third period. Made a concerted effort on the backcheck and involved himself in his team's defence. Scanned regularly for threats and worked hard to eliminate them before they developed. Lack of ankle flexion really stands out

**David St-Louis:** August 7th, 2021

Russia U18 vs Slovakia U18 - Hlinka Gretzky Cup

Slafkovsky showed some great skills in this tournament and in this game, too, albeit less often. I like his awareness; he makes some large scanning movements on retrievals, helping him find a passing option instantly. And he has some creativity in his passing, too: lobs and two-touch feeds. His mobility will likely be average in the NHL -- his agility especially is hindered by his length -- but his awareness, processing, and passing will still give his game pace. His rushing patterns are really interesting, with and without the puck. He understands how to create space for himself and for teammates by cutting laterally on defenders, and he does so at the right time.

**J.D. Burke:** August 7th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup Gold

Really strong performance from Slafkovsky in this contest. He was the main driver on Slovakia with his passing skill, vision, and small area skill creating a handful of chances for his team on a shift-to-shift basis. His touch as a distributor really stood out in this contest. Perfectly weighted passes on every shift. Passes into space. You name it. If a Slovak linemate was open, then Slafkovsky got them the puck. Really sharp player in space, often trying to weave in and out of defender's blind spots, using the dotted line, etc. Not a particularly explosive skater, but he thinks his way around open ice like a seasoned vet.

Did a great job of sealing off backpressure on the Slovak's first goal of the game, leading an odd-man rush and hitting Filip Meszar with a perfectly placed pass for a tap-in goal. Problem-solving ability was evident when numbers closed on

him. Looked the part of a top-five talent in this hockey game.

**J.D. Burke:** August 4th, 2021

Slovakia U18 vs. Sweden U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

This was a more subdued performance from Slafkovsky than I'm accustomed to seeing. Even so, Slafkovsky's version of a subdued performance is still among the best that this class has to offer. He's such a gifted, smart playmaker. Look-offs, well-timed contact to create, one- and two-touch passing... it's all there, and he makes it look easy. Struggled to connect on the one-timer a few times in this contest, and I'm beginning to wonder if his shot just really isn't that strong. Sent a Swedish forward to the shadow realm with an absolutely thunderous hit. The question I keep asking myself is what happens when Slafkovsky really starts to take advantage of his plus-level frame to create offence? I feel like that could take his game to another level entirely.

**David St-Louis:** August 2nd, 2021

Slovakia U18 vs. USA U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Wow. Slafkovsky dominated that game. The skill plays were memorable: great rush patterns, elusiveness along the boards, passing skills, and handling. Slafkovsky can bring the puck inside his feet to dangle defenders, goalies, and pass it to teammates. He scans a lot on retrievals to find his next play before getting the puck and he manipulates opponents with fakes before moving counter to their feet. Significantly above-average abilities combined with a high-level understanding of the offensive game and both a high processing speed and intelligent decision-making. These attributes could make him a top-5 pick at the end of the season.

**J.D. Burke:** August 2nd, 2021

Slovakia U18 vs. USA U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

It didn't take long for Slafkovsky to leave his mark in this hockey game. He jumped on a loose puck in front of Livanavage, dangled him into the shadow realm, and then scored on an against the grain finish in tight to double the Slovak lead to 2-0 early after he'd picked up an assist with a one-timer that the goalie couldn't corral on the first goal. It's just impossible for his peers to separate Slafkovsky from the puck. It's almost comical watching them try at times. He's too big, too aware of spacing and how to shield the puck from harm, and too skilled. Loved some of the arced attacks to draw defenders into his orbit on entries and create space elsewhere for his linemates. He might be one of this draft's best playmakers, and I think the potential exists for his finishing ability to reach a similar height.



4  
Rank

6  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

7  
Passing

A  
Grade

6.5  
Puckhandling

6.5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

- 4th Best Straight Line Skater
- 4th Best Problem Solving Skills
- 4th Highest Ceiling
- 4th Highest Floor
- 3rd Best Vision
- 3rd Best Transition Forward
- 5th Best Two-Way Forward

# LOGAN COOLEY

C | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 5' 10" D.O.B. MAY 4, 2004  
WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS LEFT

"He projects down the middle and has the speed and skill package you look for in the top-six. His safety is what makes him so appealing." - Eastern Conference Scout in May 2022

SHADES OF: Robert Thomas

66%	56%	53%	1.89
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	51	27	48	75
USHL	24	13	23	36
WJC-18	6	3	7	10

> Committed to Univ. of Minnesota

## Scouting Report

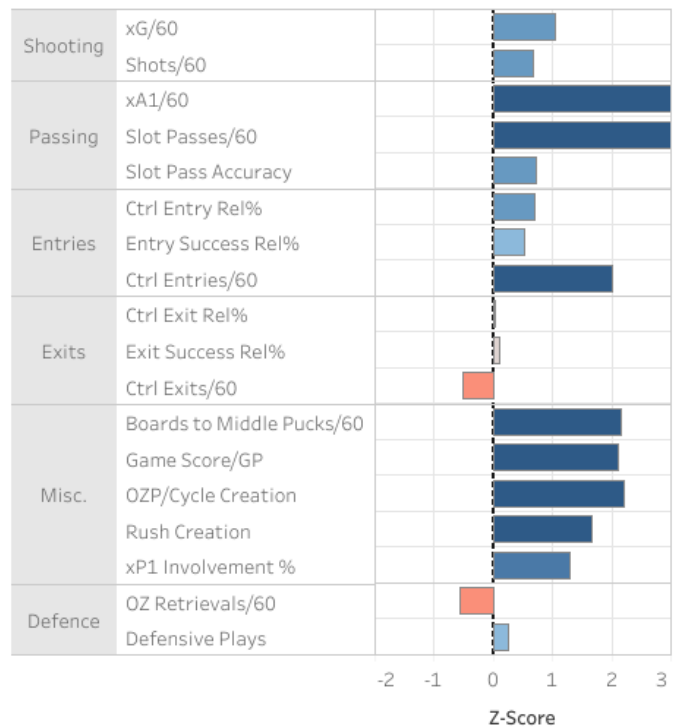
You won't find a more singularly-gifted puckhandler in this year's draft than Logan Cooley. He's a human highlight-reel, swashbuckling his way through defenders like a hot knife cuts through butter.

It all starts with the first touch, and Cooley has the best one in this class. The way he seamlessly blends pass receptions at speed into his first move without breaking stride is almost unfair. Whether it's catching a difficult pass on the backhand, forehand, or inside a crossover -- Cooley's making it happen. It's like watching a wide receiver with an unlimited catch radius.

The way Cooley keeps his top hand pushed out from his body as a handler for the full range of motion, changes speeds and lanes through the neutral zone, and deceives with shoulder feints and look-offs -- this is pro-level stuff. You can rest assured that this part of his game is going to scale up to the NHL in at least some capacity.

Cooley's more than just an AND1 Mixtape on skates, though. He's one of the rare triple-threat scorers in this draft. All of those moves serve a purpose, whether it's drawing in defenders to create space elsewhere, opening up passing lanes, or getting into better shooting positions. Think of it as controlled chaos.

Games Tracked: 12 | Minutes Tracked: 175.4  
Data tracked by Mitchell Brown (@MitchLBrown) | 5v5 only



When he's not putting defenders into the spin cycle, Cooley's picking them apart one pass at a time as a distributor. Everything you look for in a professional-level playmaker is

there -- the vision and anticipation to see developing plays, the cunning and deception to make them more easily attainable, and the touch as a distributor to connect.

Our only real concern with Cooley's projection is the absence of any high-end tools outside of his skill as a handler. Even then, Cooley's tendency to play beyond his considerable skill level often turns his greatest asset into a liability. There were just far too many turnovers and low percentage plays in his draft year for our liking.

On the one hand, you want to see a gifted player like Cooley test the limits of their game every time he takes the ice; on the other, a little discretion would go a long way.

Where Cooley managed to allay our concerns on that front was with his growth this season as an off-the-puck scoring threat. It showed our staff that there was a way for him to stay involved in his team's offence even when he's not driving

play personally. The proof of concept that he can produce in a more selfless fashion.

Cooley supports the play well, consistently displays an understanding of the rotation habits of everyone on the ice, perfectly times his movements into space, and prepares his body and footwork to send one- and two-touch attempts on goal as the puck finds him.

Still, it wouldn't hurt Cooley to add another gear as a skater. He's a bit top-heavy, lacks explosive lateral mobility, and sometimes struggles to access his outside edges. He's about an NHL average skater as currently constructed, and it's definitely a part of his game that could stand to improve.

Overall, though, there's no disputing Cooley's No. 1 centre upside, even if it's hardly a foregone conclusion that he gets there at the height of his career. Just having that within his range of realistic outcomes counts for a lot.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

USA vs Germany - WJ18

Cooley continues to show his skill and it's probably time to bump them a point, at least. He continues to be hyper-inefficient, which scares me for his NHL career, but he's smart enough to learn to pick his spot as he ages, and we saw some glimpse of small-area skills: reverse hits, defensive stick manipulation around the board, skate fakes... He anticipates the game at quite a high-level, too, knowing where to find his teammates, anticipating their drives.

**Cam Robinson:** April 26th, 2022

Germany vs. Team USA - U18s

Okay, it's been long enough. Cooley is back to No.3 on my personal board. Sure, he's been a little too 'take on the world' at times the last month or so, but he is showing my high-end skills on a consistent basis that just didn't show up as much earlier in the year. His hands are lightning quick and he's unafraid to try creative patterns and routes to beat defenders. I still want to see him use those skills to draw more coverage and distribute more efficiently, but I think that will come. He's testing limits right now and showing he has elite stuff.

**J.D. Burke:** April 26th, 2022

Germany vs. Team USA - U18s

Points be damned, I thought this was probably Cooley's best performance of the tournament to date. His ability to corral difficult passes at speed and blend that play into a handling manoeuvre really stuck out. He was electric every time he touched the puck, sometimes stickhandling through the German defence like they weren't even there, including one sequence where he literally did that twice through the

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Thomas Vanek

YEAR: 2002

SIMILARITY: 89%

2 Taylor Cammarata

YEAR: 2013

SIMILARITY: 81%

3 Jaden Schwartz

YEAR: 2010

SIMILARITY: 73%

4 Chad Rau

YEAR: 2005

SIMILARITY: 71%

5 Johnny Gaudreau

YEAR: 2011

SIMILARITY: 71%

6 R.J. Umberger

YEAR: 2000

SIMILARITY: 70%

middle of the offensive zone. Could've had a second assist in this contest with a doorside setup for Jimmy Snuggerud, but the German goalie robbed him. His one assist was a cross-ice feed to Cutter Gauthier for a one-timer goal.

**J.D. Burke:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

Not the strongest start to the tournament for Cooley, though he finished with a goal and an assist by the time the final horn sounded. The goal was fairly unremarkable. Cooley deposited the puck into a yawning cage as Cutter Gauthier set him up to finish the 2-on-1 rush. The assist was downright spectacular, as Cooley collected the puck high in the offensive zone, faked inside to create space for himself to drive the goal line, and then hit Isaac Howard with a look-off pass into the slot. Other than that, it was Cooley against the world. You have to appreciate the confidence level, but it would be nice to see him use his linemates from time to time. He just couldn't help but to skate into numbers with the puck, often losing possession in the process. The skill level with this player is absurd, and there's something to be said for

the way that he pushes the envelope on a shift or shift basis. Sometimes discretion is the better part of valour, though.

**David St-Louis** : April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

Cooley is only getting more dynamic. His first-touches are improving and improving; he takes them in movements, off his backhand, inside crossovers; he creates instant separation and drags defenders away from teammates which opens them for passes. He plans his moves, drives the net, makes give-and-goes. He's still getting overexcited and trying too many low-percentage plays.

**David St-Louis:** April 1st, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs USNTDP U18 - USHL

Cooley continues to play his game of him vs the World in the USHL. Complete transformation in his style of play since the second half of the season. Now he doesn't hit the best play all the time, but half the time, just heads straight at a pack of defenders to try and dangle them. Some nice, projectable habits this game: taking pucks in crossovers, first touch leading to next play... His game is still very interesting overall due to his supporting and playmaking instinct (at times), but the combination of poor decision-making and the doubts around the finer parts of his skating...the lack of ankle flexion and the upper-body falling to the ice makes me think of him more as a 6-10 prospect than 2-5.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

This was the usual Cooley second-half viewing. He did too much at times, but also made several high-end plays. Let's start with the bad. It's clear he's still learning how to read pressure: he dekes too early, cuts back into players he just beat, and misses the perfect passing window. Several of his decisions suggest poor judgment rather than a lack of physical skill. As for the good, he blends dekes with passes and shots, makes the pass that starts the passing play (showing planning), turns puck battles into passes, and makes one and two-touch plays. He often recognizes the best option immediately. His off-puck game remains strong: he supports the puck, generally chooses the best area to get open for a pass, and disrupts the puck carrier in pursuit. Physical and his puck protection projects as a strength: wins leverage, cuts back away from pressure. The more I watch him, the more I see 1C upside. His game required further calibration, but that he's willing to take risks to broaden his game under all this pressure is positive.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Cooley went right back to the experimentation in the game. The needlessly complicated plays, tried unnecessary dekes, and didn't use his teammates to build the offence at times. But he also had some incredible sequences: look-off cross-slot passes, backhand passes beating the defender's pivoting, passing on the heels of the defender, and connecting with one-touch passes. As his game expands, he becomes more dynamic. He manipulates defenders to open lanes, a perfect combination with his off-puck instincts and board game. Deceptive on retrievals and looks to move the puck to the inside as soon as possible. None of his tools project high-end, but the combination of them could be. He's a top-5, if not top-3 player in the draft class.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Cooley struck the right balance of skill and efficiency in this game. He created a bunch of scoring chances, all in different ways. He cut inside, then dropped the puck behind him as the defender chases. Made cross-ice transition passes to moving teammates. One-touch cross-slot passes. Look-off cross-slot passes that held the passing lane open. Backhand passes to the inside under heavy pressure. He's read the feet of defender's now, waiting for their pivot before changing directions. He remains a strong off-puck attack - his subtle movement directly led to his first goal. He's physical, a strong support player off-puck, and looks to make plays to the inside. Everything else is here, too: defence, shooting, handling, skating. Are any of these high-end? No, but it's tough to ignore his improvement. He's gone from a pacey, off-puck connector to a play-driver with manipulation ability and efficiency. He's right back into the discussion with Nazar for a top-3 spot. What a player.

**David St-Louis:** February 25th, 2022

USNTDP U18 vs Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Cooley continues to make poor choices of moves in tight spaces, but it's hard to really hold the useless feints and one-on-one skill tricks against him when the game is 9-0 at the half point. At some point, you have to allow for experiment. Cooley's skills are expanding. He's more manipulative and better at it, too; his timing, his feints are improving. The Green Bay defence also let him get away with moves, it has to be said.

The give-and-go and defensive games are still there and they're still more projectable strengths than his one-on-one play, overall. The skating is a 5 for me and the hands a bit



## Logan Cooley 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 6 || Base XLS: 66% || Impact XLS: 66% || XPR: 70.4 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



above that. Wide recovery and hunched over in his strides, but better form in crossovers.

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Cooley continues to play above his skill-level. Not sure if it's the confidence boost from going to the World Juniors, but the plays he tries aren't the best decisions and sometimes outside of his technical ability, which is closer to average than above-average for me across the board. I like Cooley for his ideas, for his play connection, for his off-puck game, the occasional deception... Not for the flashy dangles and passes he now tries that are mostly unnecessary. Maybe it's all I'm seeing, too. One way or another, this lack of self-awareness won't affect his projection too much for me. I think he settles into the right kind of game for him pretty quickly at the next levels. He showed a bit of offensive planning on the powerplay this game, attracting defenders on himself, running around the net before dropping the puck behind to a teammate who didn't really expect it. He tried another set up after a faceoff (that lead to a goal) but his spacing was quite poor on that one which almost closed the play for him. So he has interesting ideas, but the execution isn't always there.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 22nd, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Cooley continues to impress me. He's got such a smooth crossover and shifts his weight so well under duress to protect the puck. He has patience as a puck carrier and keeps the puck in a pocket position that makes him a threat to shoot. There's a lack of diversity in his rush patterns; he prefers to take the outside lane and wheel behind the net rather than cut to the middle or attack defensive triangles, but this allows the NTDP to establish a presence in the offensive zone and get their defensemen involved. To me, he's still the top forward on the team.

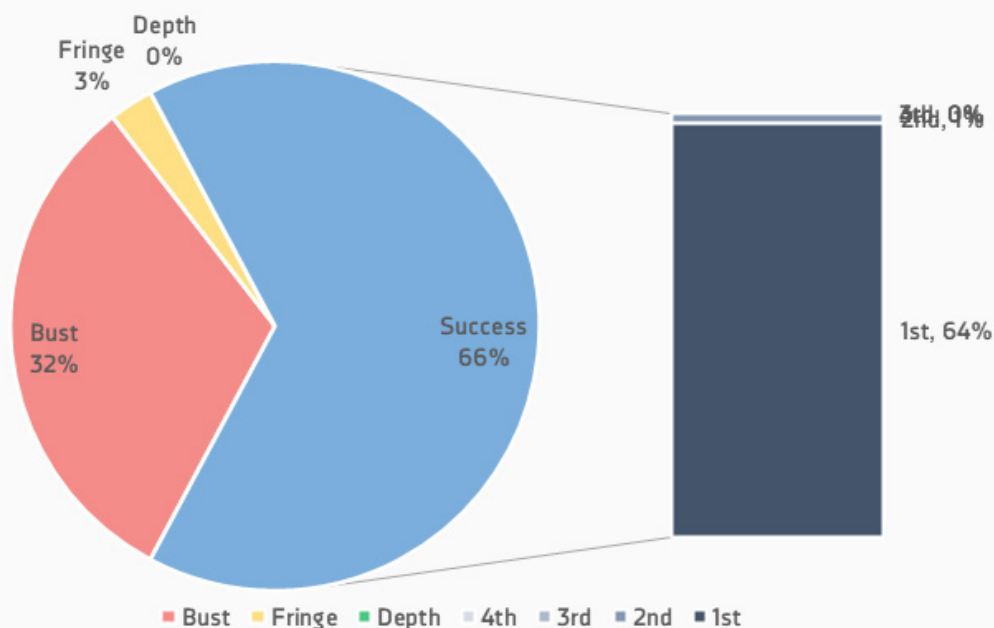
**David St-Louis:** January 22nd, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Cooley continues to overestimate his skill level, but he flashed a grade higher than what I expect him to be in this game: some nice backhand saucers and dangles through defensive triangles. His skating still projects as average for me (a bit lumbering, rounded back, wide stance) and his handling above-average, but I still don't see him really create by manipulating on the powerplay. He continues to move ahead of the play and support well. I struggle to find elements in his game that really excite me, but he's a relatively

## Logan Cooley 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



easy NHL projection, considering his (inconsistent) attention to details, his off-puck game, and his ability to make plays through defenders at times.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Not sure I've ever seen a more perplexing game than this one. Cooley was awesome at moments. He manipulated a defender to access passing lanes, then connected with a hook pass underneath their stick. The usual forechecking energy that he was able to directly translate into scoring chances. Board play was a strength: deceived before receiving the puck, waited for incoming defenders, turn his back to them, then cut to the inside. From there, he's more a prodder than decisive attacker like Nazar. That's fine. He slows down and waits to see what defenders will do, then bases his decisions on that. That ability to delay and reaction is one of his strongest offensive attributes. However, Cooley deviated from his game a ton. He looked off give-and-go opportunities to do everything himself - usually resulting in a turnover. Needless to say, he extends possession sequences with no discernible value added - just missed opportunities. Doesn't fully understand how to use a curl-and-drag wrister (he tries to shoot between the legs of defenders), but who does on this team? Anyway, I assume Cooley's game will correct itself in time. I mean, I give Korchinski and Pickering the benefit of the doubt, so why wouldn't I with Cooley? He'll be fine. He looked like a top-five pick.

**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Uneventful performance overall from Cooley. His techniques aren't all that fluid and he overestimates his own skill level at times. He moves the puck smartly to create opportunities for others and seems to know the best play most of the time, but he lacks the refinement to really become a consistent creator at the NHL level.

**David St-Louis:** January 3rd, 2022

Minnesota Golden Gophers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Cooley understands the game at a deeper level than all of his teammates in the USNTDP. He doesn't pass if passing isn't needed, but skate up until he meets pressure; he attracts defenders before moving the puck and he has some manipulation skills, some creativity. He understands the impact of a deceptive posture and leverages it to create better plays for himself and teammates. He had one great pass between the legs to set up a teammate after cutting across the slot, again, showing an understanding that the defence would focus on him and so his teammate would have the better look. His skills are limited. We saw it again in this game. He tried the Lacrosse moves behind the net. Failed it. Then launched into a series of dangles that barely worked. He always looked on the verge of losing the puck (which he did in the end).

**David St-Louis:** December 26th, 2021

Slovakia vs USA - WJ20

Cooley looked at home on the ice. His connector identity shone. He made the simple plays, fast, and sprung teammates for a bunch of chances. He even got the one assist by

faking the goalie and a last remaining defender with a head fake. He did defer a bit too much to his teammate on a last two-on-one. The play was a shot. He tried to manipulate the defender to create a lane that didn't exist. But it's normal for a draft-eligible player on this stage. I liked his half-wall play; effective distribution, not forcing anything. And his defensive positioning overall; he stayed above the puck and reloaded quickly.

**J.D. Burke:** December 12th, 2021

Madison Capitols vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Even the best prospects have bad games, and by god, was this ever one such occasion for Cooley. His motor was great from puck drop to the final horn, and there were glimpses of advanced offensive thinking, particularly the use of space passes to get past defenders in open ice, but that's about it for positives. This stat really says it all: The program finished with seven goals, and Cooley didn't pick up a single point. He was actually on the ice for two goals against, including one in which he failed to pick up the trailer who wound up burying the puck in the program net at one point. Very limited puck touches and a high percentage of them resulted in turnovers either trying to be too cute with the puck or forcing passes that weren't there. Burn the tape, as they say.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Cooley's not dynamic and I doubt he will be at the next level, but he's an awesome centre-of-the-action player. He consistently moves the puck at the right times in transition, then dashes into the right lane to get it back. He has a number of ways he can bring pucks to the inside: outracing defenders, cutting across the front, or passing. Serves as a link between his linemates, but can also finish plays, as he did twice in this game. Shot's probably an average projection (some sweeping through his shot, lacks release diversity), but he's always in the right space to use it. A strong supporting player across all three zones, and an alert forechecker who consistently disrupts the breakout. I don't think he's a clear-cut top-six centre, but definitely a middle-six centre.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 26th, 2021

Buff State vs. NTDP U18s - NCAA

Five points. Do I really need to say more? Okay, okay. Cooley really flexed the offensive muscles in this one against a weak Buff State team. His edgework and high level skating ability were on full display as time and time again he entered the zone with speed, turned defenders' feet, cut back/cut to the middle, etc. The point is, he was too hard to contain for

anyone on Buff State, and demonstrated a pace of play and evasiveness that was super exciting to watch. On the outside track, Cooley was strong enough to wheel around the zone until he found an option that satisfied him. He was also slippery enough to jam on his inside edges and work the middle lanes. Just continues to get better every time I watch him. Showed some nice off-puck spacing for a back-door goal too.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Copy and paste the game report from October 29th. Cooley's the model of consistency on a roster filled with players who are anything but. He consistently deceives on retrievals, preparing space by angling his feet and waiting for the backpressure to engage. When they do, he cuts back the other way and quickly moves the puck. Uses his hands and pace to open up lanes, and when combined, he's able to cut inside and set up a teammate, and then relocate for a return pass. He identifies options quickly and usually makes the right read immediately. A pretty crazy backhand saucer pass inside crossovers in this game, delivering it with perfect timing just as he crossed the blue line. He's always involved defensively, on the forecheck, and so on. His game's easy to appreciate. I think he's a potential middle-six centre.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Cooley's exciting when he's messing around. He spins away from pressure, dekes through the next layer, and tries to make something flashy happen. He did it a couple of times in this game. And he's not shy about taking a defender wide and driving the net -- it won't work in the NHL, but I like his assertiveness. But he's best when making the simple play at a high pace. He recognizes options immediately, consistently finds open space, and knows the next play upon receiving the puck. He's an off-the-pass shooting threat and a quick possession distributor. Understands how to play within the flow of the offence, and I mean that in a good way. He consistently ensures that the play runs through him through his positioning, and he's highly efficient in pretty much every area. His game isn't defined by manipulation, deft individual skills, or overwhelming volume; it's all about recognizing options quickly and executing immediately. Clean up some of the breakout decisions, and I'm confident that he'll be a middle-six centre.

**David St-Louis:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Cooley was the best player on the ice, in a subtle way.

His hockey sense probably ranks as a 7 or 8. Everything is there. Awareness and rotation habits, processing speed, planning/anticipation, and even a few manipulation moments. He doesn't force too many plays (good criterion) and generally knows how to progress the attack in the best way. For me, Cooley is at his best as an off-puck threat when he can attack space, adjust his footwork to prepare for a pass, and release instantly upon catching it. Cooley's body, feet, and stick seem to always be in the best position to fire. His skating has some mechanical flaws; he bends over the ice a bit in forward stride, but with crossovers, you see him fly past defenders and take on the goalie himself.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** October 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Cornell Big Red - NCAA

The Cornell game plan was to shut Cooley down and outside of his one power play goal, he was pretty invisible through this one. The goal was a nice one, he received the puck on the short side post and caught the goaltender cheating across the crease, allowing him to open up his hips and jam it through. Good recognition on that. Outside of this play though, he was kept to the perimeter in the offensive zone and on the rush. Cooley got beat up a little bit in his own zone, the Cornell forecheck did a good job finishing their hits on him, which clearly rattled his decision-making down the stretch. A pretty stark contrast from the other NCAA games I've seen him play so far this season.

**David St-Louis:** October 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Cornell Big Red - NCAA

Cooley's skills continue to lack the shine that we usually associate with top-5 prospects. It's too bad because his mental game is there. His passes are quick as he both processes openings fast and anticipates rotations of teammates and defenders. He challenges defenders off the rush to create entries, heads straight at them, freezes them, and gains the outside lane. Mitch Brown told me this is a suboptimal pattern in his game and I'm starting to see it. He is mostly an outside driver. He opens that lane with slight manipulations, but he would create more by gaining the middle. Not sure his skills would support such constant between-dots drives, however. He scored on the power play this game. He got the puck below the goal-line, and seeing the goalie advanced out of his net, he attacked the blue-paint and slipped the puck between his pads as he tried to recover. Clever.

**David St-Louis:** - October 16th, 2021

USNTDP U18 vs Michigan Tech Huskies - NCAA

Cooley is probably the best USNTDP player at positioning

himself to support the play. His plays are fast and smooth; he connects them because he looks for options, but also because he seems to have an instinctual understanding of rotations, of where teammates should be at a certain time. He doesn't necessarily manipulate defenders one-on-one with deception and dangles, but he does with movement (east-west cut) and with passing play.

**Daniel Gee:** October 16th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs Michigan Tech University - NCAA

Cooley was dominant in terms of impact and high danger chance generation against Michigan Tech University.

The most apparent part of Cooley's game is the blend of his high-revving motor and natural plus tools. He is a projectable NHL skater, who flexes well-balanced linear crossover drives, and well-mechanized bio-mechanics in his forward stride (90-degree knees, ankle-flex, separating push offs, powerful recoveries, and a correcting posture). He's full throttle on every shift, both on and off-puck -- a true threat on transitional play. In this game he had a plethora of dangerous plays while leveraging his plus-movement. Inside oriented, Cooley had a great off-puck burst up the middle, magnetizing defenders as Nazar facilitated a net crash attack. Later, Cooley entered off the far boards, busting wide, attempting a deke into the slot -- the lane was ultimately sealed. He scored in the second, slipping behind Michigan Tech's defenders and separating on a breakaway -- executed a fake and then easily scored on a backhand shot. Cooley actually should have had another goal in the first, breaking in on a two-on-one, sending some misdirection that he was going to pass and then ringing a puck off the post. High-end handler in small space, looks to cut through open space and explode through structures -- handling and skating skill blending.

Cooley's game was similarly effective while exerting sustained pressure. He had a couple dominant shifts exploiting his off-puck movement, pace, and skating ability. After a Howard transitional attack on the right-wing, Cooley came in as a trailer, filing through the slot, having a high-danger shot deflected. Off that sequence he executed a hook pass to Nazar who found space in front of the net. He's uber-confident carrying the puck, activating low to high on a crossover heavy activation that saw him walk around the perimeter of Michigan Tech's zone -- tonnes of body manipulations that caused opponent staticness. There were some examples where better catch-and-release ability would have resulted in a more dangerous chance -- he needed an extra drag of the puck on a pass he received as he attacked the hash marks. Passing skill in general was pretty high-end -- slips and hooks integrated throughout. His shot appears to lack

down-force generation, a symptom of some strength issues and a lack of lower-body integration. His release (wrist fold) is extremely quick, however.

Improvements are needed in the DZ based on this viewing. While he is a very active back pressure pusher in transitional plays and he has scanning (shoulder peaks) habits, he often is disengaged posture wise and passive in the middle lane. Needs to be leveraging tools more to push counter attacks and pressure mistakes. Tools and projectability in general are interesting and probably warrant a high first round selection.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Cooley's intelligent, somewhat creative, and very detail-oriented. Doesn't force plays, using give-and-goes and off-puck movement to supplement his high-speed transition attacks. He changes pace with the puck on his stick in all situations: retrievals, neutral zone attacks, and break outs. He understands how to gain space on the other side of defenders without relying too heavily on one particular skill. He is, however, dependent on outside speed to setup his attacks -- and I don't see him manipulating or creating lanes. I think he's mostly a high-pace thinker and executor. He establishing body positioning on retrievals, after beating defenders, and in puck battles. He's an intelligent defender who grabs steals across the ice from his motor and timed engagements. Forecheck steal directly led to a goal. I like how he plays within the flow of the offence, but can also take charge when necessary. Looks like a potential middle-six centre.

**David St-Louis:** October 9th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs Muskegon - NCAA

Cooley displayed the full extent of his hockey sense in this game. He showed awareness, processing speed, adaptability, an ability to think ahead, and even some manipulative skills. He supported teammates all over the ice, understanding their intentions and giving them timely passing options, and he killed plays defensively by picking up the right coverage. Offensively, I really liked his change of speed to create passing lanes, with and without the puck. His ability to manipulate his pace like this will serve him very well at higher levels. Off the rush, he used some clever skating patterns to beat defenders one-on-one and carry the puck in the offensive zone. He has a tendency to collapse at the hips while skating, but it isn't a big problem. His form, when he carries the puck with crossovers, improves a lot. His skills -- his skating, handling, and passing -- are clearly above-average for me. I also liked his decision-making in this game. Cooley didn't force plays; he read multiple options and picked the best one.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** October 2nd, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Michigan State Spartans - NCAA

I was thoroughly impressed with what Cooley showed in this game; he's an explosive skater with some high-level agility and gets up to top speed quickly. In the offensive zone, he's a crafty playmaker, he sees targets well off the rush and has the strength to fight off defenders and move play towards the net. For me, he's an uptempo, playmaking center with first-round skill and upside; he's clearly one of the best forwards on the NTDP, it will be interesting to keep an eye on him as the season goes on.

**David St-Louis:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Cooley's passing shone in this game. He spotted the puck into space, ahead of teammates as they beat their coverage and escaped, and he moved the puck quickly, smoothly, and precisely on the powerplay, keeping the puck in his hip pocket to hit options as they became open. Cooley doesn't really challenge or fake defenders; he doesn't open plays, but he sees them as they appear. He showed handling skills on reception; one pass came behind him and he deflected it in front using one-hand on his stick, but overall, I wouldn't give his hands more than 6; he is not a real threat to dangle unless he has a speed difference. He prefers putting the puck into space than to get in a stick battle with a defencemen, which isn't necessarily a bad play, but for a high-pick you would like to see a little more dominant skill. His puck protection mechanics, close contact skills also need improvements. Like many USDP forward, he tends to hunch over the ice as he skates.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Cooley and Nazar shone brightest through this contest. Cooley, unlike Nazar, puts more of an emphasis on his skating and driving on defenders with speed rather than using stick-handles. He such a shifty skater and has an explosiveness in his stride that makes it difficult for defenders to seal him off high in the zone. He facilitates play offensively, getting his head up and identifying the right option to hit in stride, he's a great playmaker with high-end processing ability. Showed some signs of physical play too, finishing hits and playing big. I like him as a first-round pick.

**J.D. Burke:** September 25th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

There's so much skill at Cooley's disposal. He's a gifted



puckhandler, equal parts inventive and confident. Pulled off some amazing inside-outside moves through the middle of the ice to create a chance in the first period. He's more of a smart worker than a hard worker, not that his work rate is really in question. He made plays at pace with a couple of slick one-touch passes. Strong performance.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 30th, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

Pace. Lots of it. Cooley's relentless. Without the puck, he's stepping on the gas to steal away possession as soon as possible. With it, he attacks in waves. He always wants to burn the defender wide, but I also plenty of desire to play on the inside. I think it comes down to diversifying his rush patterns. A slick inside cut with the weight shift for shot built into it, setting up his game-tying goal. Showed quickness at

this level with an almost properly loaded stride and high crossover integration. Exciting player.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Much of Cooley's game won't work in the NHL: the overreliance on the outside lane dashes, the inconsistent execution, and highly inefficient game. But it's easy to see that he's going to really improve. He attacks with a ton of pace, and even though he wants to beat defenders wide in transition, he always looks to get inside before the net defender. In offensive zone play, he anticipates passing lanes, getting open to become an easy option, then hitting an open teammate in scoring position. He'll need to add more gears to his game and start pressing the middle earlier, but has the makings of a first-round pick.



5  
Rank

6.5  
Skating

6  
Shooting

7  
Passing

A  
Grade

6.5  
Puckhandling

7  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

2nd  
Best Straight Line Skater

2nd  
Best Problem Solving Skills

1st  
Highest Ceiling

2nd  
Best Vision

1st  
Best Transition Forward

# FRANK NAZAR III

C/RW | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 5' 10" AGE JAN. 14, 2004  
WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS RIGHT

"You don't have to be big to be good anymore and size shouldn't trump skill. You take the best player with the highest ceiling and he's most certainly in the top 20 for this class by that measurement." - Western Conference executive in April 2022

SHADES OF: Brayden Point

67%	60%	56%	1.88
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	56	28	42	70
USHL	24	15	20	35
WJC-18	6	3	6	9

> Committed to Univ. of Michigan

## Scouting Report

Frank Nazar III is the force multiplier in the 2022 NHL Draft. It's as if his team has a numbers advantage almost every time he steps on the ice.

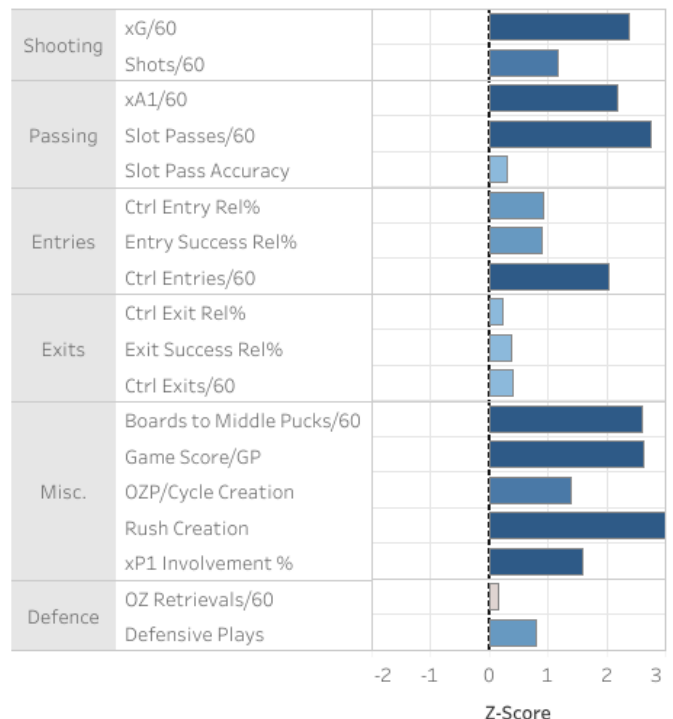
You watch Nazar cut through the neutral zone with speed and manoeuvre his way through defenders like they aren't even there, and our label of him as a force multiplier doesn't warrant further inquiry. It's obvious, plain for all to see.

A lot of the time, though, Nazar makes subtle, almost imperceptible plays at every corner of the ice to create advantages for his linemates - little things like dragging defenders toward him on entries to create half-ice 2-on-1s or driving the net off-the-puck to give his linemate more runway. The more attention you pay to Nazar, the more you appreciate his offensive genius.

An inside-driven dual-threat scorer, Nazar isn't shy about using his plus-level skill as a handler to get between the hashmarks. It's his default setting if anything. A smooth, precise puckhandler who maintains possession at the heel of his blade, hands moving independently of his feet - this part of his game comfortably projects to the NHL, too.

The question, and it's a fair one, is whether Nazar's 5-foot-10 frame will be able to sustain this playing style in a

Games Tracked: 13 | Minutes Tracked: 192.5  
Data tracked by Mitchell Brown (@MitchLBrown) | 5v5 only



professional setting. And for many scouts who can't answer that question in the affirmative, what does that mean for the

American pivot's projection? And is he still a centre?

Our ranking of Nazar should make clear that we're not especially concerned. The inside of the offensive zone won't be as easily accessible at the next level, even for all his skill as a handler, but there's so much more to his game than that, even if that's one of his more admirable qualities.

We've already touched on his guile as a distributor, but you can also count on Nazar to consistently create shooting opportunities for himself with his off-puck intelligence. He's a master of the give-and-go, timing contact against defenders to create space, hiding in defender's blindspots -- you name it.

And he's never going to be late to a shooting opportunity

either. Nazar is one of the draft's most effortless skaters, with nearly perfect mechanical form and small-area agility to match.

The skill, the sense... it's all there for Nazar, and his ceiling is among the highest in this draft as a result. And if he stood but a few inches taller, we suspect more of our peers would hold him in a similar esteem.

There's no guarantee that Nazar will one day leverage these tools at the NHL level well enough to be a first-line centre. Much like Cooley, though, it's well within his range of possible outcomes. If you want to swing for the fences in this part of the draft, then he's your guy.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Thomas Vanek  
YEAR: 2002  
SIMILARITY: 92%

2 Taylor Cammarata  
YEAR: 2013  
SIMILARITY: 81%

3 Jaden Schwartz  
YEAR: 2010  
SIMILARITY: 72%

4 Chad Rau  
YEAR: 2005  
SIMILARITY: 71%

5 R.J. Umberger  
YEAR: 2000  
SIMILARITY: 71%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

USA vs Germany - WJ18

Nazar is not showing as much playmaking skills as Cooley overall, not as much deception, skating skills, handling moves...The small-area games, his ability to find the puck in tight spaces, establish body positioning, protect it, score around the net -- They remain superior. Are they worth as much?

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Czechia vs USA - WJ18

The amount of highly technical and creative passes and receptions from Nazar this game was staggering. The puck is glued to the stick of Nazar in tight spaces. He loses it sometimes, but finds it back in a second, always. Is it projectable? I'm not sure. He's always pulling off plays by the skin of his teeth and we want players capable of creating large advantages. The game has to be easy for them at this level. More and more Nazar is a great supporting element, however, making plays by moving off puck and by stripping opponents of the puck. He rammed one in this game and the puck squirted to Howard. He's still forcing many plays.

**J.D. Burke:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

What a start to the tournament for Nazar, who managed to pick up a pair of assists in his 15 minutes of ice-time. The way that he manipulates defenders is just so advanced for a player this age, particularly in space. He didn't get an assist on the play, but there was a rush in the second period where Nazar dragged a defender wide as he gained the zone,

cut back to create separation, and then feathered a perfectly weighted pass into space for Jimmy Snuggerud to send on goal for a chance. His second assist was pretty special too, as he collected the puck behind the Canadian goal and immediately sent a saucer pass through traffic and onto Isaac Howard's stick for the easy goal. You also have to give Nazar a ton of credit for the way that he fearlessly plays inside and through traffic. There are times when Nazar looks like the best offensive player in this class, and this was one of them.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Another standout game from Nazar. His awareness of defenders is probably the best in the draft class. He turns one way, waits for their reaction, then cuts the other way. When he's passing, he waits for defenders to turn and then passes on their heels. He's even adding a delay game: cutting back instead of outracing defenders or waiting an extra second before making the next play. He still forces the odd play, but he's gone from missing options and inefficient to attempting the best play and connecting regularly. That's a huge turnaround. He overwhelms with pace, and his better posture will harness his driving crossovers and natural explosiveness more. Defensive motor can be inconsistent, but I think it'll be a strength moving up the ranks. He establishes body positioning with ferocity and piles up the steals when engaged. He's pretty easily a top-five in this group, no doubt.

**Cam Robinson:** March 20th, 2022

USNTDP vs Cedar Rapids Roughriders - USHL

Another game showing off high end skill for Nazar. He



scored just a ridiculous backhander while going down on one knee and moving away from the net. Showed the strength, body control and poise while having a defender draped all over him. Tagged a primary helper by picking up the puck off the wall near the blueline, one-handing a touch through a defender's feet to dish it over. He was cutting the middle with speed and ferocity whenever he had the puck in transition. Clearly a dangerous player, he still finds himself with time and space in the offensive end. Was a little off time in the defensive end on a couple of shifts where he lost his man or bled out too high. Overall the work rate was there though. His physical strength is very apparent.

**Cam Robison:** February 25th, 2022

USNTDP U18 vs Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Jesus. Nazar had 10 legit scoring chances in this one. He is so active in his pursuit of open ice in dangerous pockets of the offensive end. Pushing off of players, faking low to pop out high, getting to the net front at the right time for tips and rebounds. His skating remained dynamic in transition - he has serious pop from a stop and his top speed is high. I'd love to see a little more lateral shiftiness but it'll come with more strength. He absolutely thrives in the middle of the ice. He ended the night with three helpers - two primary with one showing his wide speed and a shot at a bad angle, corralled the rebound, swung around the net and sent a snap pass cross-slot for the tap in. The upside and creativity is palpable.

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Nazar confirms his evolution with this performance. I liked his defence for the most part: constant scanning, attaches himself to his check reasonably well, timely intervention to cut passes or almost cut passes, some engaging. He now uses teammates a lot more to beat set rush defences and he would do that a lot more successfully if Howard understood spacing concepts a bit better. He makes pick plays to create space for Howard, attracts defenders on himself to make space for Howard... Nazar could still manage the puck better. He looks a bit nonchalant sometimes in his decisions, like each one of them doesn't matter as much in the grand scale of a chaotic NTDP game. It's not a big hit to his projection, but it's still something to account for.

Nazar will definitely be able to score from tight spaces at the next level. When he attacks the net, he cuts them at the hands (without a thought about his own safety) and he can fire quickly with the puck in front of him. A lot of tools, improving hockey sense projection, and defensive engagement

-- he's probably going to be top-6 at our next meeting. I like him more than Cooley.

**David St-Louis:** January 22nd, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

The more I watch prospects in this draft, the more disappointed I get. The search for potentially high-end talent is proving quite hard, but Nazar is a candidate. He's someone who I still can't exactly figure out because he continues to add to his game. At the start of the season, he wasn't using teammates at all. Now, he's trying give-and-goes and one-touch plays in transition and becoming more of an off-puck threat, a good one, too, capable of establishing body positioning preemptively in the slot, of moving to readjust to a passing lane, of going to the net to both catch pucks and clear space for teammates to attack down. He extended many of his shifts way too long in this game and started floating a little bit, but I like the defensive engagement in general. He got a breakaway (another) and scored with an effective move. The contrast between him (becoming more effective) and Howard (falling deeper into the "I'm too skilled for you" pit) is striking. He might end up top-3 for me....By default.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

So Nazar, Cooley, and Howard have been playing together and holy cow is it fun to watch. Nazar and Cooley especially were wheeling all over the place. Nazar consistently used edgework and stickhandling maneuvers to wheel around the zone and create pockets from himself inside the dots. Off the rush, the passing was exceptional, he was hyper-aware of where his teammates were and moved off the puck so well to be a threat off the return pass. He's a decent skater and has the handles to really manipulate defenders before issuing a well-timed pass or dangle. Him and Cooley are high, high, first rounders for sure.

**J.D. Burke:** January 14th, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

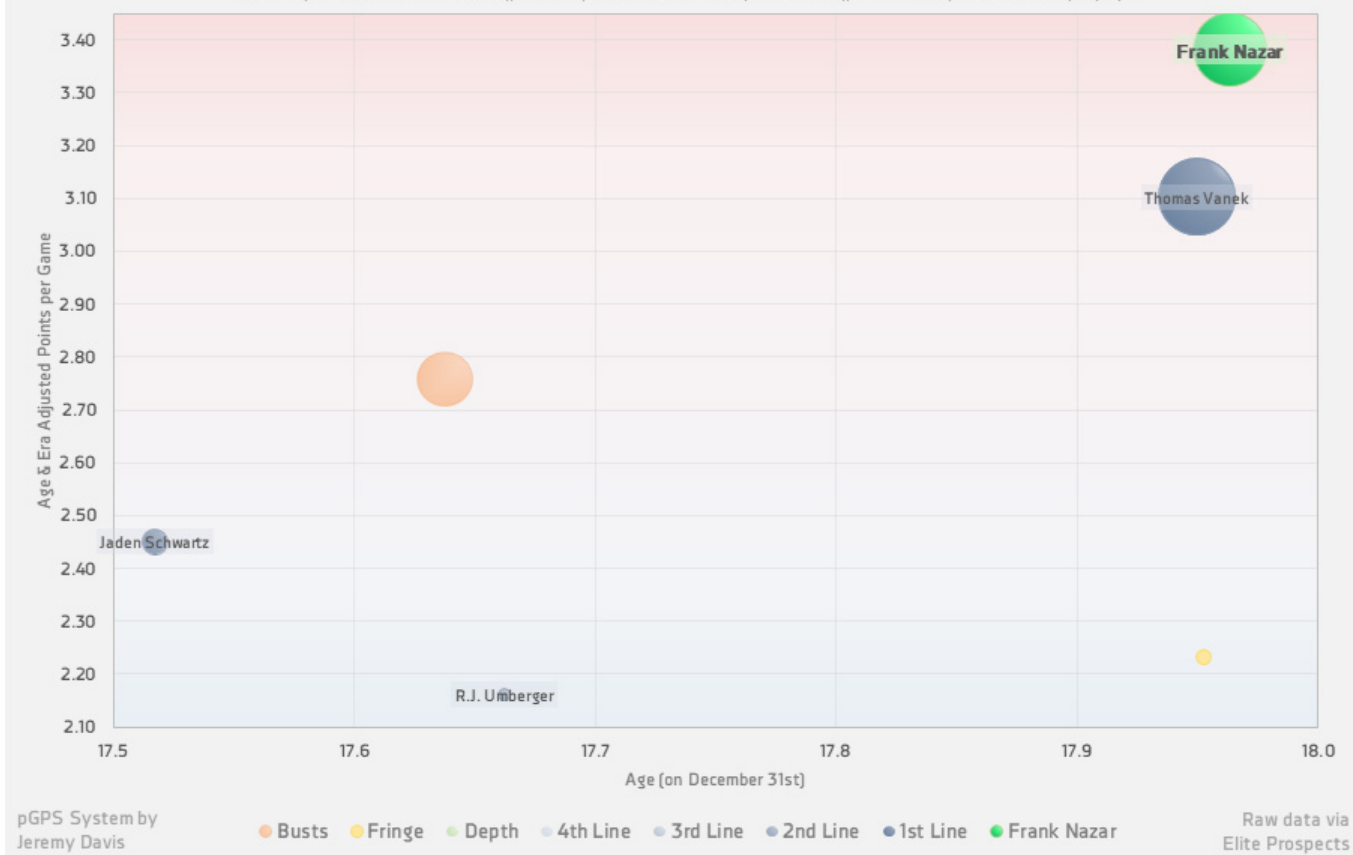
The full array of Nazar's skill set was on display in this contest. The eye-line deception, the shoulder feints, the way he set up his manoeuvres... there was very little the opposition defenders could do to contain Nazar with the puck on his stick. And when they'd managed to dispossess him for even a moment, Nazar would just as quickly retake possession with second and third efforts. It just looked easy for him at times. Nazar was incredibly inside-driven in this hockey game, generating easily two or three highlight reel-grade plays even if the puck didn't land in the back of the net. Grabbed a pair of primary assists, including one low-key

## Frank Nazar 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 5 || Base XLS: 67% || Impact XLS: 67% || XPR: 70.3 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



exceptional pass on the rush to set up Isaac Howard with an open net. His sense of timing, pacing, spacing, etc. is such a valuable tool on the rush. Nazar knows where to go, and at what speed to make himself a more easily reachable, more threatening shooter. The only real problem that I had with Nazar's game was the defensive work rate which was, frankly, pretty weak. An awful lot of floating, puck-watching, cheating, etc.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 8th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Such a strong performance by Nazar, who continues to make a case for himself as a top-10 pick. The kid's work rate in the offensive zone is incredibly high, with the puck he makes such an effort to penetrate the inside and create high-quality chances. Without the puck, he hustles to get open and supports the puck close. His shooting was impressive in this one too, getting to soft spaces and firing off quick one-timers to catch Dubuque off-guard. His skating has become more of an asset, he can use crossover and inside edge cuts through the neutral zone and high in the offensive zone to create separation and give himself areas to work with the puck. The debate between him and Cooley is a close one.

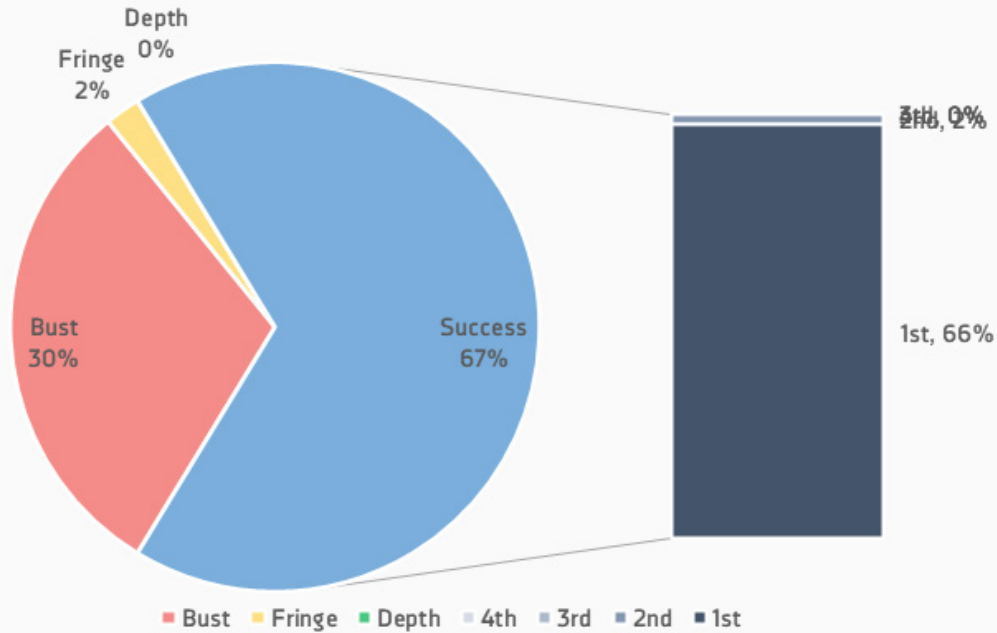
**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I'm not even sure how many breakaways Nazar had in this game. He truly has a knack for gunning past the line of defence to receive stretch passes and take on the goalie. I bet he finds occasions like this in the NHL, too (albeit way less often). Nazar continues to develop as a passer. He doesn't force plays, but takes what's there; he pushes the defence back with his crossover accelerate, turns their feet, and then reloads the puck to trailers, installing the offence instead of making one-and-done, forced plays. His playmaking still needs better deception. He killed a far-post tap-in goal because instead of faking a shot, he fixated on his teammate there. The last remaining defender red the play as a result and cut the pass. Nazar can leverage evident scoring situations when he has more time into even better plays, but not do it quickly on the fly when he has less than a second to analyze the situation. There are still some hockey sense doubts here, but as his tools are so great, as he can get to spots other won't ever be able to in the NHL, his decision-making will be helped. He is already much more adaptable in his decisions than he was earlier in the season. I also like his inside game, the way he rushes the net with and without possession, another element that will translate

## Frank Nazar 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



well and will have coaches like him.

**David St-Louis:** January 3rd, 2022

Minnesota Golden Gophers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Nazar's speed and acceleration were on full display in this game, both as a pressure mechanism and a transition one. He backchecked, cut opposing plays by placing his stick inside lanes, and then created offence off turnovers by rapidly attacking the other way. He seems to pass more frequently, to look to pass more, instead of going solo on defenders (even if he is capable of pulling off these one-on-ones with his advanced skills). One time, he took the wide lane off the rush, and as he entered the offensive zone, opened up his skates to feed the puck back to a teammate, trailing the play. The pass moved through the defender. Defensively, Nazar can turn it off sometimes. He forgot his man in front of the net after both of his defencemen went to battle on the wall. It was a switch situation that he executed late, but in general, he supports the play in the right spot.

**Cam Robinson:** December 29th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs Augsburg University - NCAA (DIII)

An interesting game from Nazar in this one. He was dynamic as ever while transporting the puck. Talk about a player who loves to cut into the inside of the ice. He was using his mates well in give and go situations to exploit seams in the defense, he showcased his terrific speed wide and then cut to the net front - narrowly missing the full crease wrap in

flight. He was in smart positions defensively throughout, but was guilty of making a few too many soft, 'tricky' plays in his own end that resulted in turnovers. Playing Div 3 opponents perhaps played a role in that. He was excellent in the dot, nabbing an assist off of a clean ozone win. I really like his ability to hit mates in flight and through folds. He's a creative and advanced passer. I'd have liked to see him shoot more in this one for the some of the chances he had. And to be more aware and decisive with the puck in the dzone.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

This wasn't just the best Nazar game I've seen, it might've been the best performance I've seen from any draft eligible so far. In total, he either shot or set-up 19 shots and completed 12 controlled entries at 5-on-5. He not only keeps the middle when getting, he outright attacks it from every possible position. Beats defenders wide and cuts back in, cuts across the front, runs through back pressure to draw in the extra defender, and passes to teammates through layers. While he missed a number of passes into the slot, he set up a number of scoring chances with manipulation and gravitational pull, like a cross-slot look-off passes, against-the-grain passes after gaining the inside, dropping pucks back to teammates before finishing his off-puck route. The best play: hesitation move to draw in teh defender, then cut off their hands, work back up the boards, cut inside, spin around and shouldercheck, before turning his body and head away from his passing

target and connecting with a cross-slot pass through three defenders – elite play. This was a much better transition passing game, as he used teammates on his flanks after moving both defenders to the inside lane. Timing isn't perfect on some of these kick-out passes, but that he's suddenly using them so regularly denotes a major shift in his game. The off-puck offence, relentless backpressure, retrieval skill, and handling skill all featured regularly, too. There are few minor things: tweaking stride mechanics, improving awareness of backpressure in open ice, and improving the timing on his passes. In this game, he looked like a potential top-line forward and a top-5 pick in the draft.

**Cam Robinson:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Oh boy, this was a good one from Nazar. He was setting up chances in high danger areas like a mad man. His speed was evident but it was his edges that really stood out. He was able to receive the puck in flight, toss a couple of crossovers to explode into space and then use that slight advantage to cut into the slot area while protecting the puck. He was drawing defenders to him before sending slick passes through folds - using fakes and hesitations to gain advantages. Showcased high end handles in tight and under pressure. Missed a few of the more quickly timed touch passes out to the flanks, missed a couple of assignment in the dzone, but overall a standout and impressive performance. You see him play like this and you can't help but envision a high-end C at the next level.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Nazar was a force on the forecheck, winning races on retrievals, winning battles from disadvantages, and stealing possession. Advanced understanding of body positioning in battles: gets low, attacks their feet, and works to get the player on his back. Plenty of inside lane attacks as usual, but they weren't as individualistic as normal. Instead, he passed cross-ice or from the boards to the inside lane to connect with teammates. Still had his gamely impressive manipulative, high-pace rush sequence to gain the middle, too. Grabbed a couple of chances, but I don't see this a needle-moving performance. He's a top-10 pick, but with a more assembly required than most.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

This was a classic Nazar game: the pace, the inside play, and scoring instincts. Finishes all of his off-puck routes, and usually arrives at the right times. A lot more NZ passing in

this game, which benefitted his strong offensive outing – it also meshes well with his off-puck game. If given the puck when flatfooted, he delays and makes a positive option. But that's the only time he does it. He forces passes because he lacks the foresight to let his teammates skate their routes before moving the puck. Misses opportunities because he doesn't scan consistently. Still skates straight at defenders and loses possession. A lot of his game seems like guesses. He checked out defensively on a shift or two, but it was mostly impressive work along the boards, in puck pursuit, and eliminating threats off-puck. He's clearly an advanced with player with tough-to-teach elements. Equally, he has many limitations that seem tricky to teach, like lacking a delay game and lacking foresight. Still, teaching him how to properly set up his dekes and adding more passing skill probably enables him to become a top-nine forward regardless.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I still don't know what to make of Nazar. His tools are among the best three-to-five players in the draft class. Explosive skater with significant inside leg push-off inside crossovers, mechanically sound puckhandling with creativity and touch, and plenty of shooting refinement. In some regards, he's really advanced decision-maker/thinker: finds pockets of space routinely, understands how to manipulate defender's feet, attacks the inside, and wins battles through body positioning. He scored a pair of goals, including one with the outside lane net drive. And then he tried it a couple of more times without much success. He doesn't use his teammates regularly enough, and he's too individualistic in how he attacks, and when he passes, they're often way off. Relentless on pursuit, but sometimes turns it off in the DZ. I can see the top-10 argument, but I also see the late-first argument.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 26th, 2021

Buff State vs. NTDP U18s - NCAA

Surprisingly, not really Nazar's night on this one. He picked up a couple of assists, which is to be expected with the minutes he's playing (and the 8-1 score), but there was a flatness in his game tonight that was uncharacteristic. Blind centering passes, getting caught in traffic without a place to move the puck to, knocked over a couple of times; it was a bit of a departure from a usual Frank Nazar game. He stepped it up as the game went on and found his footing and pace a little bit, but I really expected him to dominate against a weak D3 school like Buff State. With what I've seen from him though so far this year, I'm willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. Chock it up to too much Thanksgiving

turkey. He's still a top-15 pick.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 5th, 2021

Adrian College vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

This was a return to form for Nazar. Granted Adrian College isn't exactly the most challenging opponent, but Nazar was still impressive against an older, stronger team. The off-puck timing and spacing in the offensive zone and on the rush continues to be a huge positive, Nazar is second to none at finding pockets of space where he's a threat to shoot. He's got a ridiculous amount of skill and confidence, connecting a between-the-legs pass on a two on one that almost resulted in a goal. The physical game continues to be a strong point too, Nazar finishes every hit and plays so much bigger than his size. He's a first-round pick to me.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Nazar makes the game way harder than it needs to be. Delay and pass to the trailer? He dekes inside and tries to take everyone on himself. Wait a second before passing? He tries to hammer that thing through bodies. Give-and-go opportunity? More dekes. I respect how badly he wants to play on the inside, how much he wants to posterize defenders. But he needs to relax. There were also some really intelligent plays: simple inside-lane breakout passes for chances up the ice, spinning off pressure and driving the inside to shoot (instead of dangling another player), and short-range passes through a defender. As usual, off-puck movement with a bit of timing; he's good at coming from the outside to the middle at the right times and playing between checks. And the physicality's always here. He's a terrific athlete, just overpowering, explosive, and very high energy. There's a legitimate top-10 argument here, provided his limitations are the result of desire instead of poor play-reading. Not quite sure what to make of him yet.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I want to see more from Nazar with the puck. His off-puck habits and ability as a finisher are undeniable. We've known that for a while. But I've had a few viewings of him where he just doesn't impress me when he gets the puck on his stick. There are low-percentage attempts at highlight-reel plays, trying to do it all himself rather than cutting back and delaying for help. It gets frustrating to watch sometimes. That said, he finds soft spots so well to support teammates and has a nice quick shot that he can fire through defenders to catch goaltenders off guard. I've seen his ability to make

the simple slip pass before, manipulate off the rush and find lanes to the net more effectively (even if it isn't as pretty), these are the habits he needs to engage in more regularly. The guy has such a high motor and work ethic though, I have no doubt he'll figure it out eventually. He loves the checking game, he bangs and crashes wherever he can; it's rare you see him pass up a hit. He's my second forward so far behind Cooley.

**David St-Louis:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I got some Josh Anderson vibes from Nazar in this game. Not that they are at all similar types of players, but they both developed their game around their main skills -- skating, handling, penchant for physical engagements, and net-drives -- and forgot to add passing in there. Nazar sped all over the ice in this game. He caught passes on the fly, even those that were off target with some stickhandling agility. He dangled multiple defenders and even cut inside on one to attack the net, showing puck protection mechanics that will serve him in the pros (knee extension, outside edge use, a body lean toward the opponent...). He also overdangled (why attack four defenders by himself?) and missed passing windows consistently. He had one shift where he created a give-and-go and it turned into his best scoring chance. Some of his poor passing decisions are the product of choice (he doesn't want to pass) and others because he doesn't see the option, so focused on the defender. Nazar also had a very lazy defensive shift in the first period that made me sour on him. He really didn't want to help teammates outside his own coverage, even if the puck carrying attacker was cutting inside his stick range.

**Cam Robinson:** October 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Cornell Big Red - NCAA

Speed and transitions for days in this one. I love Nazar's ability to transport the puck, move it quickly, hit a hole and get it back before turning it into a scoring chance. Even against Div 1 competition his speed was highly evident - especially the crossover acceleration while already in-flight. The hands are soft and can manipulate in tight spaces, and he used those to draw opponents and distribute effectively. Had 4 or 5 attempts - 3 real chances but only hit the net once. Grabbed a secondary helper after digging the puck out of the corner and dish to the point. You'd think his skills would result in even more chances and points but not as of yet, but the talent is clearly there for an explosion.

**David St-Louis:** October 23rd, 2021

#### USNTDP U18s vs. Cornell Big Red - NCAA

Hello Frank Nazar! His defensive game is still a work in progress, but at least he was more involved in this contest as he filled penalty kill duties. His tools are above-average. Nazar can outbattle college opponents, fly by them, and also thread the puck through them to teammates, because yes, he was passing more this game, not only mindlessly rushing the puck up-ice. Although he can take on a couple of defenders himself at times due to the precision of his skating and handling moves and pace, the offence always looks much cleaner and effective when he decides to pass. He finds good options when he is scanning for them and understands how to adapt his passing angle to reach those. His speed remains his best creation attribute. He can turn turnovers into scoring chances in an instant.

#### David St-Louis: - October 16th, 2021

##### USNTDP U18 vs Michigan Tech Huskies - NCAA

Nazar is a complex player to evaluate due to the inconsistencies in his play, even skill-wise. One minute he attacks with perfect skating and handling form and threads the puck through tight lanes, and the other, he struggles to keep up his awareness of his space and escapes at the same time as pulling off his high-level plays. But overall, I would rate all of his skills as above-average. His vision, while inconsistent, could also be considered a strong point. When Nazar looks to pass, he can pull off some precise, timely feed to teammates that are just opening themselves. He is also good at finding quiet ice, off the rush for breakaways, and in the offensive zone to support plays. The way he plays the game is flawed right now -- the dekes through five opponents and the offensive cheating -- but you could reorient that skill better and turn him into a connector with a ton of solution to keep possession for his team off the rush and in the offensive zone.

#### Daniel Gee: October 16th, 2021

##### USNTDP U18s vs Michigan Tech University - NCAA

While Nazar didn't see any conversion in this game, he was probably as equally dangerous as Logan Cooley was, if not more.

Nazar's intelligence shines through on practically every shift, especially in offensive zone sequences. In sustained pressure, Nazar is constantly activating off-puck into soft coverages. In the first after Howard intercepted an outlet, he sent a backhand pass to Nazar waiting on the left-hand circle, leading to an attack with no resistance. Nazar tried to drag the puck across Michigan Tech's goaltender, popping the puck five-hole -- which was saved. His penchant to get lost in coverages helped him later in the second. Sifting into the

slot, Nazar took a pass from the near board, catching and hooking a puck on net in one motion for another high-danger chance. Nazar's passing ability was highlighted throughout this game. In the third he created a high-danger chance off a forecheck, backhanding a pass to Cooley in the slot. The passing skill continued in transitional scenarios. In the first he layered a backhand pass to Howard who was bursting through the neutral zone with speed. Later Nazar chipped a backhand pass into the neutral zone to create a two-on-one for Cooley and Howard. On another sequence in the second, Nazar layered a cross ice pass on a 3-on-2 that was deflected. Some of the passes he attempted were extremely high on the difficulty metre, which of course led to turnovers.

Nazar had some great on-puck transitional sequences, however. One one shift in the first, Nazar took a Cooley pass with speed, bisected two defenders exploiting their extremely poor body positioning, and fired a shot stickside under pressure. Later on a second period powerplay, he did the same, breaking through a transitional wall. Habits were immense in general; he manipulates through changes in pace, executed passing skill while frankly being hammered physically, and can execute in one motion. His worst play was honestly a one-time pass he took on the right-wing, missing badly and ticking the puck wide.

Nazar had some great pressure pushing plays in the defensive zone. While a lack of physical strength really limits him currently when providing resistance in the slot and on the perimeter he shoulder peaks often, gets low and clogs passing lanes, and competes hard to facilitate clears. Struggles mirroring footwork at times -- it resulted in a really bad lost check in the first.

#### Mitchell Brown: October 9th, 2021

##### Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Nazar looks amazing. He consistently attacks the inside, dangles through defenders, and tries to connect with advanced ideas. He tries to deceive, even on retrievals, shows plenty of NHL-calibre physicality to win battles, and has a terrific feel for when to accelerate. Drives off that inside leg in his crossovers while accelerating -- he can really separate at this level. Finished his off-puck route and fired off a clean two-touch shot. The issue? He rarely connects with these plays -- it hasn't seemed to have improved since last season. He just throws pucks at his teammates with much thought, his passes consistently miss their target (usually behind), and he blinds throws pucks into the slot (he went 2-for-7 on passes into the slot this game, for reference). He can open up passing lanes with handling, but his timing on the actual pass is usually way off. He just goes non-stop without ever

thinking. There's a lot of reason to believe in Nazar, but he has to start completing plays.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

My goodness is Nazar impressive. The speed, the motor, the skills, it's all there. There really isn't much more you can ask for from the kid. He was making plays all night, carving up opponents through the neutral zone with his speed, setting up teammates, and punishing opponents. At times, there was an overreliance on his hands on zone entries that will not work at higher levels, but he managed to get away with it in this one. Still, his skating and edgework is so high caliber, he's truly got an arsenal to work with in terms of manipulating defenders. Looks like a first-rounder.

**J.D. Burke:** September 25th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

It's not much of a stretch to suggest that Nazar could've easily finished this game with a hat-trick if he only had a bit more luck. He was the best forward on the program in this contest. That much isn't up for debate. Nazar's sense of timing is so refined for a player this age. So are his habits, and that extends to the full sheet; Nazar backchecked diligently, tracked well through the neutral zone, and is a bit of a pick-pocket. Wants to drive the inside every time the puck is on his stick. Scans for pockets of space off-the-puck. Picked up a goal with an absolute haymaker of a one-timer. Easily a first-round talent. Easily.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** September 17th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Clearly the best player on the ice, Nazar was unbelievable at facilitating offensively in this one. Off the puck, he gets into pockets of space that make him a scoring threat; had a nice one timer goal where he slipped past defensive detection and fired a quick half-slap on net. I'm not sure how strong his skating is, it seemed about average to me and there was nothing special about his acceleration or edgework, but he was super crafty with his hands. He used handles, fakes, and look-offs to open up seams in the offensive zone and was confident enough to carry the puck and regroup to look for new opportunities when he wasn't happy with options given to him. A clear first-round pick if he continues to have showings like this. Right up there with McGroarty, Cooley, and Howard.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 17th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Nazar's always in the thick of the play. His off-puck move-

ment, timing, and awareness ensure that he's always getting the puck. Once it lands on his stick, he attacks the middle instantaneously. Early into the rush, he cuts inside and tries to manipulate. Perhaps a bit too reliant on his hands at the movement, but his hand and puck positioning are both projectable and should allow him to beat defenders at the next level. Deceives when setting up the moves, too. Absolutely fearless in contact. Always involved on the backcheck. DZ positioning needs tightening up but he clearly has instincts, timing checks, solving tricky situations, and anticipating plays along the walls.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

The best player on the ice behind Savoie. The stickwork stands out right away. He's a skilled handler who manipulates defenders in open ice, while still having problem-solving skills in-tight. Hesitation moves, changes of pace, and eye deception are his go-to set-ups -- all high-level stuff. Reads defenders' reactions to his manoeuvring and capitalizes immediately. Very, very, very inside-driven, consistently bringing pucks off the boards to the inside, attacking off retrievals, and trying to set up teammates. His passes weren't always perfect in accuracy but had plus set-ups. Defensive timing and instincts to steal pucks away at the perfect time. Always seemed a step ahead in his check, reading the play while applying pressure. Forechecking is a clear strength; got the jump on so many passes. Constant off-puck movement, timed to the play around him, which directly led to a goal. Tough to think there will be more than 10 players in the next draft better than him.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

In terms of play-creation potential, Nazar has the highest upside in the group. But his execution is so far behind the other top players. He doesn't recognize options, doesn't pass early enough, and gets locked into handling the puck. His off-puck offence appeared in spurts, but is greatly limited by the simple fact that the play dies on his stick so much in transition. He's so inside-driven, so creative, and so physical that it's easy to see the potential. Any amount of space leads to him rushing the interior and he'll run over anyone necessary to get there. He's going to need to evolve. I think he will.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Nazar has difficulty connecting plays but he has the basis of a top-15 pick. His passes are often simply inaccurate,



but the timing wasn't off in this game. He's over-reliant on handling skill, leading to missed opportunities and turnovers. But he's such an advanced player in pretty much every other facet. His properly loaded stride with finished extensions launches him around the ice, and his motor's high, evident in his work on the backcheck. Just a non-stop play disrupter. Extremely inside-driven, and if he can't get the inside lane himself, he looks for a teammate on the ice of the rink. Some really advanced body positioning plays, too. Getting his hips lower than opponent's to knock them off balance or coming across their body and pinning them to the boards while he spins to face the slot. Clean up the decision-making, and I have little doubt he could be a top-15 pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

Nazar was the NTDP's second-best player in this, even if he really only created one play at 5-on-5. Right away, his desire to bring the puck to the inside at all costs is apparent. There's no amount of pressure or contact that will deter him. He's far too reliant on his hands, fixating on beating groups himself instead of using his gravitational pull to pass to an open teammate. Still, he sets up moves on an angle, tries dekes in motion, and has a variety of ways to beat players: Backhand dekes, small flips of the puck, hesitation moves, etc. Throws in some eye deception for misdirection. Defensive stick really stood out, too, but he wasn't in position to make use of it regularly. In this game, he was the player with the easiest pathway to add new layers to his game. Energy + skill + desire to be a difference-maker on every shift is a rare combination.





6  
Rank

6.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

6  
Passing

A  
Grade

6  
Puckhandling

6  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

4th  
Best Four-Way  
Mobility

5th  
Highest  
Floor

4th  
Best Neutral  
Zone Defender

3rd  
Best Transition  
Defenceman

4th  
Best Offensive  
Defenceman

# SIMON NEMEC

D | HK NITRA

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. FEB. 15, 2004  
WEIGHT 192 SHOOTS RIGHT

"He's the type of defender you build around. He skates very well, has a great brain, and is starting to show his offensive game at the pro level. He can get pushed around at times, but he should be able to handle that more as he grows and recognizes how to get out of trouble sooner." - Western Conference Scout in January 2022

SHADES OF: Morgan Reilly

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
Slovakia	39	1	25	26
WC	4	0	2	2

## Scouting Report

Šimon Nemeč just put together the most productive draft year season from a defenceman in Tipos Extraliga history. In fact, Marián Hossa and Marian Gáborik are the only two other players in league history ever to best Nemeč's 26 points in 39 games as a first-time draft-eligible skater.

Some of that is survivorship bias in action. Defencemen of Nemeč's quality don't usually play their draft year in the Tipos Extraliga; they fly for the Czech Extraliga or any other number of more challenging professional settings.

The other part of the equation is that Nemeč is just a really damn good hockey player. Even a less difficult (all things being relative) professional setting is still a professional setting, and he deserves a due of credit for the way he handled the assignment. It's not like HK Nitra sheltered the 18-year-old Slovak blueliner; his 20:15 a night in ice-time, according to our partners at InStat, was third-highest on the team.

How did Nemeč pull it off? By constantly making the right play at the right time and rarely if ever deviating from his team's structure.

You just won't find a more reliable, steady defenceman in this year's draft than Nemeč. He isn't going to bring you out

of your seat with any exhilarating displays of creativity or skill, but the trade-off is that he won't leave you shaking your head in disbelief at a poor decision or a costly turnover either.

That posture isn't for a lack of skill or NHL-level tools. If anything, the opposite is true. We view Nemeč as one of the draft's more tooly defencemen, with above-average skating, handling, shooting, and passing skill. His one-timer is a veritable cannon.

We also don't want you to get the idea that Nemeč is strictly a stay-at-home defender either. While low percentage shots and an inability to create offensive advantages often marred our game reports for the 6-foot-1 blueliner, there was also a consistent appreciation for his offensive activations, be they on the rush or from the offensive blue line. He'll always take what's there.

You would like to see that skill on the rush translate as a neutral zone defender, but that part of Nemeč's game is still a work in progress. A fairly accommodating gap and an inability to break down multivariable situations in space often conspired to leave the Slovak defensive prospect helpless on the rush.

His skating base and sense are such that Nemeč should be able to iron out these parts of his game with time, but for now anyway, they represent something of an Achilles heel in his game.

Overall, though, Nemeč has one of the highest floors in

this class. It's all too easy to imagine a scenario where he's playing top-four minutes in the NHL, featuring in both phases of special teams, and leveraging his tools and sense for consistently good-not-great points totals. Any team would be happy to find such a player with a top-10 pick.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 17th, 2022

Canada vs Slovakia - WC

This was Nemeč's best performance of the tournament, but I still have the same concerns with his game. He got pressured into mistakes offensively and defensively, and there is no thought behind his activations. His spacing, especially, is a problem. He runs toward teammates, closing their space, and taking the puck and plays away from them when it would be best if he moved away, to space out and open up the offence or cover defensively. I like the activations, but the patterns need work and the timing, too. The breakout passing was, at times, good, but mostly difficult for him, a lot of uncontrolled plays, rims on the boards and hard-to-catch feeds. Defensively, he can shadow attackers very well. His footwork or edgework is one of the best in the draft. Again, I come back to the same thing. Nemeč's is all tools and offensive confidence, but he needs a lot of refinement.

**David St-Louis:** May 14th, 2022

Slovakia vs Germany - WC

Nothing interesting from Nemeč in this performance, apart from the blue-line mobility and the occasional good reverse play on breakouts. He's a step behind defensively and has trouble engaging opponents. The risk management is off in his activation and breakout passes. He costed his team a goal early in the game by going down too much in the offensive zone and then not backtracking hard enough to cover a 3-on-2. There is just a lack of anticipation in his game, especially of the position of defenders. His o-zone play was mostly limited to shooting from sub-optimal spot. No real playmaking. The skating still looks like an above-average grade and the handling, too, and I like his constant engagement in the offensive play. But more and more, as the season comes to an end, I think that Nemeč's projection is pretty much all about tools.

**David St-Louis:** May 1st, 2022

Nitra vs Slovan - Extraliga

A bit of a bland performance from Nemeč, like the previous ones. He scored, but that was attacking down the wing and shooting the puck at the net...It deflected on a body and in. It seems easy to rush Nemeč and I doubt his processing, like when situations become more complex defensively, the

risk management ability goes away, and on the breakout, where the forecheck can force him into imprecise passes. He has the patterns, but not the hockey sense to back it up.

**Cam Robinson:** April 22nd, 2022

HK Nitra vs Zvolen - Extraliga

A mixed bag in this one. Nemeč was skating well - jumping into the play, staying down low to hold possession, falling back, recovering well. But it wasn't always effective. What looked like a really smart pinch turned bad when the puck bumbled around and set off a 2v1 the other way. He didn't even try to get back and it ended up in the back of the net. On the flip side, he made several smart plays deep in the dzone where he waited for coverage, made a smart cutback and sent a smart dish to his partner or up the wall. He grabbed a primary helper on the PP with a simple pass at the top. He made a really nice angle cutoff to thwart a potential 2v1 on a 50/50 puck in the 3rd frame. Cut it off and quickly chipped it to his backchecking forward. There were some really smart, smooth plays. But also some really choppy uncertain decisions.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 18th, 2022

HKM Zvolen vs. HK Nitra - Extraliga Playoffs

Nemeč's defence is functional in two areas: off-puck rush defence and following his check in man-to-man coverage. For the first, gets stops by staying close, not conceding the middle, and timing his stick check with the pass. He ends up chasing in the second situation, but uses heel pushes to angle and keeps his stick on the inside. Otherwise, he's reactionary, late, and overplays the block. Doesn't show a ton of interest in recovering when he's failed to identify his check. Retrievals remain a problem. Despite his skating posture, he doesn't use cutbacks at speed. He flips his toes in the direction the puck's headed, but never builds off that base - no cutbacks, no early contact, no quick passes back through the backpressure. It directly impacts his ability to find separation and get back up the ice. Breakout suffer, leaning on up-the-boards passes and rims instead of using the same skills that make him effective in open-ice. Still not seeing the top-10 pick here. I'll stop torturing myself and trust the smart people.

**David St-Louis:** April 14th, 2022

Nitra vs Slovan - Extraliga

I really don't see it anymore with Nemeč. The tools are there, the above-average skating and handling, but the hockey sense doubts are quite large in these last performances. Slow defensive reads and slow passing reads. He's a puck carrier, but he doesn't have the high-end skills and vision to be able to support such a game in the NHL. The defensive side is seriously concerning, with a total lack of adaptability to the play. He gets surprised constantly by quite simple opposing plays. The one time where I felt like Nemeč showed his potential was on the powerplay; he walked the line, attracted a defender, and fed the puck to a teammate -- a nice playmaking sequence, but hardly something to convince me he is still a top-5 prospect. Honestly, the comparison with Odelius here is interesting. Similar mechanical level, but Odelius is much more advanced and aggressive defensively. The gap between these two prospects on our board is too large right now, one way or another.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

HKM Zvolen vs. HK Nitra - Extraliga Playoffs

A solid game from Nemeč. Activated regularly, then followed up his play. That results into a goal, a chance, and a successful pinch. This was smarter activation game in general, using small-area passes instead of rushing down the boards. Sound a handler when moving, but his poor first-touch kills sequences before they start and limits his effectiveness along the boards. Some questionable passes and decisions; not a manipulator. It's rare that his activation results in anything more than extending the cycle, a shot off his own stick, or turnover. Defensively, he's improving but very beatable from his defensive skating. Pivots too late and doesn't load up his push off leg. Attackers beat him with speed. In defensive zone coverage, his scans but his legs are straight. He also floats too high into slot off-puck. That interacts with poor close-outs, he angles plays behind his net (not great) but then reaches in, allowing the cutback (bad). He's best when he's in single-variable, open-ice defensive zone coverage, where he can track the puck carrier and disrupt their movements. Links his activation to defence in a projectable manner. I'm still not seeing the top-pairing upside here. He has NHL tools across the board, but none significantly above-average. He activates a lot. And he scores a lot given the context. But there's not much nuance or details to his game beyond sprinting to join the rush. And that's fine for becoming an NHL player, but not enough to become an impact player.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 31st, 2022

HK Poprad vs. HK Nitra - Extraliga Playoffs

I appreciate Nemeč's activation. It's non-stop in transition, identifying routes and space before his forwards. He sprints every route. Sometimes he chooses the wrong path or steps into teammate's space. The one time he didn't activate, his team turned the puck over and he wasn't gapped up as a result – goal against. And really, it's that contrast that makes him a tricky projection. He puts himself in positions to get touches, but his execution is highly variable when compared to Mateychuk, Mintyukov, or even Korčinski. Part of that might come from how reliant his game is on structure. Could develop more skills and nuance on breakout to improve, too. Right now, he rarely flips his toe caps on retrievals (for deception) before going the other direction. Prefers the stick wave, which doesn't work against pros. Manages space on the PP and generally moves the puck at the right times, but nothing about his offensive game suggests manipulative offensive upside. Without the puck, he's back to old habits. He lunges at opponents, crosses over too early, and concedes the middle. If it's a system read, he's fine! If there's any problem-solving required or a speed differential, he's lost. Speaking of lost, he lost his mind at the end of the game and took a penalty for a series of crosschecks. Since he's not a planner, problem-solver, or manipulator, his upside comes down to defence and activation. And neither stand out as significant strengths, despite the volume of the latter. NHL activation requires a lot more than hitting the gas pedal. Not a performance that suggests a top-10 pick.

**Marek Novotný:** March 24th, 2022

HK Nitra vs. HK Poprad - Extraliga Playoffs

Šimon Nemeč was skating on the first line for Nitra. He played very well under pressure, with his opponents fore-checking him. He had no problem at all entering the zone and helping deep in the offensive zone during the power play. Was so poised, confident and his smart reactions helped his team a lot, especially in the defensive zone. Nemeč was the main puck distributor on the PP1 and was a bit creative with the puck as well with some backdoor feeds. He scored his very first postseason goal in the second period. His gap control is so effective, it's just incredible. He made a big mistake however, when he tried to sent the puck to his teammate behind the net in their zone, but it was intercepted by a Poprad's player who also scored the only goal for them. Overall it was a really solid performance.

**Marek Novotný:** February 18th, 2022

Slovakia vs. Finland - Olympic Games

This medal game was a disaster for him in terms of not

playing in this game. Němec got a chance to jump in for only two shifts. He started a rush by moving a puck up the ice. He implemented a pressure on the attacking forward and managed to steal the puck from him.

**Marek Novotný:** February 13th, 2022

Slovakia vs. Latvia - Olympic Games

Němec only had six shifts, but managed to play very well at this level. He did some good work with his stick, his gap control is just amazing. His IQ and quick decisions are great. He was very responsible defensively and poised on the blueline.

**Marek Novotný:** February 11th, 2022

Slovakia vs. Sweden - Olympic Games

Just a great performance by Šimon Němec in this one. His tremendous defensive work was nicely demonstrated in this game. His active stick and amazing gap work were extremely helpful with interreputning Swedish players from creating any offence. His work along the walls is smooth, because Němec is a very smart player and his quick decision making made it very easy to deal with difficult situations. He was also part of the PP unit, where he had a quarterbacking role and made some nice backdoor feeds. Sometimes he tried too much to for example send the puck through traffic, which wasn't successful at all. He sometimes also gave a lot of space to the player he should be covering at that moment, but it's a rare moment. Němec recorded an assist on goal by Slafkovský. Great performance by the Slovak defender, who is again very poised and played with great vision and used his amazing hockey sense.

**David St-Louis:** February 11th, 2022

Slovakia vs. Sweden - Olympic Games

Much better showing offensively from Nemeč. He controlled the play from the blue-line, through his passing and movement. He drags the defence one way and then feeds the puck the other way, he creates shooting lanes, and activates down. He lacks the vision to make the best play after/during his activations, however; he's more of a mover than a thinker at this stage, but just the lateral mobility will see him create a lot in the NHL. Other players will feed off of it and make plays evident for him. I wish he would hit the best play more often, the tight lanes and the open spaces. Defensively, he's very puck focused. In fact, he's puck focused all over the ice. Balancing looking around and looking at the puck is an area of future development for him. He gets dragged outside the dots and double covers at times. He was close to his check, aggressive even for most of the game in

his defence one-on-one, which I appreciate.

**David St-Louis:** January 25th, 2022

HK Nitra vs. HK Dukla Trencin - Extraliga

Nice game from Nemeč. He's evolving as the season goes on. It's not a complete transformation, but I thought his positioning and risk mitigation was better in this game (defensively) and even his rush defence -- tighter gaps and some surfing to kill plays. His transition game is still a bit of a mess in this league as he just doesn't have the short support to make one or two-touch breakout passes -- he is forced to try bombs or lobs above sticks as his teammates all move up-ice as soon as he touches the puck -- but as he scans before getting the puck and protects it well and has passing ability, I have little doubt that he will be able to translate his transition game. He can fill multiple roles in the rush. He even led one of them as F1 and made a dot-line drive early in the game. His offensive zone playmaking has improved; his movements are more purposeful. He manipulates to turn feet and open space for teammates, activates laterally on first touch, attacks space.... He assisted on a powerplay goal and then scored the overtime winner 3-vs-3. I still wouldn't rate his hockey sense as high-end, but he has learned the right patterns and is honing them. If he can tighten up his defensive game, anticipates more of the opposition's movements, and rotate ahead of the play, show more engagement, better footwork...Then he could surely become a top-4 NHL defenceman.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

HK Nitra vs. HK Dukla Trencin - Extraliga

Nemeč consistently puts himself in the right positions to create. He sprints up the ice in all situations, activates from the point, moves upon pass receptions, and tries the odd complex give-and-go activation play. There are moments of creativity with the puck, like delaying and passing cross-ice for a clean breakout or a fake shot becoming a pass just as the puck leaves his stick. Pinches at the right times, and has the reactionary skill to evade pressure and maintain the zone. Creating from those positions, however, is much trickier for him. Too often, he settles for shots for deflections (to be fair, it got him two points in this game). His retrievals are too basic, lacking deceptiveness and timing, and his next play is consistently poor. Defaults to the rim up the boards and sprint up the middle too easily. Sometimes shifty, but he's not manipulating defenders -- that requires actions to draw out a reaction from a defender that opens up the Nemeč's desired play. He doesn't do that. He's a strong defender, even if outmatched at times. Overcommits too easily, but I see his

aggressiveness as more of a strength than a weakness going forward. Tighten the defensive skating and stick positioning, and he'll kill plays at the next level. I think he's a solid bet to become a middle-pairing defender.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 18th, 2022

HK Nitra vs. HK Poprad - Extraliga

Nemec's new-found aggression is definitely good, but I don't see any improvements in decision-making or reads. It's not that he's making bad plays; it's that he doesn't make the best one. Passes up the middle to teammates more covered than himself and with open cross-ice options. Activates and shoots with teammates tonnes of time, space, and options still available. Dekes when he could pass. Many questionable plays in this one, but one was particularly telling: backhand aerial pass up the middle to a covered teammate when he had time and space to cut inside and pass to the open weak side player with speed. Struggles with sequencing ideas and building different plays together in a sequence. If he's deking, he dekes everyone. If he's passing, he passes and backs off. If a better play opens, he presses the original plan until he turns the puck over. The tools are above-average across the board. He's a solid defensive who has lots of play-killing potential because of his ability to anticipate the attacker's next move. Physical, even throwing a reverse hit behind his net in this game, and he switches from check to check quickly. Disruptive defender even if he lacks some awareness of how to engage along the boards and the net front.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 4th, 2022

HK Nitra vs. Nove Zamky - Tipos Extraliga

An impressive performance from Nemec. He was constantly activating into the play on every possible chance he got. He recorded five entries (three through the middle lane) at 5v5, also adding five exits in the process. Even when he wasn't recording the exit or entry himself, he was providing a weak side option by skating into open space. Just a really strong game in transition. Nemec is also always looking to activate in the OZ, clearly looking for give-and-gos, even if his teammates don't always get the puck back to him. Cool sequence early in the game where he flipped the puck to the air and tried to bat it in himself so the goalie couldn't poke-check the puck away as he cut towards the net-front from a corner. Pretty solid work on entry defence, too. Defensively, he could have been a bit more proactive on certain plays. He's not a Jiricek-level play killer, but doesn't make many glaring errors either. Looked like a potential candidate for the second overall slot.

**Cam Robinson:** January 4th, 2022

HK Nitra vs Nove Zamky - Slovakia

In his first game back after the shortened World Juniors, Nemec looked like he was shot out of a cannon in this one. He was constantly engaged in the play - pinching down the wall smartly, weaving through the NZ as he transported the puck, staying in deep and sustaining offensive zone possession. He was creative in the offensive end - on one play splitting two defenders as he carried the puck down the wall and into the low corner, he then took the puck from below the goal line, flipped it up as he cut to the front and batted it out of mid air for a chance and shot. The most noticeable and impressive feature in this one was the way he handled the puck transporting it out of the defensive zone and through the neutral zone. He utilized cuts, fakes and slight manipulation techniques to make opponents miss and create space for himself.

He was incredibly mobile in this one. Scanning, pre-scanning, shifting weight and manoeuvring to find soft areas of the ice. He nabbed an assist on the game-winning goal, had several grade-A chances for himself. He drew two penalties for his aggressive puck pursuit in the offensive zone. He was the best defender on the ice.

There were a couple of soft defensive plays in the defensive zone. One where he tried to get a little too cute behind his net with back pressure on his hip - ended up going down but his partner recovered the puck, gave it back to Nemec who then rushed the puck all the way through the middle of the ice, split the defenders with a slight move and shot then crashed the net for a rebound causing a scrum.

**David St-Louis:** January 4th, 2022

HK Nitra vs HK Nove Zamky - Slovakia

Nemec showed a bit more of his creativity in this game. One time, he attacked down the wall, beat a defender, and then went to the net. To bypass a potential incoming pokecheck, he lifted the puck and batted it mid-air on net. Not sure that sequence is worth any scouting points (was a pokecheck even coming?), but I like the confidence to try plays that are out of the norm. Nemec spent the entire game activating, trailing the rush, leading the rush, moving pucks into space, charging the line of defence to push it back -- he clearly has some understanding of defensive gap manipulations and he did prepare some passes with deception in this game. He still has some moments of poor puck management, shots he fires on net without looking for example, and I still don't think he is a high-level creator (one capable of planning offensive sequences), but there is so much there to work with for a team that he deserves to be a top-5 pick in the draft. His



defensive game is a bit loose and passive, but he tries and he is a decent shutdown presence at this level already. Nemeč needs to go to the right team. If he finds an organisation that plays an open style of offence, he could really thrive. If he doesn't, if his team forces him out of his patterns to push him toward a more traditional two-way play, they will be disappointed.

**David St-Louis:** December 27th, 2021

Slovakia vs Sweden - WJ20

Skating and handling are still above-average qualities. Not sure about his shot. What I really liked in this game was Nemeč's awareness and short-passing game in breakouts. It's a new facet of his ability, one I assumed was there but he rarely showed in previous games (as the European Ice allowed him to easily turn away from the forecheck and force them back to then organize a controlled attack).

Nemeč always activates up-ice on puck reception and if his teammates are in the right position, in the next corridor, he finds them with quick forehand and backhand moves, even under pressure. The constant movement sometimes limit Nemeč. Again, he moves before he thinks or finds the right play more often than not, but the confidence, the tools, the creative patterns (not ideas as he isn't a planner) project well to the NHL.

The breakout game he showed in this contest also eases some of his concerns. Nemeč should be able to play more of

an NA style of transition and rely on his teammates earlier in those transition sequences.

**David St-Louis:** December 26th, 2021

Slovakia vs USA - WJ20

This was a difficult performance from Nemeč, partly because of his own mistakes, but mostly

because the USA was relentless, not giving Slovakia much space to make plays or even to exit their zone. Nemeč was one of the main transition defencemen for Slovakia, which means he was responsible for retrieving pucks and carrying or passing them out, often with no real option or lane to do so. He was often skating until he had no room to play. His best play came in a give-and-go late in the game. He one-touched the puck to a teammate accelerating past the line of defence. Defensively, he was puck focused...a lot. He had trouble processing off-puck attackers and the moving disc at the same time, which further compounded every other issue. It delayed zone exits, making them more difficult...

**Lassi Alanen:** December 10th, 2021

Spisska Nova Ves vs. HK Nitra - Tipos Extraliga

Another strong effort by Nemeč in this one. He was a positive contributor in every facet of the game. Showed cool and calm demeanour under pressure, mostly making good choices on the breakout. Seems to know well when to take things slower and when to move the puck up the ice quickly.

Scored on the power play with a powerful one-timer from the point (though it could have been tipped in by a teammate, hard to say). Had one really good sequence where he first broke up the play defensively, instantly activated into space, got the puck back in the NZ, gained inside lane and slipped a pass to his teammate between the defender's feet and stick and almost got the puck back in the net-front. Consistent activation in one thing that Nemeč has really going for him. He was also stable defensively, keeping a tight gap in the NZ and even outmuscling players along the boards on a few occasions. Tools seem to be plus-level across the board.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 5th, 2021

Kosice vs. HK Nitra - Tipos Extraliga

Nemeč's confidence with the puck is notable, and so is his willingness to attack empty space on rushes. He made some very good transitional plays, ie. beating a player in the NZ with good deception to enter the zone before dishing a backhand pass to the middle. Nemeč's ability to use the backhand pass is a noteworthy detail, too. Another time he was coming down the board back towards the point, scanned and saw a player sneaking behind the defence and had the patience to wait for the lane to open before making the feed. Sometimes he likes to pass directly into pressure and put his linemates in unfavourable situations. You can also have questions about is he going to be a PP1 type, as he's not been the most dynamic passer on the man advantage in my viewings. Refinement is needed, but I see a pretty clear path into a top-4 role in the NHL, maybe even top-2 if everything breaks right.

**Cam Robinson:** November 30th, 2021

HK Nitra vs HK Spisska Nova Ves - Slovakia

A mixed bag in this one. On the positive side, he grabbed two primary helpers off of a nice low point shot and rebound on the PP, the other off of a nice hesitation shot fake and dish over to his mate. He made several smooth passes in the defensive zone to alleviate pressure - one subtle fake to move around the back of his net while being chased, but instead sent an against the grain backhander with some cause to clear the pressure. I still really dislike how stagnant he is at the top of the umbrella on the man-advantage. Very simplistic in his approach which can be a killer for projecting up as a point getter. He made a couple of scambly passing in the NZ that didn't stick and wasn't activating down the wall as much as usually in the OZ. Still, the fluid, confident, cigarette-in-the-mouth routine is splendid to watch on most shifts. Super easy top-4 projection but the questions around his PP1 likelihood are justified.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 19th, 2021

HK Nitra vs. HK 32 Liptovsky Mikulas - Tipos Extraliga

Nemeč definitely looks like an NHLer, but I'm unsure about the ultimate ceiling. The tools are above-average across the board, but none significantly so. The skating lacks hip engagement with kicking feet, and he's not particularly explosive. The hands are sound and sometimes creative, but overhandles the puck and seems to be fighting it. The biggest concern is the lack of foresight in his game. He passes to teammates with more pressure than himself, reverses to no one, and doesn't consistently commit to his decisions. The give-and-go is a key part of his game but would be bolstered by committing to joining the rush more regularly. It's not that he doesn't activate -- he does regularly. But he never proactively recognizes space. Doesn't manipulate with backpressure, only using the look-off and other forms of deception if he has some runway upon receiving the puck. He occasionally drifts off-puck, but he recovers well and usually ends up making the correct read. Closes space quickly, reads passing lanes, and ties up off-puck threats. I like his activity, engagement, and generally involved game, but he doesn't show any high-level skills. To his credit, he's already been playing pro for a long time -- perhaps that's hiding it. I like his game, and think it's clearly top-four-calibre. Top pair? Not convinced.

**David St-Louis:** November 18th, 2021

Prerov vs Nitra - Extraliga

Nemeč has a bit of everything in his kit. It makes him both an easy projection and also a harder one. His skating projects as above-average, same for his handling, passing, and shooting. He has sound techniques and mostly good habits on the ice. He is involved off the rush and in the offensive zone, at the centre of many of his team's play. His confidence is striking for such a young player at the professional level. He uses space on the ice, deception, and can make quick passes under pressure. You see him use his partners, but also attempt to stretch the play, and carry the puck up-ice himself. He hits tight windows and moves the puck inside space, showing an understanding of offensive tactical concepts. In his defence, he is also active. He scans on the penalty kill, identifies passing lanes, and moves inside them, and he closes on his man quickly off the rush. But there is an extra level, an extra layer missing for me. Nemeč is not necessarily "ahead of the game". He reacts to what the opposition affords him and what his teammates give him, and does so generally well, but his tools and/or instinct aren't sufficiently high level to recognize potential advantages he could create that are not there immediately in

the moment. Does that matter a lot? Not too much. I think he will be a good NHL player, an easy top-4 projection, a modern element of an NHL blue line. Maybe a top-pairing role is even within his grasp if his defensive game tightens up further, if he learns to process more variables, develops his awareness, and some preemptive rotations. Right now, I prefer to make a more conservative "number 3".

**Cam Robinson:** November 17th, 2021

HK Nitra vs Dukla Mikhalovce - Slovakia

All of the usual trademarks of Nemeč's game were evident in this one. He makes simple, yet nuanced plays to transition the puck out of his zone and out of trouble. He exhibited a good gap and stuffed up entry attempts. He was a nuclear weapon when it came to takeaways in this one, constantly timing his stick lifts and closing outs well. Offensively, he was timid. If I had one single knock against his game it's a lack of creativity, and more specifically, a lack of movement across the line in the offensive end. Skating on PP1, he had several opportunities to move laterally to open up shooting lanes and disrupt the scheme and netminder to give his attempts a much stronger chance. Instead, he remains content in a stagnant position and trying to shoot it through. I'd also like to see him shoot to score a bit more too, versus his penchant for tossing floaters for tips - a move that can work in the right situation, but isn't always in his case.

**David St-Louis:** November 17th, 2021

HK Nitra vs Dukla Mikhalovce - Slovakia

Nemeč is more of a doer than a creator. He has learned the offensive modern patterns, the activations, the east-west movements, the surfs, and he executes them at the right time. I'm not sure he understands how to best create within those patterns, however. He reminds me a bit of draft year Drysdale and York, that kind of engaged player, a coach's favourite, but with a lack of foresight and planning and manipulation skills. He has better tools than York, though, and should be ranked significantly above. Drysdale? Not sure. What bothers me about Nemeč defensively is his engagements. He doesn't seem to understand how to leverage his weight, how to approach opponents to separate them from the puck. He has the size, the range, and the skating to be much more effective. His breakouts were generally good in this game. He looked toward the weak side for plays and connected with teammates. He remains a top-10 or even a top-5 pick for me.

There is just too much to work with there and, in this draft class, it is worth a lot when comparing talents. He is a sure-fire NHLer and maybe a number 3 D just from his

great offensive habits and confidence. I would like him to up the pace.

**David St-Louis:** November 7th, 2021

Slovan vs Nitra - Extraliga

Nemeč's defensive game wasn't as effective in this game. He closed his gap off the rush before the blue-line and stuck to his check away from the puck, but his processing of the unfolding play lagged. He took weird angles to close out on opponents, leaving them space and lanes open to pass to the slot or cut around him. He looked like a step behind the play. His puck-moving was also a bit on the slower side. Even with options open, with teammates ready to carry the puck up-ice, Nemeč preferred to reload the play, to pass the puck back or skate it back to try for a controlled breakout. Some of these sequences might have been on line-changes that I didn't spot, however. I like his offence in general. I don't think Nemeč is a high-end quarterback -- he lacks the planning and constant manipulation abilities -- but in the offensive zone, he attacks space with the puck, improves the location of plays, reads the ice for passing options instead of mindlessly firing, and his timing on plays is generally on point. He looks like one of the better defencemen in this draft class, but this game didn't get me all that excited about his potential. There were flashes, though.

**Cam Robinson:** October 31st, 2021

HK Nitra vs - Tipos Extraliga

Maybe the best defensive showing I've seen from Nemeč at the pro level. Usually a bit dicey on the gap with speed coming at him, he was timing his separation very well in this one. Poking the puck at opportune times, reading the play and attackers' intention to thwart and eliminate along the wall before any threat could begin to materialize. Additionally, when he would strip, he had the wherewithal to make a quick move to create space before pushing a safe outlet pass.

We didn't see the roaming, fluid, transitional and wall-pinch-ing that he has shown in the past but he still looked great retrieving and transitioning the puck quickly to get the offence rolling. In the zone, he wasn't nearly mobile enough and telegraphed his shot intentions too early and had many blocked or clogged up before getting it off. Overall, an interesting showing.

**Daniel Gee:** October 31st, 2021

HK Nitra vs - Tipos Extraliga

Another strong game for Nemeč who didn't push the same motion driven transitional game, but put forth an extremely proficient defensive effort.



In transition Nemeč was a menace. Gap control, deceptive stick placements to bait opponents into pokeable areas, and play stopping through release harassment were highlights throughout his shifts. Two stand out sequences in this game; in the first Nemeč, held his stick in his hip-pocket, read the attacker's eye-line change, and poked the puck away as soon as the scan occurred. Later in the third he used a teammates back pressure to aggressively swoop onto the puck carrier, poking the puck forward into a 2-on-1 counter attack. Linear crossover separation, weight-transfers into the zone entry -- unfortunately Nemeč kept his feet static as he passed, leading to a rushed teammate shot off the left-wing. He deflected multiple shots away-- in similar fashion, timing his placement to disrupt the release. In sustained pressure Nemeč's secondary threat identification and play stopping really stood out. Multiple create tie ups, leveraging strength and timing again mitigated multiple screens and tips. In the first he harassed a off-puck net crashing threat tying up their stick, only to switch off instantly to cut off a ring behind the net. Won a bunch of battles below the goal-line leveraging his body and stick. Nemeč also showed a tonne of projectability on his retrievals -- he scanned multiple times, planned escape routes, and helped facilitate a bunch of clean outs.

In transition, while Nemeč did slow down the overall attack on-puck with some delayed exits, he was more accurate than on my October 15th viewing. Great two-touch ability helps him receive and move passes quickly -even off the backhand. In the third he made a scan, manipulated with his eyes, and connected on a long pass to the open LW. Some layering ability as well. Nemeč had a standout on-puck carry sequence in the second. Implemented weight-shifts to avoid the F1, backhanded the puck off the boards on the entry and skated on the retrieval -- finished the play with a pass to a teammate in the crease from the far-corner.

The most underdeveloped part of Nemeč's game is in the offensive zone. While he activates constantly -- especially in the second half of the third period (this guy was deep on the forecheck at times), he lacks manipulation off the blue-line. He had five-plus shots blocked within 10 feet of his release -- far too predictable. He doesn't really move at all while on-puck on the blue line. When Nemeč activated lower in the offensive zone he added a lot of value. One shift he took multiple drop-off passes on the right-point with the intention of attacking deeper and through the dotted-lines. One of the plays he executed a drag deke but the puck was knocked away. Liked his weak side activations -- in one sequence he knocked down a really bad pass on the weak side, spun under pressure and linked a perfect pass off his backhand to a teammate. Looked mature in this one. Second pairing

upside right now but if he adds some deception and better decision making on the line he could be better.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 24th, 2021

HK Dukla Trencin vs. HK Nitra - Tipos Extraliga

I like Nemeč's ability to make basic plays, and I mean that in a good way. He adds a bit extra to the simple breakouts to give his teammates more space, activates at the right times, and occasionally uses space to create something for himself. There's defensive ability, primarily on the puck. Establishes his gap early, drives plays wide, and gets the dump in. Gets interceptions and clean breakups in the NZ by closing distance without introducing too much risk. Overall, he's very mechanically sound. The skating, shooting, and handling are all at least 5.5-grade tools. Where his projection gets a bit trickier is assigning upside. He has very simple breakouts: inside and cross-ice if he has zero pressure, north-south if he's there someone on him. He doesn't open up lanes, or show a greater awareness of the play beyond the present moment. On one hand, he's playing professional hockey and has for years -- perhaps that's masking some of the upside. On the other, he's played at this level for quite some time -- if he had those higher-level details, he'd probably be showing them. It's easy to appreciate his game with surface-level analysis, but going deeper, I'm not really sure what to make of him beyond being a guaranteed NHLer.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 17th, 2021

HK Nitra vs. HK Poprad - Tipos Extraliga

I appreciate Nemeč as a sort of a system player. He activates at the right times, uses his teammates well, defends the rush, and doesn't seem to force many plays. After activating, he regularly makes sound, if not often safe plays. He did have one pass into the slot that just didn't click. Pinches at the right times, too. Doesn't force shots, taking what's given to him with a powerful, mechanically sound wrist which he transitions into quickly (always in the hip pocket). In-motion passes, uses the middle, and he works give-and-goes. Defensively, he's comfortably a second pairing projection. He kills plays in the NZ, angles out attacks, makes some proactive reads. Choose the wrong skating technique to close out one gap, but minor stuff. If he gets beat, he doesn't overreact by reaching or leaving his feet. Consistently gives himself a chance on plays, even ones that he's late to anticipate. Establishes body positioning and wins battles for retrievals. The biggest issue is the absence of dynamic qualities. He had one sequence where handled to the inside and beat the player behind their heels -- that was about it. He doesn't open up lanes, and sometimes doesn't skate into the lane

before passing. He's intelligent, fluid, and active, but I don't think he's a play-planner or all that advanced in his reads. Solid No. 3, but I'm not sold that there's more beyond that. That's a top prospect, of course.

**Daniel Gee:** October 15th, 2021

HK Nitra vs HC Grotto Presov - Tipos Extraliga

Point production and consistent defending defined this game for Nemeč, who didn't look out of sorts while playing with a bevy of much older teammates and opponents.

A true in-motion passer in transition, Nemeč probably had his most dangerous offensive sequences off the rush. While accuracy was honestly a major issue, it's hard not to appreciate what he's trying to do, generally executing out of good routes, finding the optimal teammates, and moving to open up new lanes, while also mitigating the effectiveness of more aggressive forecheckers. Through changes in pace, active rush-joining as soon as he released breakouts, Nemeč facilitated multiple dangerous chances. In the first, Nemeč executed a linear crossover drive on the right-wing, working a give-and-go entry, eventually jettisoning the puck through the crease. This was somewhat of a trend. Later in the first, Nemeč burst through the neutral zone, dragging the puck inward to exploit the momentum of a checker, only to have the puck poked off his stick -- his teammate grabbed it, spun and scored. He actually recorded two additional assists that were essentially good first passes on the breakout -- leading to a couple solo efforts. There's some obvious puck-skills here -- skate-to-stick handles and hip-pocket protection in pressure present in the viewing. I don't think Nemeč provides a tonne of value in sustained offensive zone sequences. A worrying sequence was in the second; Nemeč dragged a centering pass from near to far boards but ended up slamming a shot into a defender clogging a lane - probably the only example of movement along the line. He struggles to manipulate to open up pass lanes and took a bevy of garbage point shots that hit the high defender. He has activation habits and times pinch attempts very well. In the second he executed a pass off the right-hand circle to a teammate below the goal-line who facilitated a one-touch pass back door. Nemeč had a couple of hard one-time attempts late in the game -- form is good, struggles to utilize full flex potential of his stick but he forced a goalie to make a big glove save off a well placed shot from the point.

Nemeč was generally aggressive in transition, shifting high in the neutral zone to kill entries. His gap on some sequences was all-world, keeping pace, sheathing his stick, and timing poke checks. Nemeč missed a couple of breakout reads (attackers in his peripherals), which led to him conceding

the inside lane as he recovered out of the pivot. One play led to a really bad slashing penalty. In sustained defensive pressure, Nemeč's head checks and mental mapping really aid his effectiveness. He activates out of defensive structures to support battles at good times. Scans regularly on retrievals and takes great routes. Obliterated a man in the crease with a dangerous crosscheck. Nemeč looked like a high-end pick - not sure if offense will fully translate due to the lack of OZ habits, but the rest of his game should allow him to be a second pairing guy at the least.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 10th, 2021

HK Nitra vs. HC Banská Bystrica - Tipos Extraliga

Nemeč was playing in all situations for HK Nitra, contributing on both power play and penalty kill. First two periods were very meh, but he started to show better things in the third. Early on, Nemeč was failing to connect on his passes, even though there were some good ideas. There were some highlights on breakouts: sucking in three players before no-look slip passing under the forechecker's stick. Defensively, Nemeč was pretty reliable overall and broke up some plays in the neutral zone. Activated into the play a couple of times, but didn't do much with those plays. Offensively, I liked how he was looking for high-danger plays instead of blasting point shots. I didn't see high-end mobility and maneuverability from the point, though.

**David St-Louis:** October 3rd, 2021

Dukla Michalovce vs. Nitra - Slovak Extraliga

This game was a blowout, but I find there are values in contests like this to evaluate young players. They feel more comfortable showing the offensive side of their game. It was the case for Nemeč (although he rarely shies away from plays in general). He activates up-ice every change he gets. His rushing skills still need refinement as he dead-ends the puck at times, but in general I like the enthusiasm. One sequence in particular showed his instincts. One of his teammates controlled the puck cross-ice and attracted the attention of the defence, before passing to Nemeč. The defenceman knew he had space to work with and that the opposition was in a scramble. Instead of making a low-percentage shot on net, he faked it, and sent a pass back the other way, across the ice again to that same teammate who had freed himself for a goal. It was a high-end display of "enlarging an advantage". Defensively, Nemeč attaches himself to his coverage, but has a tendency to watch the puck a bit too much, which limits his ability to adapt his positioning to cut passing lanes. His puck-moving is relatively low-pace, but it is quite typical for this league. Pucks don't move up-ice as quickly. Teams prefer

to bring it back and attack with control. Nemeč could work on establishing body positioning on retrievals, which would prevent him from being stripped of the puck as he catches it.

**J.D. Burke:** October 1st, 2021

HK Nitra vs. HC Slovan Bratislava - Slovak Extraliga

I've been tracking Nemeč for some time, and this is probably one of if not my worst viewing to date. All the concerns I've long harboured about a lack of creativity in the offensive third were realized. Nemeč was stationary, pinned to the coffin corner of the offensive zone, largely uninvolved in his team's offence during sustained possessions. I can't help but wonder how much of this is systems related, though. Nemeč became increasingly adventurous as his team trailed in the third period, and even tried to drive the net from the outside on an end-to-end rush at one point -- unsuccessfully, granted.

Nemeč was uncharacteristically poor in transition and the defensive zone this game. Actually overskated one puck, missed his man in the subsequent chaos, and had to dig the puck out of the back of the net for his trouble. Looked completely lost trying to break down a 3-on-2 rush, pressuring the puck-carrier at the wrong moment, and leaving his partner on an island for the 2-on-1 that ensued. Couldn't seem to connect on many of his outlets. Just a burn the tape-type of performance.

**Cam Robinson:** September 28th, 2021

HK Nitra vs HK Spisska Nova Ves - Slovak Extraliga

An interesting game from Nemeč in this one. He was firing the puck with raw vigour - posting 9 attempts with 6 hitting the target. Most of those shots were fakeless, non-moving point shots that didn't really threaten. He was under pressure in most circumstances, but I'd have liked to see him attempt to be more mobile and shifty to open up the lane first. Each one had the potential for a tip or rebound opportunity and one did so landing him a primary helper. Defensively, he was his usual self - gauging the gap effectively, smartly getting a jump on loose pucks with his anticipation and quick first three strides. He uses his stick and positioning well in the defensive end but did get caught running around on a shift in the 2nd that landed an HD chance against.

Overall, the package was strong but not elite showing in this one. What stands out the most is that this is a 17 year old who is logging 24 minutes in all situations and looks every bit the top pairing player he is at this level. Skating is a 6 at least. Puck skills need refinement and the confidence to link up complex movements. I love his overall brain though.

**David St-Louis:** August 7th, 2021

Russia U18 vs Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Nemeč is incredibly focused on shooting the puck. This must have been a coaching directive with the team trailing. He at least shoots for sticks and rebounds and gains the middle of the ice before receiving the puck to improve the dangerousness of his distant releases. His shot mechanics are good. There is depth in his release, full body involvement, and they should improve as he adds strength. Nemeč also showed his usual deep activations in the offensive zone. Once, he found himself net-front, alone with the goalie, in a position to tip a puck in, but his teammates, who had just rushed in the zone, missed him. Nemeč boxed attackers away from the net in his zone and rushed up ice with the puck every time. Not many high-end projectable elements in this game, but a ton of effective habits from the defenceman.

**J.D. Burke:** August 7th, 2021

Slovakia U18 vs. Russia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

This was a pretty grim performance from Nemeč. I just didn't see any of the offensive creativity necessary to match with his top-five billing as one of the premier defensive prospects in this year's draft. Just a tonne of missed passing opportunities and low percentage shots, many of which bounced harmlessly off of Russian shin pads. Had a great opportunity to light the lamp in the third period, activating off of the blue line and into the slot for a 10-bell chance, but failed to connect with the pass, flubbing the shot. It was that kind of game for Nemeč. His defensive reads were all relatively strong, and he didn't find himself on the wrong side of any scoring plays that I remember. There's something to be said for that given the score, I guess?

**David St-Louis:** August 6th, 2021

Team Slovakia vs Team Finland - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

His skills looked above-average in this game: his skating, puckhandling, passing, and even his shooting. He played quite passively in the neutral-zone in general, but this was probably a team strategy. With his great posture in backward skating and stick work, Nemeč has the potential to become a fierce rush defender, one who kills plays as early as the red-line.

I liked his breakouts in this game. He was also a little passive on retrievals, deferring to teammates in pressured situations, but he showed some manipulation abilities to open up space for them. He also supported every play by activating up-ice and his drives created a few scoring chances.

In the offensive zone, Nemečs lacked imagination, but he distributed the puck well and showed precise timing when attacking down from the blue-line. And, for the most part, Nemeč fired at the net when there was traffic and a chance to



create rebounds. This was, overall, a promising performance from Nemeč and he could be selected very high at the draft. Right-shot defencemen with his package of tools are rare.

**J.D. Burke:** August 4th, 2021

Slovakia U18 vs. Sweden U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Really strong performance from Nemeč in every corner of the ice in this contest. You really get a sense for how well-rounded his game is in this contest. Just a collection of above-average tools across the board with high-level hockey sense as the force multiplier. The one tool that gives me some pause is his skating. Looks to recover a bit wide and could probably stand to get a little more depth out of his stride. Defended the rush exceptionally well in this contest. Showed some puck skills leading the breakout and charging into the offensive zone. Sniped a goal from the point in this contest with a well-placed wrist shot. I'd like to see Nemeč be a little more adventurous from the offensive blue line, though. A little creativity with the puck would be nice, too.

**David St-Louis:** August 2nd, 2021

USA U18 vs Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

When not activating deep in the offensive zone to launch passes to the slot, Nemeč was a bit static at the point in this game, content firing most pucks on net from the same point he received them. He supports breakouts, but I find his execution a bit slow, sometimes due to a lack of pre-reception scanning, but often just because he wants to gain ice himself

first and foremost before thinking about moving the puck. He might not be a top-end processor, but I don't really worry about his play-reading. His skating looks above-average, especially his backward one; Nemeč can easily adjust his speed and positioning in rushes to cut passing lanes.

**J.D. Burke:** August 2nd, 2021

USA U18 vs Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

This wasn't necessarily a poor performance from Nemeč, but I didn't see anything all that special from the Slovak defender either. He was mostly static in the offensive zone, pinned to the blue line, settling for low percentage shots and a high volume of them at that. No real displays of creativity to speak of. Then again, that slap shot – it's a serious weapon. No doubt about it. Played a tight gap and defended well in the neutral zone on the odd occasion when the Americans managed to complete an actual breakout in this game. Perfectly timed an intervention on a 2-on-1 to disrupt a potential scoring chance.

To Nemeč's credit, I thought he got a little bit more adventurous in this contest as the game went on, occasionally activating off of the blue line and getting involved in the play deep in the offensive zone. Made a great feed into the slot from below the goal line for a chance, but otherwise, pretty straight forward stuff. Nemeč doesn't really create offence so much as he takes what is available to him.



7  
Rank

6  
Skating

5  
Shooting

6.5  
Passing

A  
Grade

7  
Puckhandling

7  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

4th  
Best Vision

2nd  
Best Transition Defenceman

1st  
Best Offensive Defenceman

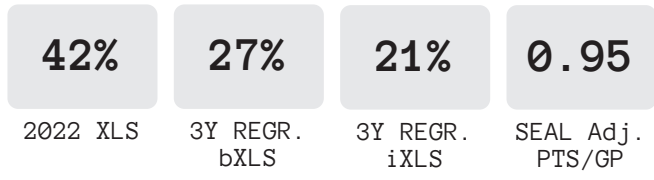
# PAVEL MINTYUKOV

D | SAGINAW SPIRIT

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. NOV. 25, 2003  
WEIGHT 192 SHOOTS LEFT

"He's a wild stallion that hasn't had the benefit of playing in structured coaching. He's got all the tools to be a difference maker, but needs some development to get there that he won't get in Saginaw." - Western Conference Scout in May 2022

SHADES OF: John Carlson, Kris Letang



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	67	17	45	62

## Scouting Report

There's bouncing back from a lost year, and then there's what Pavel Mintyukov pulled off for the Saginaw Spirit last season. How's nearly a point a game clip on the OHL's fifth-lowest scoring side for bursting back onto the scene?

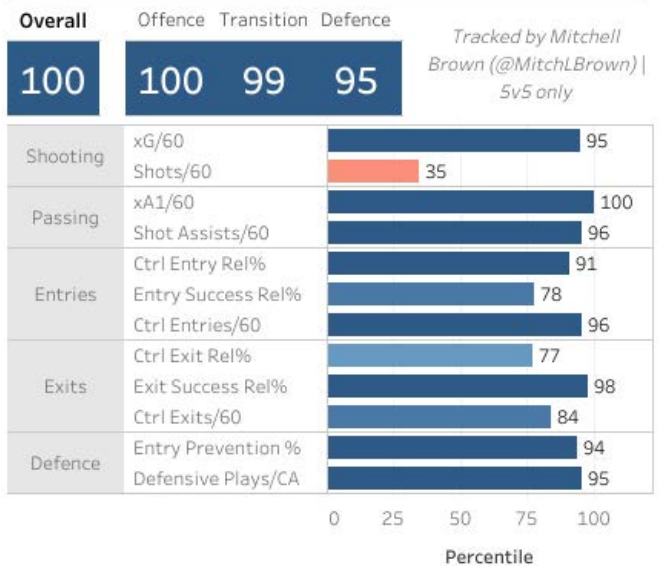
Just imagine what he would've done with the benefit of a draft-minus-one season under his belt...

Those gaudy point totals accurately reflect Mintyukov's ability and the sort of future that awaits him in the NHL. He's an offensive defenceman by trade and one of the very best players with that profile in this year's draft.

The tools are strong, but Mintyukov mainly relies on his cunning and guile to pick the opposition apart. His processing power is just miles ahead of most other players at this stage in their development.

Constant scanning off-the-puck and decisiveness with it made the Russian blueliner one of the most effective high-pace creators in the CHL last season. The one- and two-touch feed were his weapons of choice, and Mintyukov used them to strike with rapier-like precision through any cracks in the defensive formation. And when openings weren't already there, he made them with deceptive handling, look-offs, and feints.

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 149.4



"Mintyukov's puck skill is unique for a defenceman," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a Scout's Notebook article on Mintyukov. "He easily beats defenders with sound form, hand speed, and projectable setups. But he doesn't overuse them...he plays a give-and-go style, based on short- and medium-range passing, constant movement, and non-stop pressure."

Those puck skills and offensive blue line activations helped the 6-foot-1 defender nearly crest the 20-goal mark. And who knows, maybe he gets across that finish line with a better shot. If there's any weak point in Mintyukov's tool kit, that's it -- particularly the wrister, limited by a reliance on a sweeping motion rather than generating lever-action with downforce.

As one might imagine, those puck skills coupled with an enthusiasm for activating into the play made Mintyukov an exceptional puck-mover, too. He was downright clinical in transition, going through the motions on a breakout like they were routine; deceive on the retrieval, leave a forechecker or two behind with handling skill, and get the puck up ice with pace. It just looked easy for him.

The same, of course, isn't true of his play in the defensive

zone. Mintyukov has the tools to one day develop into an effective in-zone defender, but he's not quite there yet. He's far too puck-focused and reactive, doesn't time his close-outs well, and struggles to break down multivariable situations. We saw a fair bit of improvement from Mintyukov defensively as the season progressed, but it's still far from a selling point to his game.

Here's the thing, though. You can teach a player with Mintyukov's skill set how to defend at least at an adequate level, but you can't teach someone without his natural ability to create offence or transition the puck in the NHL. That makes the gamble worthwhile. And if you hit, then you're looking at a top-four defenceman with power play utility for many years to come.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Slater Koekoek YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 95%	2 Matt Finn YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 93%	3 Dennis Wideman YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 93%	4 Ryan Wilson YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 92%	5 Cameron Gaunce YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 92%
6 Rostislav Klesla YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 91%	7 Brent Burns YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY 90%	8 Geoff Schemitsch YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 90%	9 Patrick McNeill YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 90%	10 Tom Mannino YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 90%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 16th, 2022

Saginaw Spirit vs. London Knights - OHL

What a performance. Wow. The offensive instincts are even better than at the start of the season. The adaptability is super high, the anticipation, too, and the ability to manipulate through feints, passing, and movement, too. The hockey sense grade is really high, probably a 7 to 7.5. A lot of planning and processing speed, too. On the breakouts, quick plays off the walls, creative, too, between the legs and with the backhand. Mintyukov knows his handling space at all time, where defenders are around him, which helps him protect the puck and hold on to it to let plays develop. The defence has improved since the start of the season, a bit sluggish still, but the aggressiveness in one-on-ones is now backed off by better off-puck reads. It's still the weakness of his game, along with his skating. A more agile and quick Mintyukov would be scary.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 15th, 2022

Sarnia Sting vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Almost 30 minutes of ice time for Mintyukov tonight, as Saginaw got blown out by Sarnia. Somehow, he was only on the ice for one of Sarnia's seven goals. Unfortunately, on that goal, he misplayed and lost control of the puck at the offensive blueline, which led to a Sarnia breakaway. Still, he didn't let the increasing number of goals stop him from doing the

typical Mintyukov things - activating off the point, starting the breakout and leading the rush, making crafty plays with the puck to avoid checks, and limiting offensive chances while he was on the ice. I wonder how much more he could create on a better team. He's definitely separated himself from the rest of his OHL blueline draft-eligible peers by now - and Saginaw finishing at the bottom of the conference makes his play all the more impressive.

**Daniel Gee:** April 9th, 2022

Saginaw Spirit vs Windsor Spitfires - OHL

Mintyukov played up to reputation in this game against Windsor. Overly aggressive in transition, he was activating very high in the NZ to kill brekaoutpasses and disrupt puck carriers. He went as far as absolutely burying a picka carrier on the red-line on a first period play and levelling another on the near boards in the second. Mintyukov's anticipation was on display as well -- in the first he jumped into an entry pass lane and counter attacked immediately without missing a stride. Locked down a bunch of secondary crease crashing threats. Mintyukov was caught out position on one second period play after some aggression, leading to a goal against -- needs the follow up support.

Showed some manipulation habits off the blueline stutter-lateral shifts to open lanes and freeze defenders. He will drag

to fake a shot, only to wire a pass into a teammate's one-time shot. Arm is a bit too locked to his hip when he does release shots -- had trouble getting the puck through traffic. Really smart pinching and activating sequences in this one. On one shift he walked down the half-wall, cutback against pressure, spun onto his forehand and connected on a pass to a planted man in the crease. Even crashed the end-boards for the OZ retrieval on the play. In transition, the manipulation and crossover weave blend was very prevalent. He saw daylight through the neutral zone in the first, burned past an F1, but ended up running into pressure just before he could delay for support. This part of his game will be so dominant next year as he continues to expand his skill gap against OHL defenders. Looked liked a top-10 guy in terms of talent.

**Lauren Kelly:** March 24th, 2022

Sarnia Sting vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

I thought this game perfectly encapsulated the good and bad of Pavel Mintyukov. Three points for him in this game, all in the second half of the match. The first was a secondary assist on the powerplay. On the second, he snuck off the point and got himself open on the doorstep to score. He also picked up a secondary assist on the OT winner. In fact, he was instrumental in Saginaw's comeback as they scored five straight goals to eventually win. But the game didn't start off great for Mintyukov, who was on the ice for three of Sarnia's eight goals - including Sarnia's first in the opening two minutes. He was a little all over the place defending in front of the net and eventually the goal scorer was left wide open for the wrap-around. As for Sarnia's sixth goal, Mintyukov jumped up into the play to take the puck deep into the OZ, lost control of it, and couldn't get back in time to prevent a breakaway goal. The high-risk, high-reward style of game he plays, especially on a team that struggles both to defend and in goal like Saginaw, is going to lead to some goals against. However, Saginaw would not have won this game without Mintyukov. He's definitely one of the more skilled defenders available in this draft, and on a team with a little more structure and commitment to defence, I think the mistakes would clean themselves up. Top-15 pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 26th, 2022

Erie Otters vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

A stellar defensive outing for Mintyukov. Killed plays in the NZ, took away the middle while still keeping a tight gap, and eliminated his check regularly. A well-timed shoulder won him several battles, and he immediately tried to make a skilled play afterwards. His ability to link complex ideas together is surely right at the top of the class with Wright. Just non-stop advantage creation, regardless of the forechecking

pressure and situation. Lots of manipulation and look-off plays. Consistently brings pucks to the inside with a combination of handling and passing skill. Sets up dekes in a projectable manner. Activates non-stop, but without losing sight of his defensive duties. He didn't have many OZP sequences in this game, but it didn't matter. The instincts were obvious from game one, but now we're seeing the planning and sequencing of plays across all three zones. His game is highly creative and quite scalable. Passing accuracy and timing need some work, as does his choice of routes while activating. How much of these will be improved by Saginaw improving their structure and skill? Probably most of it. Top-10 pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 9th, 2022

London Knights vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Mintyukov's one of the most obviously skilled players in the draft, but contrary to popular belief (you know who you are), that's not necessarily a bad thing. The handling skill really pops for good reason, but the way that he prepares his move - shifting weight, faking one direction - ensures that he'll beat players in the NHL. And if not, he's so advanced as a reactionary skill player that his hands are a projectable problem-solving tool, even in high-leverage situations like pinches. Notable passing skills as explained countless times before, bolstered by his continued willingness to play a give-and-go game. Lots of his best plays are subtler space management sequences where he takes the puck in motion, beats a defender into space but gets cut off, and still manages to find a secondary option - excels at creating repeatable situations with the puck. Killed a play at one end, joined the rush, and wristed a fortuitous bounce on goal for a secondary assist. Feet are too noisy while defending the rush (too many crossovers), but he's an instinctual play-killer who gets inside attackers and rips away pucks at the point of least resistance. It'll require the right situation and team, but there's a real chance he's a top-10 or better player in this draft class.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 30th, 2022

Saginaw Spirit vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

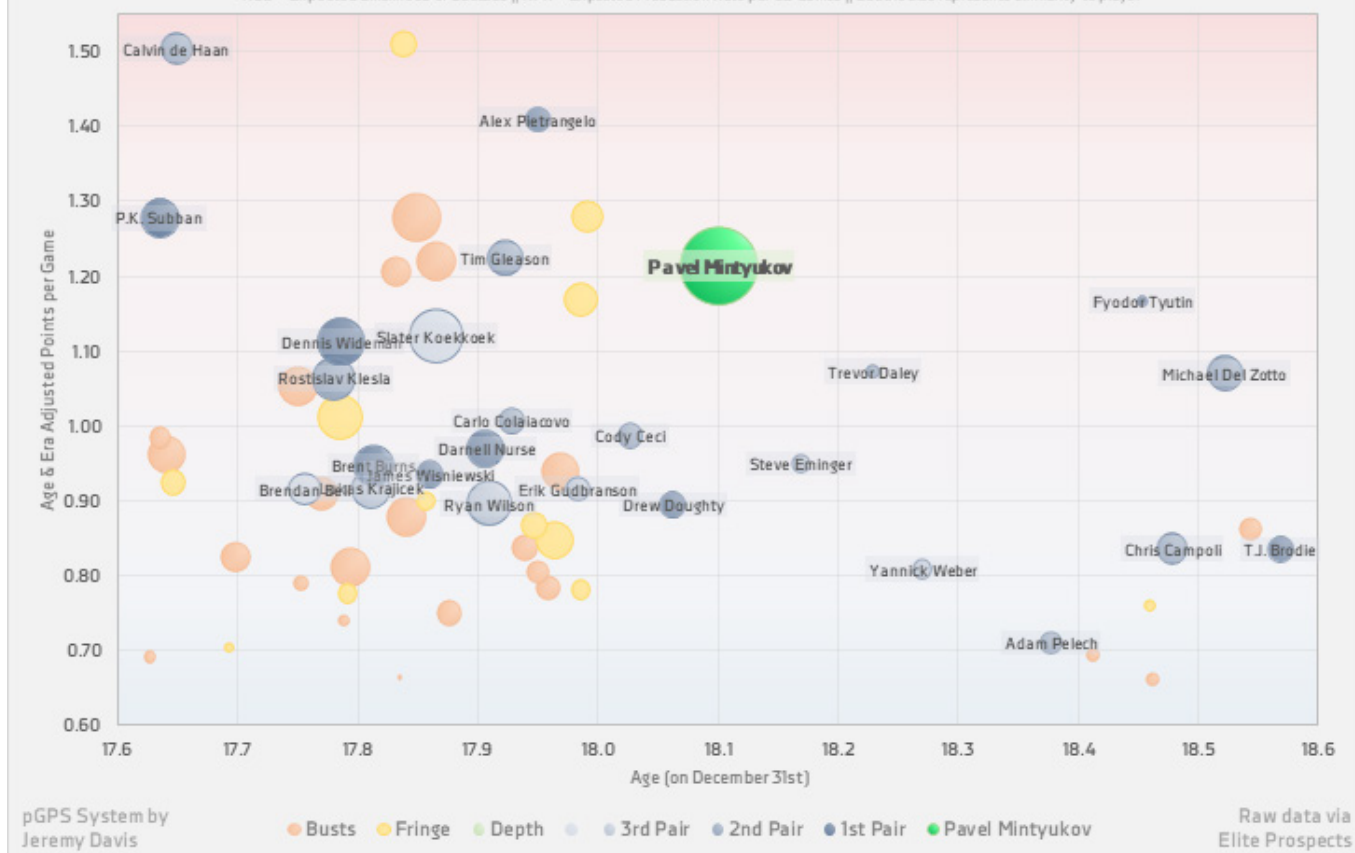
Mintyukov's defence continues to improve. He killed a ton of plays in this game in a number of different ways: tight off-puck game and timed stick check for the interception, anticipating a deke and getting the steal, mirroring footwork along the boards, reach-in recovery steals, and 1-on-1 stops deeper in the zone. Off-puck defence continues to tighten up, as he's anticipating threats and eliminating them. Still wanders and gets caught in the NZ, and his defensive skating features too many crossovers, but his instincts and timing are unique for this level. His disdain for the point shot remains. Now, he's

## Pavel Mintyukov 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 59 || Base XLS: 42% || Impact XLS: 33% || XPR: 32.8 || Drafted Pct: 78%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



looking for the point-to-crease shot passes through defenders. Lots of activation and individual skill, including faking the hand-off before sprinting down the boards for a MD look. Attacks the middle with the puck, then passes to teammates while looking away from his target. Slip, hook, and backhand deliveries. Perhaps a bit too optimistic on some of his plays, but he has the skills to manipulate defenders and open up lanes.

Activation was the weakest part of his game. He did it lots, but he consistently ran out of space on his route. He'd benefit from delaying, then sprinting across the defender instead of always trying to go behind them. Does he benefit from Saginaw's system? Absolutely. He'll need to play in a creative, activation-centric environment in the NHL to maximize his impact, too. A team that sees 6'2" defender with dekes and hits will probably be disappointed. But his skill level is too high to keep him out of the top-10 in this class. Might even be the second-best defenceman in the draft class.

**David St-Louis:** January 29th, 2022

Saginaw Spirit vs Flint Firebirds - OHL

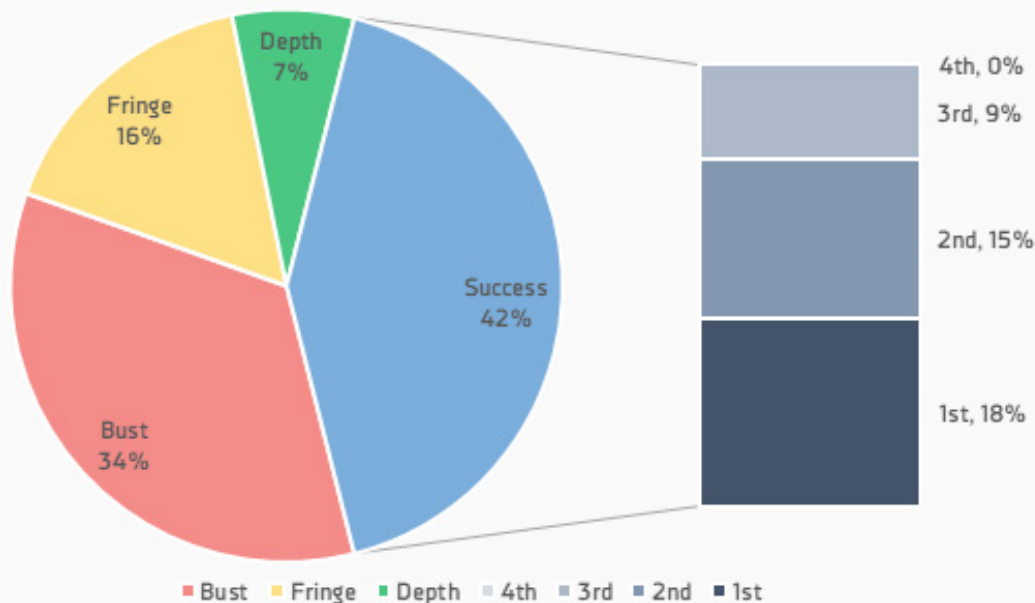
Mintyukov is getting better defensively, in his risk mitigation and his ability to kill plays. His awareness has improved. I'm just not sure he defends in NHL ways all that often. It's all aggressive pinches, aggressive pokechecks, aggressive inter-

ceptions, aggressive close-outs...things that could really expose him at the next level, as, while he has speed, his four-way mobility isn't high-end. It won't allow him to recover if he misses. His game in general projects weirdly to the NHL. He activates and attacks in straight lines, through the neutral-zone and down the offensive zone. He relies on outpacing opponents -- and is really good at it, having mastered the passing sequence: pass, stride through pass, get ahead of the next opponents -- but these kinds of rushing ahead plays, where he moves ahead of teammates or in line with them won't happen in the NHL. That being said, he understands spacing, and pockets of space, and knows how to create and abuse them. His processing speed might be the fastest in the draft. It's absolutely crazy how fast he perceives lanes and spaces even under overwhelming defensive pressure. I'm not sure he is that aware; he just anticipates and reads openings extremely quickly and has the hand speed to complement these reads. Deception on every pass or almost; manipulates high defenders in the offensive zone...A lot of very interesting qualities. The only issue is that they're not scalable. They're indirectly projectable. He would have to use them in different ways and the amount of details he will have to learn to make himself a competent NHL defender might break some other aspects of his game. He's more of a 10-20 pick for me at the moment due to the uncertainty of his profile, his



## Pavel Mintyukov 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



lower production, older age, and the environment he plays in. Mitch Brown keeps telling me that the Mintyukov way is also the Saginaw way, that a lot of the defenceman's patterns are also found in other of his teammates. Could his amazing season just be a perfect storm? A player who fits a particular system very well and can't replicate his success elsewhere? That seems unlikely. Too quick thinking, too confident, too skilled, and too aggressive.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 5th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

At this point, there isn't a ton keeping Mintyukov from the top 10. A lot of what he does comes through Saginaw's flexible structure and all-out activation – teams that don't give him similar opportunities will be disappointed. He's still prone to making weak, nonchalant plays with the puck. Off-puck defence still needs plenty of work, although it's much better when compared to even early December. But the skill's bordering on special and his reads/anticipation of openings isn't far behind. He doesn't just deke, he manipulates the feet of defenders first. Same with his passing, just as he did in the third period to set up a scoring chance. When he activates, he stays – that directly led to two scoring chances for him.

Passes inside crossovers and strides, then sprints into space to become a return pass option. Some of his activation reads demand too much from his teammates, but he's not just doing what Nemecek does. This is activation with foresight and a purpose; activation to enhance the quality of the ensuing play and he has the skill to capitalize. All of the details remain strong: the

physicality, the well-timed 1-on-1 engagements, the constant lane changes in transition. Rarely makes the same play off a retrieval, showing the skill and willingness to complete passes of all distances and difficulties – and he chooses the best one for the situation. His ultimate upside is likely team-dependent. Give him the keys to an-already highly active and creative team, and he could be a high-impact player on a top pairing. If not, he might struggle to generate offence outside the PP.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

This wasn't a great performance. Mintyukov activated at the wrong times, passed out of his target's reach, and passed into teammates more pressured than himself. At times, he was too reliant on the give-and-go to beat players – he could've just skated the puck into space himself. When he's really pushing, the stride's an easy above-average projection, but he finds himself with unnecessary pressure because he doesn't consistently engage his hips when skating back for pucks. Still, he showed all of the things that make him an exciting prospect: the well-timed pinches, the deceptive playmaking, and the constant focus on play creation. A highly skilled handler for a defender: top hand free, independent hands and feet, weight shift and eye deception set ups, and highly creative, even in-tight. He's a robust 1-on-1 defender, combining his footwork, stick, and shoulder to tremendous effect. Check identification off-puck continues to improve, now transferring his aggressive on-puck to off-puck coverage. Looks like a potential top-four defender, but with lots of assembly required.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

The more I watch Saginaw, the more I realize that the seemingly chaotic nature of his offensive game is by design. Saginaw runs a ton of interesting activation sequences: defencemen sprinting down the middle of the OZ, tons of exchanges and hand-offs, lots of lateral movement, and once activated, they stay in deep. Mintyukov's designated space was between the hash marks, the so-called bumper, but at 5-on-5. When he goes back to the point, his partner activates. When his partner goes back to the point, Mintyukov goes back to the middle of the offensive formation. I don't fully understand it, but I'm certain that those weird moments where Mintyukov ends up chasing the play, occupying space that forwards normally take, or seemingly wander off are more or less the result of learning an interesting, free-flowing structure.

With the context out of the way, there are a couple of intriguing parts of Mintyukov's game. I'm inching towards the belief that he's a special playmaker. He had one sequence where he took the pass inside crossovers, used a mohawk to freeze the D's feet, baited the next one by weight shifting and reaching out, and then passing under their stick just as they reached out for a chance. He constantly looks for the give-and-go, finds teammates around the slot, and manufactures runways of space for his recipient. Understands when to speed up or slow down, highlighted by his work on retrievals and in-tight plays. He's a highly creative, deceptive handler who toys with puck positioning, look-offs, and footwork to misdirect opposing players, and then puts the puck on the inside. Off-puck defence is an absolute mess: he misses assignments and sprints ahead too early. But he's a rock on-puck. Very aggressive and confident without being too committing. There are some skating issues, largely because his lower body leads his movements onto his edges, preventing him from exploding through pivots and turns. Still, playmaking + handling + physical and confident 1-on-1 defence is a really scalable skill set. He'll need to be put in the right situation in the NHL, but he has top-four upside, in my opinion. First-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 19th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

Mintyukov did cool things in this game, but he wasn't even the best of Saginaw's blueliners at doing said cool things. Activation, patience on the breakout, looking to create offence, etc. Still, he stands out as the most skilled, even if the execution's a bit loose. He turned a NZ interception into a look-off slip pass around a stick to an open teammate. After some handling issues early (with sound ideas), he completed several memo-

orable retrievals: wait for pressure, escape out the back door, then leave the puck in space for a teammate. Set up a goal with a cross-slot pass after joining the rush. A poorly timed pinch saw a chance the other way, but he blew a guy up. Points for that, I guess? Really, he's all instincts at this stage. There's little structure or restraint to his game. His play-killing instincts are really strong. He breaks up plays with timed engagements, he's physical, and understands how to eliminate space and contain skilled attackers. Now, the positioning needs a ton of work. Really, his project comes down to grow. He has first-round tools, but the reads and decisions are all over the map. I respect the confidence, however.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 17th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Mintyukov played over 26 minutes in this game for Saginaw and on both special teams (and both teams had multiple powerplay chances). He stands out as a very smooth skating defenseman who loves to jump up into the play and contribute offensively, and he's fast enough to get back to help stop odd-man rushes if he's caught. He picked up a secondary assist in this game after controlling the puck at the point at 4-on-4 before passing off. He also threw a hit to separate a player from the puck, and he really likes to crosscheck opponents in the back during puck battles, but he wasn't really all that invested in getting the puck back in those battles. One standout shift was when he broke the puck out and led a shorthanded 2-on-0 rush up the ice. Overall I liked what I saw, but I did feel like he was a little too aggressive in joining the rush at times and needs to rein in his roving in the defensive zone (sometimes he was playing a bit too high). I don't think he's quite the A-ranked prospect NHL CS has him as, but he definitely looks like an NHL draft pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 14th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

Mintyukov didn't stand out too negatively or positively in this game, but he wasn't all that noticeable despite playing 25 minutes. He read the play well in the offensive zone, making smart decisions on when to pinch in deep and jump up in the play - on one occasion he stole the puck and it led to a scoring chance. He also protects the puck well when he has possession of it, he had a nice strong drive up the middle of the ice before deking around a defenseman and taking the puck straight to the net for a scoring chance. Mintyukov was a bit all over the place in his own end though, he liked to pick one player and stay with him the entire time no matter where that player skated to, which often left the front of the net open. It wasn't necessarily costly in this game, but it could be in future ones

and especially at higher levels.

**David St-Louis:** November 13th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs Sarnia Sting - OHL

Mintyukov strides through every pass, or at least he did in this game. He also attracts before passing and passes in a variety of ways, with his backhand, by spinning on himself. He is one of the better playmakers from the back-end in this class. His handling skills, despite the hiccups, at times, seem to rank significantly above-average. He dangles on reception and passes instantly on reception. His head is up and he shows himself adaptable to pressure (he knows his options and can change his plan). His skating looks about average but there is a lot of pace to his playmaking and puck movement, a bit like Denton Mateychuk. He seems to lack lateral agility and this limits his ability to manipulate defenders and forecheckers. Again, he is an early birthday and a low-scoring one, but there is so much there. The overaggressiveness defensively cost him this game. He still needs to strengthen his defensive habits and improve his puck management. But the decision-making problems don't weight a lot pitted against the crazy fast processing speed and the package of skill.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 6th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Maybe it was because of the back-to-back fatigue, but Mintyukov was slightly less effective tonight. He showed more of the same tools, the puck control and passing abilities continued to stand out. He also tried to dangle through two defensemen activating from the point and after he was stopped, he stole the puck right back and fired it on net. His timing seemed good at both ends of the ice for the first half of that game - he broke up a play defending a 3-on-1 making a good read to anticipate a pass, pressure the new puck carrier and then poke it away. He also got good body positioning defending the rush. He seemed to tire more easily - 44 seconds into an 1:08 shift, he was caught in the offensive zone and was really laboured on the backcheck, unable to prevent an odd-man rush from developing. He's still too all over the place in his own end and too focused on following the puck carrier. I think he's a first round pick, but he needs to fix his positioning in his own end.

**David St-Louis:** November 6th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs Sarnia Sting - OHL

Wow. Hello Mintyukov. I know he is an older, low-scoring defenceman, but this performance was worthy of a top-10 pick in this draft. Am I getting overexcited? Probably. He was physical, surfed to kill plays, had a high-level awareness of passing lanes, used his stick, engaged hard... Basically played

an effective shutdown game for most of the contest. He broke a 3-on-1 by recognizing that the puck carrier had his head down and by jumping on him. Two quick fencing movements of his stick and he killed the opposing chance. Other instances, he was overaggressive and overcommitting, but I generally like an active defenceman more than a passive one even if that style comes with mistake. That was one of the best Junior stops I've ever seen. But it's offensively where he distinguished himself the most. He was a true quarterback and played with pace and purpose. He took every puck in motion and manipulated defenders at the offensive blue-line. He passed early and toward space. A LOT to like here.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

The play of the game, and one of the best plays I've seen this season, started with Mintyukov anticipating a pass, lunging towards the intended recipient at the time of the pass reception (defensive timing), and then deking through two defenders. Then, he faked the shot and set up a teammate with a look-off pass just over the defender's stick. Perfect timing and set-up. The timing wasn't perfect every shift, neither was the reads, but he consistently activated both with and without the puck. Rarely static and often calling for the puck. He uses every modicum of space given to him by skating towards incoming pressure to manipulate their feet, stepping into space before firing, and activating off-puck down the weak side. That activation directly led to two of his six neutral zone stops in this game. Killed plays both face-to-face and with the early pivot and surf, although overly committing on a couple of sequences early in the game. Physical and seals off the recovery route. Off-puck defence needs a ton of tightening up. He wanders, backs off too early, and finds himself reaching a ton. But he also shows instinctive play-killing ability. Mechanically, he's definitely NHL-calibre. Skating's driven by knee pushed over his toes with hip engagement. He doesn't finish his strides fully. A creative handler with that top hand freed for an expanded range of control. Constantly adjusts puck positioning before passing, reaching out or pulling in to access passing lanes, and he's always deceiving, sometimes even before receiving the puck. There's definitely more shift-to-shift consistency required, but he has a first-round tool kit.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 5th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Mintyukov was pretty dominant in this game. His assist in this game came off a great read where he anticipated the pass and intercepted it, deked through two players to get the puck out and chased after it in the NZ before passing off to

a teammate on the odd-man rush for a goal. As aggressive as Mintyukov likes to be in the offensive zone, he doesn't make too many ill-timed pinches and often he was the one back defending an odd-man rush while his defense partner was caught. He was the one who went in deep to the offensive zone on the penalty kill to allow his teammates to change (which was odd considering he's a defenseman). He's pretty good at shutting down odd-man rushes, if he can't poke the puck away he gets good body positioning on players and keeps them to the outsides. He also laid a hit on the goal line and stole the puck before starting the breakout. He's a very confident puck carrier and can control it well under pressure. He looked worthy of a first round pick in this game.

**EP Rinkside Staff:** November 3rd, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Sault Ste Marie Greyhounds - OHL

Not that we should put much stock into +/-, but -5 is pretty glaring. He matched up against BMB in this one and BMB dominated. His reads seem to have marginally improved - they seem a little more calculated now. He read a breakout and pinched down to stifle a chance to exit with speed. The inconsistency from shift to shift is noticeable - he's either admiring his pass and slow to recover or he's full send, chasing reads. He was nowhere to be found on GA1, letting a player split the D and he wasn't within a stick length - poor form given it was his side of the ice. He was so far out of a position on another, that he came flying across the ice, and deflected the puck into his own net. He moved the puck to open space under pressure very well in his own zone, leading to easy breakouts for his teammates. He had a few rushes up the ice that showed his poise with the puck and great edge work. His stick on puck defensive play continues to be a strong asset, when he uses it. The biggest question still surrounds the consistency of his play, and decision making. The willingness to engage is there, but the reads hold him back.

**David St-Louis:** October 24th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs Eerie Otters - OHL

Mintyukov scans a lot on breakouts, two or three shoulder checks, and he takes the option that will lead to the highest chance of a controlled breakout, even if it is the most risky. Some decision-making issues, but I like the desire to make plays overall. He has the skill and the processing speed to pull them off. The criterion and play selection can always improve with coaching. He has a good sense of timing on defence, but is overaggressive in his close-outs. He needs to learn to

balance risk better. He plays with lots of pace, but there is no doubt that he will have to change the way he plays the game to have repeatable success at higher level, become a bit more conservative and take his spots. Can he do it?

**J.D. Burke:** October 23rd, 2021

Erie Otters vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Got the whole Pavel Mintyukov Experience™ in this one, complete with the displays of overwhelming puck skill, decisiveness, pace, and yes, the defensive miscues, too. Mintyukov's pure skill in every facet of the game is obvious. He's a deft, skilled handler, with a free top hand, keeping the puck at the heel of his stick as he manoeuvres past forecheckers. Scans for breakout options going into every retrieval. Is constantly scanning and maintaining a detailed map of the ice period, really. A proactive defender but sometimes too committing, particularly in the neutral zone. Got burned on one such play for a goal against. The question I'm left asking myself after a performance like this one is whether Mintyukov is testing the limits of his individual skill or just struggling to calibrate his defensive posture on some of these plays where he overcommits and gets burnt. I'm less concerned if it's the former. Should note that he sniped a goal in the third period bar down off his outside foot. Hell of a shot, too.

**EP Rinkside Staff:** October 20th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

It's easy to tell he's going through an adjustment, because he's running around. He got lost defending the rush, leaving two men open at the net front, resulting in a goal against. He has moments where he's hyper aggressive on the puck and gets out of position (chasing to the top of the zone and leaving the net free). But, when he's defending along the wall, he consistently engages physically, but not overzealously. It pressured puck handlers enough to force rushed plays and keep the puck out of the dangerous areas. He's unafraid to jump up in the play, whether he leads the rush or supports in the second layer. He runs the top of the PP, where he could benefit from shooting more, but is effective with his puck movement. He doesn't have fantastic speed, but he showed agility on his edges and is very smooth. I question some of his reads on both sides of the puck, whether it be jumping into plays, chasing too far out of position, or passing reads that lead to turnovers. I think it could be a product of adjusting to OHL, but something to watch for.



8  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

6.5  
Passing

A  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

7  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

2nd  
Best Motor

3rd  
Best Neutral Zone Defender

1st  
Best Transition Defenceman

2nd  
Best Offensive Defenceman

# DENTON MATEYCHUK

D | MOOSE JAW WARRIORS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JUL. 12, 2004  
WEIGHT 194 SHOOTS LEFT

"I think he's going to be a defenceman who shifts the paradigm of the position."  
- Eastern Conference scout in May 2022

SHADES OF: Devon Toews, Roman Josi

92%	81%	44%	1.08
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	65	13	51	64

## Scouting Report

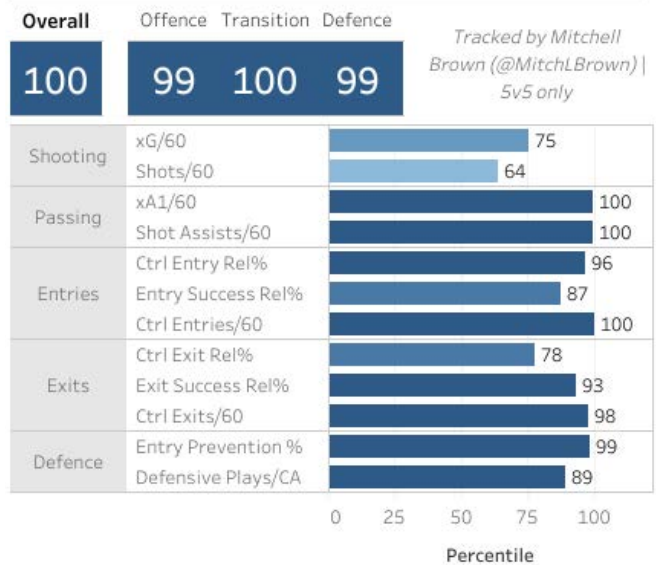
Denton Mateychuk treats his positional assignment like a suggestion, one he defies with reckless abandon. He's a mercenary every time he takes the ice, unbound by even the most time-honoured conventions of his role.

It's like he's everywhere at once, shouldering an enormous burden for his team like it's nothing at all -- cueing the breakout, leading the rush or joining it as a trailer, supporting the puck, leading the forecheck (yes, seriously), shutting it down between the blue lines, and containing in small-area defensive scenarios.

"The result of the constant activation is numerous," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a mid-season Scout's Notebook. "For one, Mateychuk averages 150 puck touches per game, more than 50 above the average top pairing WHL defenceman. The activation ensures he's always gapped up in the event of a turnover, which blends with his projectable rush defence and play-killing instincts. And he's always sprinting up the ice. It's exhausting to be on the opposite side."

Some of that is going to change as the talent pool compresses around the Winnipeg-born blueliner. It'll have to. The considerable skills advantage that informs Mateychuk's freewheeling, caution-to-the-wind playing style in the WHL

Games Tracked: 10 | Minutes Tracked: 226.1



won't be there at the next level. Not to the same degree, anyway. This, of course, says nothing of the willingness of even the most progressive NHL bench bosses to let this happen on their watch.

His style may have to change (though to what degree is unknown), but that doesn't mean that Mateychuk's quality has to diminish too much as a result. There are many projectable parts that make up the sum of his game; compo-

nents that, individually, all rate as average-to-above-average NHL projections.

Let's start with the Warriors defender's transition game; we'll build this picture from the goal line out. Mateychuk is clinical on the breakout, scanning for threats and options on the retrieval, stacking deception onto his first touch, dragging the F1 into the defensive zone only to dart past him -- it's all too easy for him. His forward stride may lack a separating gear, but his four-way mobility, puck-protection mechanics, and the ability to find outlets under pressure make him nearly untouchable.

Constant motion allows Mateychuk to break from his team's structure in the offensive zone and seek opportunities that just aren't there for other defencemen. He prods for soft ice, finds it, and times his entrance into that space at the best possible moment for a shooting opportunity or a chance to hit his teammate elsewhere with a perfectly weighted pass for a chance of their own.

Taking things back in the other direction, Mateychuk

does his best defensive work in the neutral zone. He gaps up early, maintains good backwards skating posture, takes away space with his stick, and angles opponents exceptionally well.

Things get a bit more helter-skelter for Mateychuk during in-zone defensive sequences, but it's still a part of his game that projects as average-to-above-average at the NHL level. His switches aren't great, but he generally does a good job of identifying off-puck threats and acting proactively to take away their time and space.

The evolution of Mateychuk's game will be a fascinating part of his development to track. There just isn't really a blueprint or a set of priors to lean on for someone with his profile. That makes him one of if not the most compelling player in this draft, if nothing else.

Overall, though, we're reasonably confident in Mateychuk's ability to find his way and carve out a top-four career in the NHL. It's just a matter of how he does it, and that's more of a point of curiosity than anything.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Cam Barker YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY: 89%	2 Ian White YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 87%	3 Kris Russell YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 83%	4 Matt Dumba YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 83%	5 Ryan Pulock YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 82%
6 Nathan Paetsch YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 82%	7 Filip Novak YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 82%	8 Stefan Elliott YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 80%	9 Derrick Pouliot YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 80%	

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 13th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

Mateychuk set up three scoring chances in the first period. Activated off-puck before finding a teammate on the inside. Skated at a defender, cut around, and passed back through them. Picked up his first assist with a hook pass after outracing a defender from the boards. Second assist with a shot-pass on the powerplay. The degree of difficulty on every play he makes is high. Sometimes, he makes things needlessly complex. For the most part, it's the product of being asked to create. He delays, cuts away from pressure, skates directly at forecheckers, starts the give-and-go, always uses the middle when possible, and keeps his head up through every action. Stride lacks refinement, but he has projectable posture. Body positioning remains a strength. Wasn't beaten in the rush once in this game. Times his engagements and keeps a tight gap off-puck. He'll have to be willing to switch off his check in help defence situations, but the defence probably projects as average to a strength in the NHL. It's all about timing and early play-killing for

more offensive-tilted players anyway. He has top-pair upside, although middle-pairing seems more likely.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 11th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

Mateychuk is basically the Charles Oliveira of hockey prospects. He's non-stop pressure and offence. He makes mistakes, but an inevitability when you're putting yourself in the fire so often. And every mistake has a solution already in his game. A couple of the notable mistakes: throwing a puck up the boards instead of passing on the heels of the forecheck, missing opportunity to cut inside and pass for an entry, and failing waiting too long to pass to his teammate down-low from the point. However, on at least five occasions, he read the feet of the forecheck upon receiving the puck and made a high-skill play to the middle, then activated. He consistently changed the point of attack with crossovers and cross-lane passes. And he connected with forehand passes to the slot after delaying and a pile of shot-passes to the inside. The skating has moments. His cutbacks are better

than Korchinski's: he pushes his top hand away from his hip for a tighter turn and better counterforce. With better timing, he'd get even more separation. Several high-end sequences in this game, where he links together defensive zone coverage, in-motion breakout passing, inside-lane plays, and playmaking skill. Defensively, he relies on his quick feet and leverage. Attacks the feet of attackers along the board. Anticipates opportunities to pressure and steal. Sometimes ends up on the wrong side of his check, and he locks himself to check without recognizing help defence opportunities. The biggest issue is the first touch. Sometimes he just loses control without reason. Mostly, he puts the puck in poor positions with incoming pressure because his initial reaction is to always make a quick pass. It's getting better, however. At this point, he's a no-brainer top-10 pick. If the NHL playoffs have made one thing clear, it's that activation matters, but it'll have little impact on the game without skill. Mateychuk's the best activator in the class and his variety of skills is only second to Mintyukov.

**Daniel Gee:** May 10th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Mateychuk pushed a high-paced game in this viewing; he was aggressive, efficient defensively, and was honestly a pretty overwhelming presence in a game full of high-key draft-eligibles.

Mateyucs stick work is nothing short of incredible. The tempered aggression to kill transitional rushes before the zone entry, the anticipation to up his pace to get into the lanes to create intercepts and counter attacks, and the progressive handling of Ice forwards was super impressive. Even when proactive advantages were not on Mateychuck's side, he makes an effort to free his stick so that even on board pins, he is able to direct 50/50 pucks to teammates. So much containment, smart pressure plays in this one. Stick tie-ups, release disruptions, rejects into pressure clears -- fun stuff. Mateychuck had a shift where he faced a one-on-one; managed to gap up, heel-push laterally to combat a weight-shift and kill the chance -- he's so refined.

On the offensive side of the puck there were some great sequences. Nothing more eye-catching than a first period shift. He first intercepted a pass into his crease, wheeled his net on the backhand to shield against pressure and escaped out of the end boards. From there, Mateycuk joined the rush and ended up cutting back against pressure on the near boards to set up a trailer. The stringing of plays and delay game were high end sense plays. He was very active in transition; off-puck Mateychuk drove the middle lanes, won OZ retrievals, was getting backdoor to add himself as an

option. Had another shift where he pushed cut-backs after the zone entry, but had his pass turned over as he looked for an option on the point. He threw an inordinate amount of pucks on net; low power sliders all meant to create crease chaos; not much planning and so many of these attempts are rejected. Some one-touch and give-and-go sequences attempted. Strong game overall, still looks like one of the better defenders in this draft. Plays freely -- wonder how that will change as he moves up.

**David St-Louis:** April 29th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

A great game from Mateychuk, especially on breakouts. Tons of great little plays: backhand and slip passes through and around forecheckers, before they get on him and after, too, as he showed he can make plays inside contact, after having established body positioning. The offensive game was on-point, too; he showed stick manipulations one-on-one through quick feints as he received passes and movement manipulation, dragging defender away to create pockets of space for teammates, constant movement on reception...Defensively, he's still better at killing plays off the rush than in zone, but the physicality and effort are positives, especially around the net. He tries to box out even at his size. Overall, what I liked most is the extra layer of skill in his game that I didn't see in previous viewings.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

A tame game from Mateychuk. He was still the best player on the ice. This was more of a defensive game. Defensive instincts are a strength. Identifies off-puck threats and establishes his gap earlier than most players. Keep his gap against slashing and stretching forwards. Angles attackers to the outside when necessary, but he's usually looking to get stops as the puck carrier receives a pass or pushes the puck forward -- the points of least resistance. Even when poke checking, he keeps his feet moving. Offensively, he prodded for seams and manipulated on a couple of occasions. Pinches regularly, but never introduced needless risk. Already moving before getting the puck, passes in-motion, then hustles to get open on defenders. Always setting picks on players, whether he's activating, defending or letting a teammate recover a loose puck. He's either improved mechanically or I just underrated his handling and skating. Punch turn is among the best in the draft class: properly weighted, hands and feet in the right positions. He prefers to spin away and reset, but he clearly has NHL-calibre skating skills. Top hand is always in front of his body, free to move across and inwards to maximize

## Denton Mateychuk 2021-22 WHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 9 || Base XLS: 93% || Impact XLS: 52% || XPR: 30.3 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



his puck control in all situations. Still, the puck rolls off his stick a lot. Maybe it's just because he gets like 30-40 more puck touches per game than the average defenceman. Most of the handling miscues occur on the first touch. Either way, he's a top-10 player in this class. Always involved and always creating. Advanced details and

**Mitchell Brown:** February 27th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

One of those games where Mateychuk is involved in everything, even more than normal. Set up four scoring chances at 5-on-5 (and several on the PP), showing deception, timing, backhand skill, and planning. Assist combined activation, backhand skill, and pass selection, throwing a soft pass into space just as his teammate started to free his stick. Had two chances of his own, including a point-blank chance off a give-and-go. Sold a hard fake to the outside, then cut across the middle and hit the pipe. Prepares space when pinching and activation, cutting back into space upon reception and moving through the reception and next play to stay open. Retrievals continue to improve, mostly showing sound decision-making afterwards. Rare for a prospect to use the inside lane as much as him. All the usual stuff: in-motion pass receptions and passes, with tons of rush activation and

proactive off-puck movement. And he's added deception to his passes (look offs and stick fakes) - it seems like the game is slowing down for him. Moments where misses options behind him on breakouts and passes on the heels of his teammates remain, but he completed a staggering 21 controlled transition plays at 5-on-5 this game (that's basically five games-worth for most players). Defence is still a clear strength: projectable timing with a physical edge. Plenty of skating skills with appropriate timing and usage. Stride has moments where looks projectable to above-average, but his forward head tilt and heel kick are cause for some concern. His upside's dependent on the team that picks him, but the teams that don't see the value in his style won't pick him. He's a potential No. 2 or 3.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

Poor showing from Mateychuk. Plenty of turnovers with the underlying issue being an inconsistent mechanical base. He hunches his back and sticks his head in front of his body. His hips elevate, his feet kick, and balance is shoddy as a result. Overhandles the puck inside movement sometimes. When combined, forecheckers dispossess him with surprising ease at times, and he rushes plays (especially



breakout passes). Still, there's a lot of reason to think he's a top prospect, even in this game. He sprints up the ice every single time. Mistakes don't deter him from trying complex plays or using the inside lane. Naturally quick, both in terms of foot and reaction speed, and he's shockingly successful in puck battles when second to the puck. At his best, he manipulates pressure by turning to face it, faking on the pass reception, and easily linking handling movements into passing and shooting because of his top hand positioning. He had numerous manipulative NZ plays (with delays and deception) to get his teammates attacking the blue line with space and speed. Defensively, he's still an easy above-average NHL projection. Strength is easier to add than his defensive timing, ability to diffuse complex rush situations, and natural aggression. The non-stop rush activation feeds directly into his gap control, and will only improve on a team where he's part of the puzzle, not the outlier. He plays too much, but that's not his fault. Unlike Pickering or Korchinski, the NHL teams that value Mateychuk are more likely to have the development and coaching staff that will put him in positions to offensively. Pretty easy projection in that regard.

**David St-Louis:** January 28th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

Mateychuk is still just as engaged, defensively and offensively. He seems to play every other shift and is effective in every single shift (to varying degrees). He is aware (generally), but almost a better on-puck defender than off-puck due to his motor, energy level, and timely pokechecks. He can pin players, flatten them to the boards despite his size or bring them to a stop with his skating by cutting all recovery routes. He will struggle to defend in the NHL for sure, but the mobility and the aggressiveness in his transition defence (he even fills forward fills in his team's neutral-zone forecheck) bodes well. In transition, he leads and follows the plays, tries to hit the middle of the ice in his passes, and uses fakes against the forecheck. Offensively, he moves, fakes to create lanes, and occupies space in front (improves the location of his shots). His handling still looks NHL average (projection) and skating maybe a grade above that with the right development. These things are pretty big limiters at his size. Is he a masterful anticipator, planner offensively and defensively? No. Hockey sense is about a 6-6.5 for me at this point. We will probably move him down our board next meeting, but...maybe not. He is this high because no one else is surpassing him. This game was against Matthew Savoie and Connor Geekie. Both players had lesser performances than Mateychuk and in terms of projection, too. Just a weird draft.

**J.D. Burke:** January 22nd, 2022

Red Deer Rebels vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

Just an appalling defensive performance from Mateychuk in this contest pretty much from start to finish, interrupted only by end-to-end rushes and stellar play between the hashmarks on the power play. Was caught chasing play on the first goal against, hesitating to jump on a loose puck, and then getting burnt for his indecision. Was far too puck-focused in the defensive zone, and got burnt for a second goal against because he failed to register an off-puck threat in his chunk of the defensive zone. That wasn't the only instance of puck-watching, but certainly, it was the one he suffered the most. Played a tight gap in the neutral zone, but was overaggressive at times.

It wasn't all bad for Mateychuk in this contest though. He picked up a goal at the net-front on the power play, where he spent much of this contest. Really high off-the-puck pace in the offensive zone. Even if his outlets weren't connecting with his teammates, I respected the thought process and the willingness to press the envelope. His natural aggression is such a value add in the offensive zone. It's a question of give and take with Mateychuk, and there was a lot of both in this contest.

**Cam Robinson:** January 22nd, 2022

Red Deer Rebels vs Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

Mateychuk skating miles again in this one. Not always smartly but you must commend his willingness to jump into every.single.play. Made a nice play at 4v4 in the first, anticipated the rush attempt, read and stop but pooched it by throwing the puck into a no-man's land which was turned over and held in. He was put into the cycle and pivoted the wrong way - giving his back to the forward and lending him space. Didn't cost him but was a technical error twice over.

In transition, at times, he was playing at another level than his mates. Making a shifty move and sending a quick pass up that they were not ready for. Same with his ozone jumps. Skate, make a move, dish quick and get back open. Other times, he jumped up to make himself an option but ill-timed when his mate needed support not forward options and the puck would turnover and he had to retreat.

Really love the activations even if they're an unpolished version of what they could become. He scored a PP goal by staying low for an extended period. Ditto for his secondary helper. Grabbed a primary in the 3rd as well.

Had several takeaways - maybe the best was a netfront read and well-timed poke check to negate a chance before turning it up ice quickly. His skating, on the whole, is good but it's his pivoting and edgework that is the most impressive. He's

basically a Quinn Hughes with less brains and fluidity. If you can polish his decisions and clean up the frenetic movements in his skating at times, there is a massive upside here.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 31st, 2021

Red Deer Rebels vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

As usual, there were no shortage of things happening with Mateychuk on the ice. First, he's improved his retrievals and end-boards puck decisions. Deceptive, but he manages pressure by delaying for the second forechecker, passing into the space they just emptied, then sprinting up the ice. Consistently keeps pressure on his back. Non-stop activation, highlighted by several give-and-go sequences. Sometimes too risk-aversing, passing when he should carry and missing the high-danger pass to instead maintain possession. But he set up the overtime winner with a slick cross-crease slip pass through the skates of a defender – he has the skill. Deception with the puck continues to improve, and he sells a full weight shift convincingly. Physical, well-timed engagement – it'll be a strength in the NHL, too. The biggest question remains the tools. He has an atypical forward lean with his shoulders and head, dragging him out of a proper knees-over-toes, hips-tilted-back posture. His heels kick as a result. But he also regularly gets into a projectable form, especially with the puck and early in shifts. Fights the puck sometimes, but I wonder how much it comes from his posture and skating form. In general, he plays a bit too fast, but I don't see this as problematic for him as other players because of his skating's almost there. Looks like a top-15 pick with No. 3 upside.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 2nd, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Mateychuk was on the ice for six of Calgary's seven goals against, but it's tough to pin many of them directly on him. There were a couple of passes to the inside that went awry, but at least one of them was his teammate's fault. One poor off-puck gap season and another read trying to get the jump on the pass. A few of the goals came directly after he created something – he was Moose Jaw's best offensive creator in this game. The non-stop activation, give-and-goes, and pace that I've previously seen, as well as some really high-end playmaking: cross-slot passes set up with look-offs and changes of pace. Identifies options ultra-fast and he seems to know the next play in advance. Makes the early pass when necessary, delays to make the perfect one. I came away impressed with his patience under pressure, trying to make something happen instead of throwing away the puck.

There were a few things that stood out to me in this live viewing: (1) defensive timing, he manages space laterally

and vertically and times his engagements with the pass exceptionally well, and he never seems locked or committed to one option, (2) retrievals, as drops subtler forms of deception to misguide forecheckers, scans a ton, and manages to win battles after losing the race because he eliminates the feet, and (3) the lack of inside leg push off through his crossovers (lots of kicking and inconsistencies), the lack of explosiveness through turns, and the ways that he delays or feints certain movements to make up for the lack of explosiveness. It's hilarious given what the boxscore says, but I thought he looked like a top-10 pick in this game – the anger of hockey gods notwithstanding.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Prince Albert Raiders - WHL

Not exactly a performance worthy of a top-15, or even top-20 pick. Mateychuk didn't have the usual standout performance. He activated, but was largely ineffective. He had some issues on the breakout. He tried that one-touch pass through the back pressure into space three times -- it worked once. He threw the puck past his teammates in transition, or split them. And lacked patience with the puck. In the offensive zone, there were some better signs. He deceived more than I've seen previous, and tried to open up lanes a couple of times. Didn't force passes that weren't there. Defensively, he's extremely involved, gets on his check early, and wins battles throw pressure. Maybe I've just been a victim of sampling early in the season and this is how Mateychuk really plays. Or maybe it's just a mediocre game after a string of great ones.

**Cam Robinson:** November 6th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

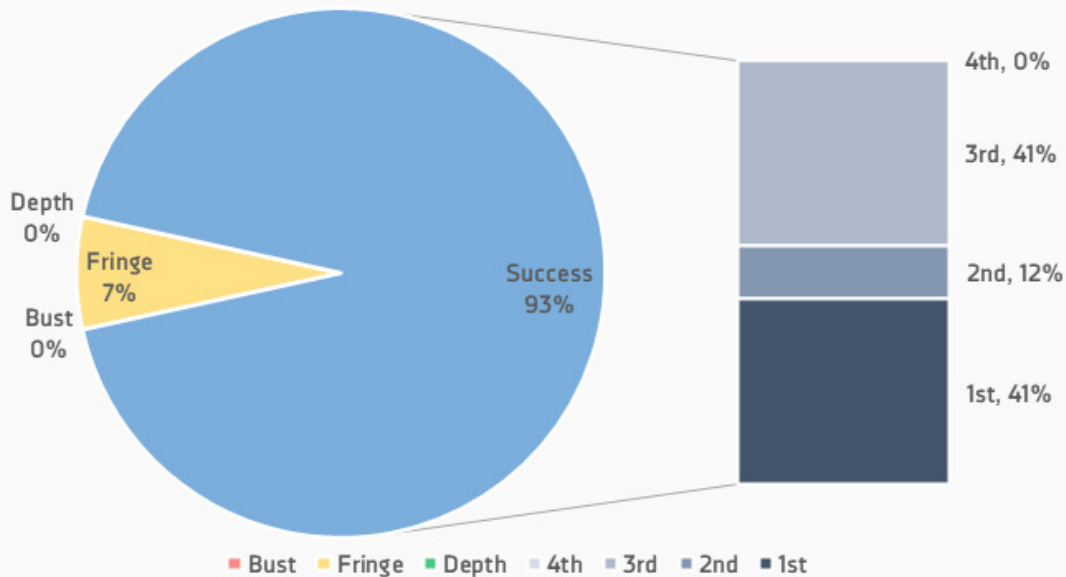
This one really showed the ferocious play creation and activations of Mateychuk. He was literally all over the ice - forcing defenders to back up while opening lanes for his mates. He showed out several passing styles to propel the play into dangerous positions - slips, saucers, area passes. He was working the puck around very well and then quickly kept his pace and jumped into open spaces to receive the go portion of the play. Always looking to be an option in basically all-situations. Without possession, he was making strong reads and stepping into players and using a quick stick at the line. I'm not sure I saw his head drop once this game - constantly scanning, pre-scanning and assessing. This may have been the most intelligent outing I've seen from him. Very promising.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 6th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

## Denton Mateychuk 2021-22 WHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



The best player in this game by a country mile. Mateychuk's activation drives his game. He fills space at the right times, creates passing lanes, and draws defensive attention. Never caught when sprinting into the rush because he processes threats immediately, helping him toe the line between activation and coverage perfectly. He fills space on the weak side in all three zones, takes charge of the game himself, and consistently uses his teammates in give-and-go sequences in the rush and from the point. The give-and-go helped set up his overtime winner. The off-puck activation led to him problem-solving a cross-crease backhand pass under heavy pressure for a tap-in. He usually looks for the passing opportunity first, firing passes into the slot for deception, making the one-pass-away read, and throwing in a look for good measure. Manipulates the feet of incoming pressure to access his desired space, often starting the manipulation process with the pass reception by moving to face the pressure and deceiving. Defensively, he kills plays early, kills them late, identifies help defence opportunities, and scans non-stop. Retrievals require tweaking, but he's never stationary. In transition, he uses the inside, looks for cross-ice passes, and deceives regularly.

Mateychuk's game requires calibration; knowing when to pass or shoot, slow down or speed up, and when to delay before passing or when to pass immediately. His hands seem to falter not because of mechanical limitations, but because he's doing too much at the same time (handling inside turns with his head up reading defenders -- just underhandle there).

His mentality -- this desire to be involved in every play, to demand the puck, to stay engaged and focused for every single shift -- convinces me that he'll improve under the right guidance. He looks like a top-20 pick, at least.

**David St-Louis:** November 5th, 2021

Lethbridge Hurricanes vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

Let's start with the negatives. I didn't like Mateychuk's awareness in the offensive zone in this game. He missed better plays, like an open teammate that could walk down to the slot and fire had they gotten the puck and his execution in general isn't as smooth as other top prospects. I think this is partly due to his stick, which looks longer than usual for his size. It takes him an extra movement to settle the puck on his stick and pass it around defenders. This lack of smoothness in his execution makes me question if he has a high upside as a puck-mover. That said, Mateychuk's transition game overall looks projectable. His passing is quick in his zone and he activates every chance he gets, sometimes even leading the breakout. Not sure how to grade his skating just yet, but he makes constant use of crossovers in his rushes, accumulating more speed. And his passing skills are a plus, overall, despite the kinks in his execution sometimes. He made a few slip passes under stick both in the offensive zone and in breakouts. Mateychuk seems to care deeply about the defensive game, too. He is engaged in the play; good posture in rush defence, denies space, cuts lane, gets on attackers as they're about to receive the puck... Lots of

like. One other question I have: how much of his scoring happens because of opportunities he gets in the WHL that he won't get in the pros? He won't play the half-wall on the powerplay (although he is effective at it, spotting teammates, and one or two-touch passing to them) and I'm not sure he will be allowed to do as much in transition. That being said, the team that will draft him will surely appreciate his qualities and enable them.

**David St-Louis:** November 3th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Regina Pats - WHL

I have never seen a prospect more involved in the play than Denton Mateychuk. Everywhere you look, he is. He surfs to kill plays in between blue-lines, shading all the way to his partner's side of the ice if he needs to, but without compromising himself. In the defensive end, he is in every passing lane simultaneously, at least that's what it feels like, and he still comes back to the net to try and box out opponents. (He's not great at it, but I appreciate the effort). And then he starts the breakout before jumping in the play, forcing his teammates to run up ice as fast as possible. In the offensive zone, he's exchanging with forwards, distributing the puck, going down ice for backdoor plays...Just everything you can think of, he does and does well.

There is control in his game. The game of most prospects would break if they tried to play it at that pace, at that intensity, but not Mateychuk. He retains his vision, some deception, and picks the right actions. Honestly, he would benefit from slowing down at times as he bubbles the puck constantly trying to stretch himself to his limit, but some part of me hopes he never slows down as I want to see him execute at that speed. It's a feat. There is so much to love in this prospect. His engagement, his desire to go, go, go. And his ability to still find controlled plays. He will make a team very happy. The only element that might prevent him from entering our top-10 is the skill level. His skating and handling are average to slightly above-average and he is a bit undersized for the NHL.

**David St-Louis:** October 23rd, 2021

Winnipeg ICE vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

This game had me bump Mateychuk's hockey sense a grade. Not that it was a particularly impressive performance, but again, like in his every contest, there were a bunch of interesting details. Mateychuk is one of the more aware defencemen in this year's class; he looks at his every option, seeing them through layers, and he understands playmaking concept, like the necessity to transfer his time and space to teammates by attracting defenders on himself before passing.

But again, his passes are not always precise. Mateychuk is more smart and involved than he is skilled. I worry sometimes that his effectiveness will go way down in a different system, one much more rigid, that doesn't allow him to rush all over the ice and control the flow of the play in the same way. Will his only slightly above-average skill allow him to break opposing NHL structures or will Mateychuk have to drop many of the things that make him successful at this level, like the breakout escapes and the offensive cycling, because defenders will be able to close and contain him much better? His defensive game was again very effective. He is on the smaller side, but understands close-out timing, angles, and how to win body positioning. He is always with his check.

**David St-Louis:** October 20th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

Mateychuk is one of the most intense and active defensive prospects I've seen. He is literally all over the ice, allowed to lead the rush, to go deep in the opposing end and play as a forward, but also tasked to come back and shut down opponents. His rush defence is on point: good stick positioning to deny space, footwork, and he gets on his coverage early. His angling is especially impressive. At times, he surfs, comes in behind opponents and cuts them at the hands on the boards, separating them from the puck to move it to a teammate. Offensively, he outpaces teammates; sometimes, they aren't ready for his charges up-ice and his quick two-touche passes. He is definitely an attacker that thrives on playing as fast as possible to not allow the opposition to set themselves in their defensive formation. Pace has merit, but it can't be your primary way to drive offence, as in NHL, everyone is fast and quick thinking. But Mateychuk also shows manipulation and planning abilities. He can hold on to the disc to let teammates get in position and fake certain plays to open others. I wish he was a little cleaner in his attempts; his handling skills fail him at times and the precision goes down, but this isn't a constant problem.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 15th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Prince Albert Raiders - WHL

Best player on the ice in this game. Mateychuk's dynamic. He's always activating, filling the right space at the right time. His pinches always work, his off-puck activations always work, and he always looks to create from those positions without forcing plays. Steps inside to survey the ice before passing to a teammate in the slot. Joins the rush and becomes a scoring threat, leading his goal on the evening. Give-and-goes feature heavily, and that activation translates to rush defence. Kills a ton of plays in the NZ, both with

high pressure and problem-solving ability. Gets on players early, follows stick with shoulder. Aware off-puck defender who projects above average to the NHL. Breakouts remain his biggest issue. He lacks patience, seeing options and executing immediately instead of trying to open the lane. Lots of great ideas, trying to go cross-ice or bringing the puck inside, but his inconsistent patience hinders his effectiveness. Even then, he still manipulates forecheckers and defenders through a combination of eye deception, weight shifts, and puck positioning. Settle down and he's a No. 3.

**Daniel Gee:** October 13th, 2021

Prince Albert Raiders vs Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL


Mateychuk put together a dominant effort against the Prince Albert Raiders. Pushing translatable habits in all three zones, his poise in every situation was remarkable. Legit scanning habits, purposeful and dangerous activations, and constant leveraging of his above average tools made Mateychuk a force.

Through his retrievals and constant play stopping sequences, Mateychuk limited Prince Albert forechecking and sustained efforts overwhelmingly throughout this game. His retrieval habits are very advanced. Shoulder-peaks to scan for information, skates pointed at the puck blended with body manipulations and precise footwork, established body positioning and angle offs -- he makes it look easy. These plays indirectly led to multiple clean breaks out of Moose Jaw's defensive zone. In sustained defensive scenarios, Mateychuk was an unmitigated play-stopper in this game. Pre-scanning allowed for proactive intercepts, his mobility and mirroring of opponent footwork was frankly suffocating, and, and supporting habits made Prince Albert possessions difficult.

In the first he stick-lifted an opponent on a ring pass, scanning beforehand and making a one motion retrieval pass. Later in the period he deflected a pass from the left-hand circle to the goal line, completely out-muscling a forechecker who dashed for the retrieval. In the second, he drove a puck carrier completely around the perimeter of his defensive zone, combating shake-off maneuvers and getting a clear at the top of the point. The poise he has is unreal -- especially on transitional defending plays. He is measured in his aggressiveness, targets sticks, clogs lanes with timing, and angles

to the perimeter often. He often swung hard into neutral zone pass attempts, reading the pass target early. The only thing I can pick out here is that he often defaults to poor body positioning, facing away from the puck (to leverage his forward stride), which will be exploited at higher levels.

Mateychuk's offensive game was also fairly impressive. He implements skill plays like hooks, slips, board banks, and backhand facilitations, passing against the grain, and sometimes blending hesitation handling plays. Execution in transition was somewhat poor in this game -- inefficient. Too many passing failures, hitting his targets in the feet, or straight up turning over the puck at times. He can become a bit static when implementing his handling, not passing in motion -- a habit that pops up every once and a while. When he does keep his feet moving, simplifying his attempts, Moose Jaw has more success. Leveraged same manipulation habits on carries, almost always pulled them off, so don't get the idea that he can't carry the puck successfully -- more self-inflicted passing issues than anything.

In sustained offensive zone situations, Mateychuk is dominant. Off the blue-line, he dragged pucks, implemented body manipulations, side stepped to open shooting lanes, and was inside oriented. He must have frozen his man at the top of the point five-plus times in this game. Timely pinch plays kept possessions alive, and his penchant to be uber patient on activations down the boards, protecting the puck, waiting for pass targets to appear, baiting attackers, and then executing his facilitations magnetized defenders allowing for broken inside structures. I loved a shift he had in the third; aggressive keep in on the perimeter, deke to the inside, slip pass (that failed). He had an amazing second period sequence where he pulled the puck off the perimeter into the middle, walked up the slot, and fired a well-mechanized shot (that was blocked). Arm completely unlocked from hip, snap-release through purposeful lower body weight-transfer, ultimately mitigated by a nasty lean to the left. Mateychuk was able to score in this game, an extra-attacker sequence that culminated in three highly leveraged wrist shots from the top of the slot, and a devastating one-timer goal to bring Moose Jaw within one. He elevated and delivered. Undoubtedly a first-round talent -- too many translatable habits, sense, and tools not to be. 



9 Rank

6 Skating

7 Shooting

6 Passing

A Grade

6.5 Puckhandling

5 Hockey Sense

5.5 Physical

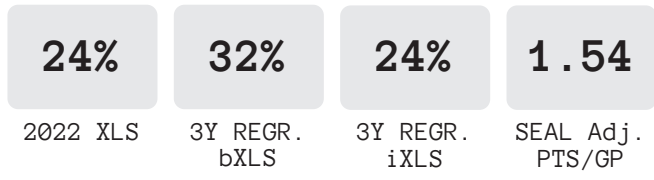
# MATTHEW SAVOIE

C | WINNIPEG ICE

HEIGHT 5'9" D.O.B. JAN. 1, 2004  
WEIGHT 179 SHOOTS RIGHT

"He can fly and he's got great hands. I think average-ish hockey sense might hold him back from becoming a can't-miss top line player, but he's got as much talent as anyone I've seen this season." -Eastern Conference scout in May 2022

SHADES OF: Matt Duchene, Kevin Fiala



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	65	35	55	90

## Scouting Report

Few players in the 2022 NHL Draft have spent more time in the scouting community's sights than Winnipeg Ice winger Matthew Savoie.

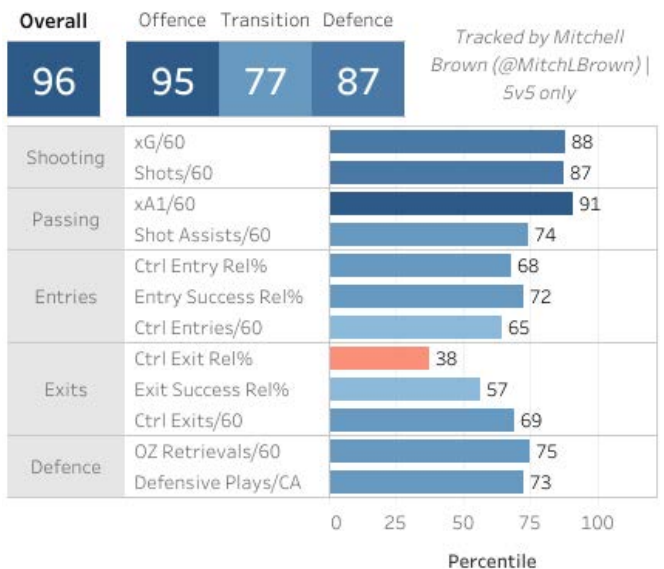
A rejected bid for exceptional status, the first overall pick in the WHL Draft, a trip to the USHL during the pandemic year, and back to a 90-point season with the WHL's best regular season side... he's done his part to command their attention.

Savoie's game is one of pure, unrelenting skill. He's built to score, whether that's depositing the puck in the back of the net himself or setting his teammate up for the honour. The result of this skill last season was a 1.38 point per game clip, good for the highest rate among first-time draft-eligible skaters in the WHL.

All of his scoring tools rate as above-average, but the foundation on which his game rests is his skating stride. Heavy crossover use and constant motion propel his high-pace, constantly attacking approach, making his every puck touch an opportunity to create a scoring chance.

Then Savoie stacks a brilliant first touch, handling skill, an in-stride wrister, and one- and two-touch passing ability on top of that skating and pace combo to ensure many of those chances aren't for naught.

Games Tracked: 13 | Minutes Tracked: 195.6



Having the runway to take advantage of those tools helps, but Savoie's proven a pretty robust off-puck scoring threat during sustained offensive zone sequences, too. His willingness to get inside and play between checks allows him to seek out soft ice, and his finishing skill takes over from there.

Of course, if one were to nitpick, they would point out that it took until about the midway point in the season for Savoie

to consistently display any of these tools in a meaningful fashion. Even then, this year's tape represented a bit of a letdown relative to the lofty standards his draft-minus-one film with the USHL's Dubuque Fighting Saints established. Look through his game reports, and you'll find that he went from a can't-miss top-five player to one barely clinging to the back end of our top-10.

And of all the alarming trends to reveal themselves from Savoie's draft year, his deference was probably the one that most concerned our staff. He was, frankly, gun shy at times, it seemed. He would often panic under pressure where others would attract opponents to create space elsewhere. Simply

put: Savoie didn't create advantages for his team the way that a prospect with top-line NHL aspirations should at this stage in their development.

However, the tools remain exceptional, and we saw enough flashes of high-level thinking to still feel confident with Savoie in the back half of the top 10 in this year's draft. To see him halve that number with his actual draft position wouldn't surprise us either. It's just that we've come to see him as more of a top-six prospect than a top-line one, and the result is his No. 10 billing in the Elite Prospects 2022 NHL Draft Guide.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Nic Petan

YEAR: 2013

SIMILARITY: 91%

2 Gilbert Brule

YEAR: 2005

SIMILARITY: 88%

3 Colton Yellow Horn

YEAR: 2005

SIMILARITY: 87%

4 Ryan Nugent-Hopkins

YEAR: 2011

SIMILARITY: 86%

5 Jordan Weal

YEAR: 2010

SIMILARITY: 86%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 13th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

Two goals for Savoie. Off-puck instincts continued to shine. Not super advanced reads, but he tries to get inside defenders when necessary, but also understands when to move to the far post. Finds space in the high slot by pushing off defenders. Highly involved on the backcheck in this game. Offensively, he settles for low-percentage shots and plays in general. The more I watch, the more I'm convinced it's a product of not seeing the opportunities. He's best when he's making plays across the front of the defenders and cutting inside rather than trying to outrace. It'll require some work, but he could still land inside a team's top-six.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 11th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

Savoie's still the same player. The tools are so impressive. The pace, handling skill, and the shooting mechanics. When he's forced into reactionary situations, he shines. Twice in this game, he beat defenders with hands and attacked the middle. Reached out to pass under a defender's stick for a high-danger chance. If given space, he'll just skate into the nearest defender unless there's an accessible pass. The decision-making concerns linger. For one, he should be more dynamic given the tools. Too many of his attacks become straight-line plays and he misses opportunities to cut inside or delay. There's no manipulation occurring. It's all pace. At the NHL level, his pace will remain an advantage. He wins races to retrievals, establishes body positioning, and throws the puck into the slot. Times his stick lifts to get the puck when he doesn't have the advantage. Works

on the backcheck, but tends to float with his legs straightened in defensive zone coverage. Puck watches. It helps him pounce on steals, but he's not eliminating off-puck threats. Stride had some bleak moments in this game (not engaging his hips when he should've) but the frequency remains high and his crossovers, cuts, etc. are projectable. I've seen better skating from him. He's not the player I thought he was, but he's still a top-10 pick in this draft.

**David St-Louis:** April 16th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Savoie leveraged a bunch of good opportunities for himself into better ones for others in this game. His technical ability is still incredibly high, but of course, the decision-making still leaves questions...He forces certain plays, dangles and passes, which makes me doubt his hockey sense still. He has a lot of pace, through his skating and also his first touches that he takes in stride and leads to the next play. He drives the net and inside most of the time...Lots to like but the same doubts.

**Cam Robinson:** April 15th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs Regina Pats - WHL

Not exactly a standout game for Savoie. We know he makes his nut while on the PP, but he wasn't has active or dynamic moving down the wall and creating seams. He grabbed a no-contact secondary assist on the 4th goal of the game - while up a man, of course, He had a couple of trnaisitons with speed where he attacked the middle of the ice. Had a nice chance thwarted. It wasn't that he was poor in this one, he just didn't stand out much in a

game where the ICE clearly were dominating nearly every possession.

**David St-Louis:** February 26th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs Winnipeg ICE - WHL

This was one of the better games I saw from Savoie this season. Not from a creation standpoint, necessarily, as he wasn't breaking defences all that much. But he did show his skill-level more frequently: his skating to pick up loose puck and rush them up-ice; his handling skills to move the puck around stick; and even his physical skills, by establishing body positioning once or twice. His defence was generally on point -- stick in the right lane, pressures at the right time on the PK... -- and his decisions with the puck were generally good, too. No forced plays; takes the best available option; supports plays well; anticipates the movement of teammates. Savoie isn't showing us the "special" because it probably isn't there at this point, but the combination of tools, reasonable sense and engagement is still interesting.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

This feels like the most important viewing of Savoie I've had so far. Finally, he's away from McClennon, and with Geekie out, he's finally playing big minutes alongside the team's two best forwards (Zach Benson and Mikey Milne). And he was fine. He scored twice, one catch-and-release wrister and one step-in wrister into the top corner. Both NHL shots. He's clearly an adaptable shooter. His retrievals were sharp, as usual. He times contact well, gets inside, and cuts back at the right moments. But he tends to elevate instead of shrinking when engaging – it'll give him issues in the NHL. The playmaking remains basic – he's all about outracing defenders into passing lanes. Not a hint of manipulation or planning. He attacks the middle and drops the puck back and uses give-and-gos, but he can't access difficult lanes. Some of that comes from his lack of manipulation and dynamic skating habits. He had one sequence of crossovers and reading the D's feet, but he's never dictating. Doesn't push the middle early enough – he won't be able to play his rushing game in the same way in the NHL as a result. The tools are insane, pretty much 6s and up across the board. It's fair to expect there will be growth in all areas. But will that make him a top-line forward? Probably not.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 21st, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Edmonton Oil Kings - WHL

A better outing, but hardly an exciting one for a top prospect. There are a lot of ways to break it down, but Savoie simply doesn't do enough out there. He plays too fast. He breaks down the wing and attempts a pass into the slot off the backhand, but rarely connects. Timing is consistently off, and he doesn't give himself opportunities to open up lanes – it's all just outracing defenders and hoping it works out. On his more difficult pass attempts, he's usually not even close to his target. And there are so many little details that he's missing: he tries to stickhandle through traffic instead of attack the defender's stick first, he forces passes to teammates more covered than himself instead of drawing pressure.

This was a more aggressive performance from Savoie physically, throwing hits and establishing body positioning – but sometimes overdid it and lost the puck. The shot's a major strength, as are the tools across the board. Deceptive on the PP, but never at 5-on-5. Skating gets a lot of shine because of his high stride frequency, but his inconsistent crossover push-off and integration inhibit his ability to find separation. There a lot of tools here, but to become a true top-six forward, his game requires just as much as work as Geekie's, and he doesn't have Geekie's manipulation and timing. He looked like mid-first.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Winnipeg Ice vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

I can't remember the last time I saw a top prospect look this mediocre. This was a nothing performance. He had a breakaway in the first period, a rebound chance, and a wrister off a faceoff. That was it. He didn't set anything up. He didn't gain the zone or break the puck out. One breakup by moving low and anticipating a cut to the inside, but otherwise, didn't do much there. Mostly an off-puck player right now.

He finishes his routes, finds space across the ice, and understands how doing both will create space for his teammates. His physical game could become a strength: he pre-scans, establishes positioning, enters battles fast, and manages contact. But he's too inconsistent. At this stage, there's really not much here to justify a top-5 pick. He's not dynamic or creative, and while his tools suggest there's potential for more, his risk-averse game and willingness to do nothing for lengthy stretches are enough to believe he won't make full use of his skill. I know Winnipeg's good, but he's consistently their fourth or fifth best player most games.



## Matthew Savoie 2021-22 WHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 5 || Base XLS: 37% || Impact XLS: 9% || XPR: 36.1 || Drafted Pct: 80%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**David St-Louis:** January 28th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

I have to stop hoping for more from Savoie. It's just not there. It could be there, but it's not. He is a conservative player who already feels rushed by WHL defences and forechecks. He needs space and defenders rushing at him desperately to make anything happen. That, or his back against the wall. Otherwise, he defers and defers and defers, forcing passes through defensive layers. The only time his skills shine is on the powerplay. There, you see his passing ability, some manipulation, and his shooting skills. He doesn't know how to use his skills to create advantages. He might learn it, but he's far from a creator at this point, not even sure he's a connector like Wright either. He's just there, picking up points from already advantageous situations. He scores by outpacing (1), rapidly slipping pucks through and around defenders (2), and with his powerplay shots by running through the faceoff circle (3). All three of these things won't hold all that well at the next levels. Besides these three qualities and the occasional defensive involvement (it's not a strength for me), I don't see that much in his game. You really have to stretch his projection and I don't like that.

**David St-Louis** - January 1st, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

I still see a second or third Wing. Savoie's talents are his off-puck game (mostly offensively, but also defensively), his ability to find space, his passing ability and his motor. There is no creative there, no plays to back layers off the rush, no gap manipulation, no one-on-one moves in the o-zone. It's all passing and repositioning and attacking high-danger areas. His skill-set is valuable but is it top-5 valuable? Maybe this season. His hockey sense is a 5.5-6 for me. He processes fast, has good scanning and rotation habits, and he anticipates. He has some adaptability. That's good enough for above-average sense, but not a remarkable mark. Savoie's best attribute might be his constant activity in tight spaces. He keeps his feet moving, changes body positioning to protect the puck on first touch, and slam it on net. There are a lot of good habits in his game.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 27th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Savoie plays too fast, and I don't see the dynamic qualities necessary to sustain that pace while adding efficiency at the next level. He's always stuck in outrace mode - once he

beats a player, he decides it's time to pass, even if it isn't. Limited patience; his passes are consistently off because he lacks the patience to draw pressure or allow his teammate to skate into space first. It's like he sees an option and immediately executes without much foresight. He doesn't delay when lacking immediate options - he sprints into the corner. The only well-timed OZ pass of this game was a pass back through the crease for a tap-in - intelligent play. His off-puck game remains strong, but he's always looking for space inside the circles instead of inside the hash marks. The mechanics are all above-average across the board, but his ability to use them remains concerning. Didn't look like a top-10 pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 20th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

So, this game was a good one. Savoie was trying to make things happen, which is a great step. Some of the attempts were bad. He forced passes into the net-front pile and didn't deceive when necessary. But he showed the solutions for the plays in other sequences. He set up three chances with some variation of look-off passes, including two with a puck-positioning adjustment towards his own feet to get the lane. Always aware of his options and executes quickly and at the right times. The off-puck movement's at the top of the class: he arrives into the right pocket at the right time, finds space in all sorts of manners across the ice, and consistently places himself in the middle of every place.

The shot to complete those plays is at 7-grade, for sure. He has a bit of an unnecessary drawback sometimes, his shooting movements are fluid, powerful, and deceptive. Adjusts his body and hand positioning to fire off the pass without having to settle the puck first. There's planning to his game as well, highlighted by some of those more deceptive playmaking sequences. I saw more dynamic skating qualities: lots of crossovers, some inside leg push-off inside of them, and using those patterns to deceive. Defensively, he's usually in the right place, highly disruptive, and links defence into offence. First touch on pucks often puts him into pressure and leads to turnovers, even when he's scanning first. Something to watch. He looked like a top-5 prospect in this game: tools, skill, room to grow.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Saskatoon Blades vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

This was a great game from the perspective of doing things, but only a decent one at actual execution. He still tries to hammer pucks through defenders or throwing them into a pile instead of picking his spot. He had a couple of

failed dekes in this game, but that's better than not trying them at all. His pace overwhelms, which directly created one of his assist. The second one was much better: he scanned, stepped into space, deceived, and then set up a teammate for a tap-in with a cross-slot laser. Scored with his usual outside leg wrister -- lots of downforce, narrow body posture driving through the shot, head up. As usual, the tools and skills are exciting. In one sequence, he combined the inside cut (jab for the nerds) with a backhand-forehand move, rolling the puck off his heel and catching it inside the turn. Explosive, controlled, and no risk. Rare to see that at this level. Followed it up with a cross-slot pass for a chance, too. Better skating than earlier in the season from higher crossover frequency. Wins races from disadvantages through speed, but mostly awareness. He always comes across the hips and usually knows the next play to escape, too.

**David St-Louis:** November 7th, 2021

Winnipeg ICE vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Savoie defaults to passing and shooting to the point where he forces some of them. He hits the first option he sees even if it is not the best one, so eager to get rid of the disc. He is a frustrating player to watch because you know he is capable of much more -- he pulled off a couple of dangles in this game at pace -- but the flashes of high-end abilities are few and far between. In fact, for most of his shifts, if I wasn't actively looking for him, I would probably miss him entirely. He is a connector at this level, and there is nothing wrong with that, except when you're projected as a top-10 or even top-5 player. It doesn't mean that we should drop his stock necessarily, but his projection has much more risk than it probably should have. If he doesn't start taking over more games until the end of the season, we will have to project him based on what he shows -- his off-puck game, his space management, and scoring timing, and his powerplay playmaking and release -- and what he could show in later years due to his flurry of skills, instead of having tangible proof of those skills, of those abilities. Savoie would make our life much easier if he came out and took the top-5 spot that he looked poised to have last season.

**David St-Louis:** November 4th, 2021

Winnipeg ICE vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

I'm not sure how I would rate Savoie's hockey sense. On one hand, he processes the game fast, pre-scans, deceives and plans (on the powerplay). On the other hand, he gets really fixated on certain plays; he makes up his mind

about what he is going to do before getting the puck and forces that play as quickly as possible. He lacks adaptability and misses clear occasions to improve scoring chances by, for example, cutting inside. I like some of his habits. On retrievals, he moves his feet as quickly as possible as he touches the puck to escape pins, and on reception, he catches the puck in his hip pocket, with his body already turned toward his next play. And I like his skills: his handling, passing, shooting, skating...They are all above-average. But again, he doesn't seem to create anything by himself using these skills, unless he finds himself alone in open ice. He had one sequence in this game where he weaved through the neutral-zone, weight-shifted to fake a defender, moved around him, and broke in the zone. He used to do that routinely at lower levels.

**David St-Louis:** October 29th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Edmonton Oil Kings - WHL

In this game, Savoie beat defenders multiple times and in different ways. He turned their feet to drive past them and attack the net and he faked one pass to open up a better one. Savoie also showed his offensive instinct. He didn't overshoot passing lanes. He anticipated their formation and controlled his skating to be in the right position when his teammates looked to pass. And he also attacked inside when he had the chance. I don't think Savoie displayed the full extent of his shooting ability in this game, however. He had a few good releases, but those could have been even more threatening, if he placed them better and fired them quicker. Defensively, he had good and bad moments. He showed some good habits, but he could have moved in position a bit quicker a few times. Overall, this was still a great performance from Savoie. He definitely showed why he will be a high pick at the 2022 draft.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Edmonton Oil Kings - WHL

Finally, a performance from Savoie that was top-10 worthy. He attacked the inside regularly, beating pressure with a combination of pace, handling skill, and deception. Among the most impressive sequences: (1) knocking down a waist-high pass, making the defender commit his feet before dangling around him and cutting to the inside, (2) a dip-in sequence where he beat one followed by another with a cut blended into his weight shift for the shot, and (3) a look-off pass into the slot through a defender for a point-blank chance. Lots of great details: pre-emptive stick lifts, physicality, well-timed DZ steals. Mechanically, the shot's a standout and likely a 7-grade, although he relies

a bit too heavily on drawback over a quick release. There are some limiting factors here, mostly focused around his lack of patience and a delay game. He forces plays (like a short-side wraparound despite having the space to step out for a high-danger look), panics after bobbling pucks and throws possession away instead of problem-solving, and doesn't really have any dynamic skating qualities. He's a top-10 pick, but more based on a high-end combination tools and skills (shooting, passing skill, off-puck movement, pace, occasional deception) than high-end impact.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 26th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Savoie was dynamic in the first period. Fired off scoring chances of his own, then recovered the puck and set-up teammates. Pre-scanned and then deceived to mask his passing intentions. Made plays under pressure, established positioning before touching the puck, and completed a one-touch pass. Movement in the offensive zone is a strength; it's just non-stop, engaging and disengaging at the right times to get pucks in scoring position. Defensively, he's disruptive. Some strong forechecking sequences to delay exits or steal possession. Skating-wise, he's NHL-calibre. Not explosive or dynamic, but he's mechanically-sound and quick enough. After the first period, his offence fell apart. He's too passive with and without the puck. The lack of dynamic skating hurts him in the odd instance where he did end up with the puck on a solo dash. Sometimes, it seems like he's deferring when he should be the play-driver. In the USHL, he knew he was the play-driver and played like it. On this loaded team, he doesn't play like it. That's a huge concern. Didn't look like a top-10 pick in this game.

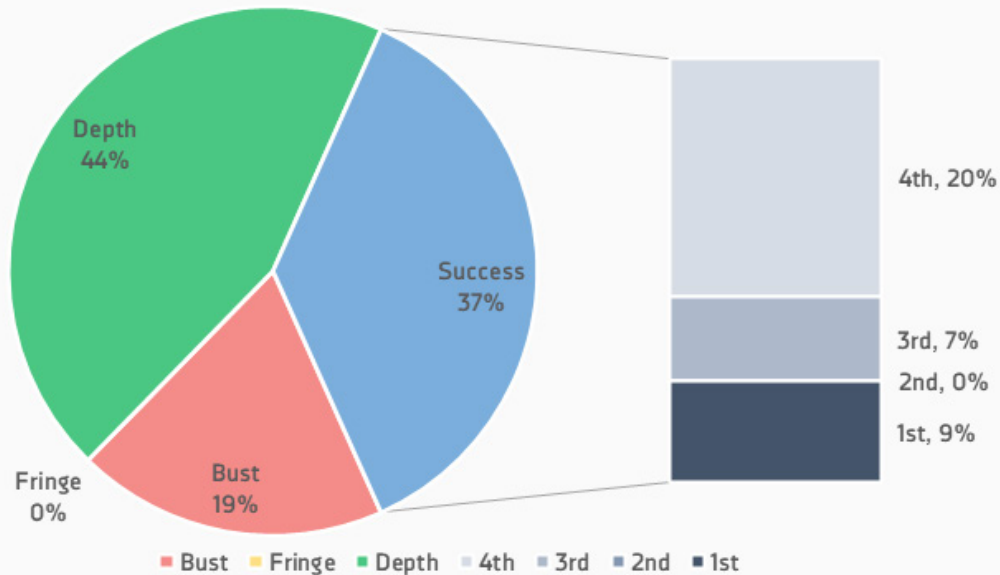
**David St-Louis:** October 23th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs Moose Jaw Warriors -WHL

Another not so interesting performance from Savoie. His biggest quality is his pace, not just his skating, but the rapidity at which he makes decisions on the ice. He beats opponents by getting to the puck quicker than them, by getting to areas quicker than them, and by sending pucks to high-danger areas quicker than they can react. He has some small-area chops, puck protection mechanics and abilities to escape, to slip away with the disc. He had one sequence in particular where he evaded pressure and made a one-handed pass to a teammate inside space. Was it a hope play? Did he know he was there? I think he did. He scored twice. Once by jumping on a slot rebound and another time by slamming the puck in from a tight angle. Skills look above-average, but again, he is not controlling

## Matthew Savoie 2021-22 WHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



possession for long periods of time or manipulating. He's rushing plays, mostly successfully.

**David St-Louis:** October 20th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs Moose Jaw Warriors -WHL

Not the most interesting performance from Savoie. Honestly, he didn't get many chances to create in this game. The game ended up as a blown out in the last period. Savoie got multiple chances to showcase his powerplay skill then: the one-touch passes, the behind the back passes, the catch and release shots, which are technically sound and powerful. Savoie looks high energy, high motor, and pacey. Is that his biggest advantage? That and mechanics. If they are, it's concerning as those will diminish at higher levels. He could scan more defensively to identify threats and move ahead of breakdowns to repair them.

**Daniel Gee:** October 17th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs Swift Current Broncos - WHL

Savoie only played around 16 minutes, but he was herculean in those minutes, especially on his downhill attacks off the half-wall on the powerplay. He drove play, and was frankly unlucky to not score in this game.

Swift Current simply had no way to combat Savoie as a shooting and passing threat other than to clog lanes and pray that they were able to deflect an array of shots away. Constant downhill shots off the right-wing resulted in over five high-danger chances. In the first, he had a wonderful shot-pass deflected from the very same place, following up with a well-mechanized one-timer off a rebound. On

the same shift he facilitated two passes to the side of the net, a set play that results in a crease jam play or bumper pass. Savoie continued to push pressure from this same spot throughout this game. Habits are high-end; inside-foot release to create deception, look-offs into slips and cross-ice feeds. Shot mechanics are instantly translatable; wrist shots consist of an unlocked right arm, one-leg weight transfer, balanced upper-body, and body synergy through his release. Powerful one-time option as well; on one shift he sent a bullet from the top of the point on net, leveraging early contact, full lower body weight-transfer, and upper body leveraging. Finally, he was able to convert in the third, passing to the right of the net, leading to a cross-crease pass backdoor. Supporting habits aid Savoie in other attacking scenarios. Savoie constantly keeps within a couple feet of the puck carrier, moving to add himself as an option. He scans on OZ retrievals and hunts for soft areas of coverages through quick dart-like activations. Solid board work to absorb physicality, fight through pressure and facilitate rings. Good stuff. He should have scored at the end of the second after picking up a puck from an activating defender on the left-point; Savoie worked in, deked through a defenders triangle, and capitalized on a pick in front of the net to pull the puck across the goal-tenders body (saved in a desperation flail).

Transitionally, there were some pace inconsistencies. Some shifts he had none at all, others he facilitated pace increases to get involved. He is great off of give-and-go attacks and drives the middle off-puck, to magnetize defenders. Had numerous slip passes fails, but started the

game with a really nice one-touch into the slot (no one there). Skating is very average; limited hip integration, average-to-slow foot-speed, and occasional wide recoveries plague his acceleration and explosiveness. He tends to plant his edges, and delays his extensions for a half second.

Savoie is a bit too puck-focused defensively. His pace limits his ability to lock down secondary threats, and I am not entirely convinced he even recognizes them in the first place -- makes him a bit reactionary and a one-stop facilitator. Supports well down-low and has some ability to harass in transitional sequences.

**Cam Robinson:** October 16th, 2021

Regina Pats vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

A somewhat quiet outing for Savoie despite dropping 2+1 when all was said and done. He showed excellent acceleration in spurts - driving the inside on the edges and cutting the crease for a nice chance in the first. His first goal was the best one, recognizing space in the slot and exposing it. He gets out, gets high, gets his body ready and finally drops to one knee before one-timing a nice pass from Milne into the back of the net. In the second he made a smart defensive play just outside the OZ to read the clear, knock it down, and then win a puck battle with a strong stick lift to turn it back into the zone. However, he was more of a passenger than a driver in this one. He had jam on the forecheck and looked dangerous while hunting for space, but I want to see him enforce his will far more often. He was keyed on, but that's no excuse. I like the player, the skills, the skating mechanics. Now I want him to dominate in all situations.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 16th, 2021

Regina Pats vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Meh. Savoie scored a couple of goals and grabbed a nothing assist. One goal came after a strong F3 sequence, moving a ton of anticipating openings, before darting across the ice to become an option as Milne popped out of a puck battle. Other than that, Savoie tried few plays, completed even fewer, and struggled to get things going. He's hardly playing with any aggression; it's like he's fine being a secondary player on this stacked right now. That's an issue. He still contributes in other ways. On retrievals, he's physical and crafty. He knows how to win a battle in a way that turns his body towards the slot just as the puck arrives on his stick. He had a slow-ish start with Dubuque (compared to how he finished) and eventually took over, dominating the puck and getting involved in every play. Maybe that's what happens here.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 15th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Hardly an interesting performance from Savoie. He had a couple of moments as a shooter, driving to the inside lane before firing under pressure. Consistent threat on the forecheck, particularly as the F2. He's a skilled handler and chains together dekes and shots quickly and tried a look-off pass that failed. Not much else. He's been a different player in these viewings than in the USHL: He's too passive, too uncertain with the puck. He's not attacking with the same pace or creativity that he did last year. If there's one major takeaway, it's that skating isn't really an issue for him. In this game, it looked like a 5.5 projection. His acceleration pattern's better (narrower and more forward push) and he drives the recovering leg forward. There's power in his skating that I hadn't seen before. He needs to start getting the offence going though.

**David St-Louis:** October 9th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Prince Albert Raiders - WHL

Pace, pace, pace. Savoie's line attacks so much in straight lines that it's hard to really evaluate other facets of his game. He is stuck driving the net as F1 to create space for trailers as his puck carrying teammate attacks the wide-lane and delays on entry. Savoie looks manipulative; he makes subtle and sudden fakes on the powerplay to open shooting lanes; those fakes blend into his release, but we don't really see it outside the powerplay. Savoie rushes all his passes and all his shots at 5-on-5, looking unwilling to move, control, and attract the opposing defence to find better plays. Outpacing gets you points in the WHL. It creates chaos and surprises defenders, but I'm not sure how his whole game holds at higher levels. He has the technical ability, the speed of execution, and probably the speed of mind. But the way he is stuck at maximum gear all the time doesn't let us see the depth of his game. The quality of his decisions suffer and you only see flashes of more interesting, projectable skills.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 6th, 2021

Regina Pats vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Quiet game from Savoie, even with the flashes of high-level details. The pace and manipulation are the biggest selling points. He attacks defenders, commits their feet, and goes the other way. Feel for pressure and a subtle physical edge help him keep the puck in tricky situations. He plans his plays, doesn't force things, and his shot's still mechanically-sound with NHL power and release speed. But he just couldn't get anything going. He was too passive. Yes, he

gets open in space, makes one-touch plays under pressure, pre-scans non-stop, but he just didn't have the aggression in this game. However, skating looks better: Better ankle flexion, more hip engagement, a more lateral push off with more controlled recovery (less heel kick). Still looks like a top prospect, but needs to turn those details and skills into offence.

**J.D. Burke:** October 1st, 2021

Brandon Wheat Kings vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Something of a mercurial performance from Savoie in this contest. The work rate seemed to come and go depending on the shift. At least, this was the case until about the third period, at which point the game was out of hand and the Wheat Kings went headhunting; Savoie was their main target, and he took a serious beating, but he rose to the occasion and didn't shy away from it.

Took great off-puck support routes on the rush to create shooting opportunities for himself, and got open a great deal as one of the Ice's triggermen in the 1-3-1 power play formation. Actually, just about scored on one such instance, taking a McClennon pass in stride, launching a two-touch shot post-and-out. Picked up a pair of assists in the third period. The first one was a bizarre play; the opponent lifted his stick right as he was about to shoot the puck and his teammate finished the play off. The second one was pretty garden variety stuff; Savoie went high, and he found Pederson at the goal-mouth with very little obstruction between the two or immediate defensive pressure.

Had a difficult time getting a read for his skating in this contest, but there were some instances of real explosive two-step quickness. Was an absolute pick-pocket, takeaway assassin in this contest, with some fierce, perfectly timed stick-lifts to steal possession. Backchecked hard throughout. I wanted to see a bit more offensive creativity in this contest from Savoie. He didn't really try anything particularly interesting.

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2021

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Savoie displayed a bit of everything in this game. I liked his off-puck timing, his ability to attack scoring chances and control his skating to remain in passing lanes off the rush. His first touches are incredible; all of them blend into the next play seamlessly. Savoie already knows what he will do with the puck once he gets it as he pre-scans a lot. His hand-eye coordination is high-end and his handling is lightning-quick, too. He has perfect control over the puck and that ability, combined with his high-level

processing speed allows him to solve traffic. He is on the smaller side, but also has physical habits, like establishing body positioning. In the offensive zone, he manipulated defenders with hesitation moves, freezing them to pass to teammates. His rushing game, a great strength of his at lower levels, wasn't on display, however. He challenged defenders head on, not making sufficient east-west movements to pull them out of position and gain the zone. Some of his plays were rushed, too, a consequence of the high, high pace he tries to play at.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 19th, 2021

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Lots of offence from Savoie in this game, in pretty much every form. The shot's projectable to a 6.5 or 7 already. Generates considerable downforce by suddenly kicking out his back leg as he pushes his hands forward. Puck explodes off his stick. Gets elbow parallel to shoulder, allowing him to generate power while shooting the puck tighter to his body/inside his feet. One-timer that he fires off the back and front foot. Hesitation moves and top free hand puck control allow him to beat defenders without really needing a speed advantage. But the star is his give-and-go game and off-puck movement: always in the right position to get the puck back, consistently finds pockets of space, and exceptional space reading as the trailer, and he immediately knows the best play. High average pace, but changes gears when necessary. The biggest issue, which connects with previous viewings, was inconsistent pass completion. Threw a ton of pucks into scoring areas, always with a target in mind, but it's either too late or too early into his passing window. Sometimes, he doesn't pass it hard enough or he's so deceptive that his target's route changes between the scan and the pass. Not a huge deal at this stage, but something to watch going forward. Looks like a potential NHL star.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 17th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

More of a playmaking performance than Savoie, especially compared to how he's been playing recently. While he flubbed a give-and-go that led to a goal against, there were many impressive plays. Recognizes options before getting the puck, then passes immediately. Beats defenders to lanes the pace of decision-making and execution, also showing the timing to hit teammates at the right moment. The manipulation ability that he shows to beat defenders didn't appear much in his playmaking -- that's the next level for him to reach. The shot and instincts to get open

were also there. Really advanced set-ups, pulling the puck through and around sticks before firing, even with his feet pointing away from the net. Stride has a pronounced heel kick with narrow, long extensions that limit his push off power. Very engaged in this game off-puck, throwing hits, stealing possession, and getting involved on the backcheck. Top-line skill.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2021

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

A tame game by the insane standards Savoie's setting. Still, the flashes were clearly top-line level. The shot's properly loaded with a quick release and off-puck instincts to complete it. Not afraid to battle in front of the net for positioning, then push off into space or play between checks. Struggled a tiny bit as a playmaker in this game: nothing major, just the usual struggles connecting on plays at 5-on-5. His timing's just always slightly off but his teammates have some difficulty finding space. The puckhandling (top hand free from hip, rolling out the back) pops in transition when combined with rush patterns: crossovers, attacking at an angle, eye and body deception. Highly confident working the puck closer to his feet or inside changes of pace. Engaged on the backcheck, but DZ coverage requires tightening up. Looks like a top-3 pick in a normal draft.

**Cam Robinson:** March 25th, 2021

USNTDP U18 vs Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

A wildly impressive offensive showing from Savoie in this one. He was all over the ice in translation and showcased the plethora of shooting varieties that make up his game. His ability to maneuver the puck in transition with his loose top hand allows him to make shifty moves in order to get the space needed to unlock his heavy release. I'd rate that shot as a 6.5 already. And while he managed just one goal on 15 attempts it was not for trying. He employed so much deception while carrying - stutter steps, curl and drags, opening up the hips and employing the mohawk at the top of the umbrella on the PP. He used the heel edge to cut back drastically while pulling the puck in at one point to create separation. Highly skilled body control move. He worked RW1 at evens and was the left point on the top PP unit. He showed an innate ability to judge the flow of the game very well to maximize his soft area landing and

reception. Was snapping the passes around and corralled several that were in his feet. Highly dangerous in spotting and exploiting pockets in the OZ. Maybe the only knock is the heel kick which becomes a bit more pronounced when he's carrying and accelerating. But the knee bend and ankle flexion looked good. Kid has a ton of juice.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 21st, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Savoie leaves few boxes unchecked, even in performances where he's not in peak form. The skills are top-line calibre, no doubt. Changes puck positioning before passing, often creating some deception before passing through a defender to an open teammate. He didn't show any explosive rush-carrying ability but it's almost irrelevant given his other skills. Give-and-goes are a fixture in his game. He's just as dangerous off-puck in the OZ, where he's constantly finding pockets of space, playing between checks, and popping into supporting position with perfect timing. Several degrees ahead of the competition already in how he gets the puck back. Eye deception to keep lanes open, and often beats defenders to passing lanes through one-touch and quick-possession passes. Sinks into proper depth with ankle and hip flexion early into shifts -- more consistent posture will come with S&C. Looks like a star in the making.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 16th, 2021

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Savoie's extremely dynamic already. But it's not just individual skill. He's always using give-and-goes to beat defenders. Consistently finds space before receiving the puck in favourable positions, especially as a playmaker. Instantly turns from pass reception to attack, identifying options well in advance. More deceptive his posture and eyes than outright body deception, at least in this game. Still, he completed several high-danger passing plays. Anticipated passing lanes and grabbed a couple of steals. Mechanically, he checks off almost every box: top hand free while handling, in-motion handling and pass receptions, the shot's projectable already, tons of passing skills, and his stride lacks hip engagement with a pronounced heel kick, but he's legitimately quick with some explosiveness. Easy to see the path to becoming an NHL star.



10  
Rank

6  
Skating

7  
Shooting

5  
Passing

A  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

6  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

# JOAKIM KEMELL

RW | JYP

HEIGHT 5'9" D.O.B. APR. 27, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS RIGHT

"Highly competitive and physical despite his average size, best one-timer in the draft. Needs to learn how to make more plays for his teammates."

- Eastern Conference Scout in May 2022

SHADES OF: Victor Olofsson, Brock Boeser

100%

2022 XLS

64%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

49%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
Liiga	39	15	8	23
WJC-18	5	6	2	8

## Scouting Report

Nothing about Joakim Kemell's profile coming into the season really screamed top-five pick, but that's exactly where he found himself on most public boards by December. A hot start to the scouting season at the Hlinka-Gretzky Cup and a productive first few months with JYP Jyväskylä in Liiga play will do that for a player.

By the time Team Finland called on him for the World Juniors, Kemell had amassed 18 points in 23 games, good for a 0.78 point-per-game clip -- the fourth-highest scoring rate among first-time draft-eligible Liiga skaters in the last 20 years over a full season.

The shoulder injury that the 5-foot-11 winger sustained in the weeks leading up to the World Juniors eventually caught up with him, though, and the production started to suffer as a result. It took Kemell 10 games to find the scoresheet upon rejoining JYP in January, and he only managed six points total in the final 16 games of the season.

Neither segment of Kemell's season is especially indicative of the player's quality, though. He wasn't quite as exceptional as his gaudy point totals might've suggested through the first few months of the season and nowhere near as inept as his muted point totals in the back nine of the season would have

his detractors believe.

However boring this may sound, Kemell's true talent level probably lies somewhere between those two blocks of his season. You can even see as much reflected in the statistics. There were signs in the underlying data that Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen tracked that the JYP winger benefited from percentage inflated totals, but you would also expect someone with so potent a shot and soft hands to outperform their expected shooting percentage. Eventually, regression occurred, and we were left with a clearer picture of the player in question.

Now, about that shot. It's easily one of the best in the class. There are only four players in our database of hundreds for this year's draft with a 7-grade as a shooter, and Kemell is one of them.

He's one of a select few players who can credibly threaten as a shooter from intermediate-to-long range consistently. Kemell is most comfortable firing the outside-leg wrister, pushing his hands in front of his body, generating the desired downforce, shifting his weight appropriately, and snapping the puck on goal.

That he scored 15 goals compared to the 11 expected goals



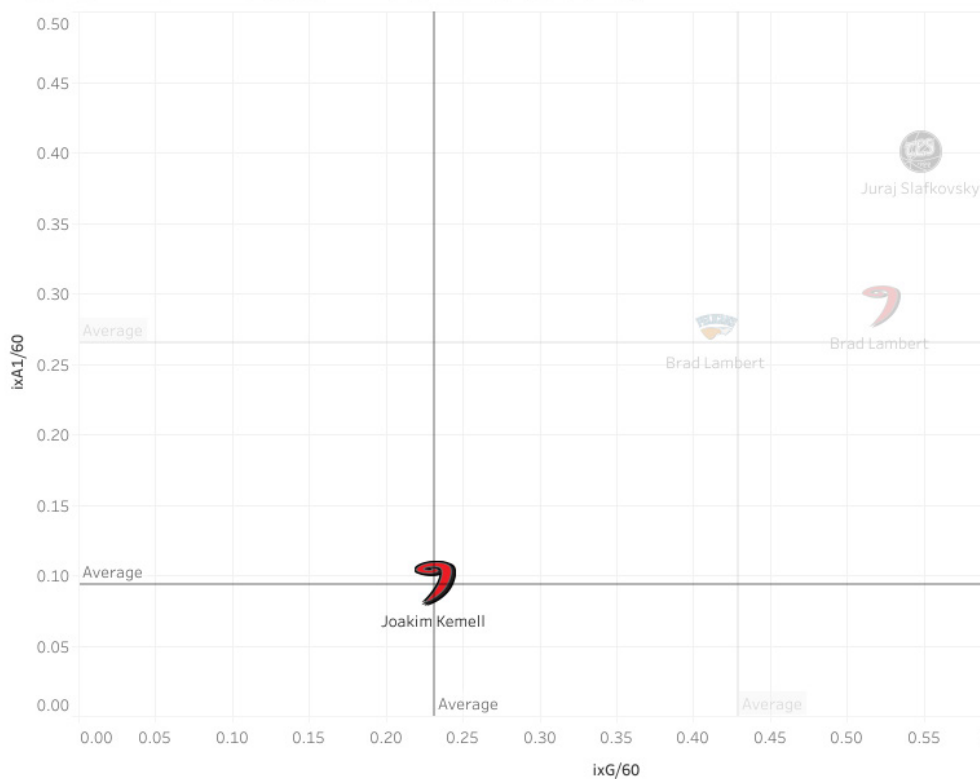
that our partners at InStat had him down for starts to make a whole lot of sense when you see the way he slings the puck out there.

It's not enough to just have shooting skills, though. The game's best goal scorers all find ways to stack the odds in their favour with crafty off-puck movement. And Kemell gets it. He anticipates pockets of space well, arrives as the puck does for shooting opportunities, positions his body in the best way to catch and release each pass, and generally seems well-connected to his teammates during sustained offensive zone possessions. He's always involved in the play.

You'll never mistake Kemell for a retrieval artist either, but he's shown some forechecking skill and physicality across many of our viewings, too. He doesn't need someone else to do the dirty work to make things happen. And as someone with an above-average skating stride, hands, and puck protection mechanics -- Kemell can make something happen every time he secures possession.

The problem with Kemell, of course, is that he's often a little too aware of his handling and shooting ability. His skills are closer to average than high-end, but he sometimes plays with the confidence of Connor McDavid anyway. The result is a lot of low percentage shots, turnovers, and missed

Liiga 2021-2022: Expected Primary Points (5v5 only)



passing opportunities. He can be downright infuriating to watch at times, more so than just about any other player in the top half of our first round.

Unlocking the best in Kemell at the next level should be a pretty straightforward exercise, and there's a nice package of skills there to work with. Add a gear to his skating stride, introduce more manipulative patterns in his small-area game, and you're looking at a low-end top-six shoot-first forward. If nothing else, a long and fruitful career as a middle-six power play specialist is likely in the cards.

## Game Reports

**Lassi Alanen:** April 23th - May 1st, 2022 - U18s

Kemell ended up leading the Finnish team in goals and points despite missing one group stage outing, logging six goals and eight points in five games total. Based on the expectations, I'd say that the tournament was a mixed bag for Kemell. He was a major factor in the big games, scoring a hat-trick against Canada in the quarterfinals and adding two goals and three points in the bronze medal game. He showcased his high-end release multiple times, though his power play effectiveness was hindered by the lack of shooting threat on the other wing, meaning his one-timer was scouted and defended with a lot of focus. Still found ways to take advantage of his release off the rush and also showcased that he can score from the net-front, whether by tip-ins or from rebounds. His physical game was strong

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 Aleksander Barkov<br>YEAR: 2013<br>SIMILARITY: 76% | 2 Mikael Granlund<br>YEAR: 2010<br>SIMILARITY: 62% |
| 3 Artturi Lehkonen<br>YEAR: 2013<br>SIMILARITY: 54%  |  |

as expected, being able to apply pressure or take a hit before making a play. Decent passing sequences from time to time as well. That being said, there were also quieter moments and the old "do it all by myself" mentality was a factor at times when he hold on to the puck for too long, missing easy passing options and give-and-gos. He didn't have a high-end passer in his line, though it's been

a consistent trend when he's playing with his age group internationally. I don't think Kemell is going to be a high-end play driver in the NHL, but the above-average tools and improvements in his two-way game and physicality mean he'll be a likely bet to carve out an NHL role, at least as a supporting scorer and an off-puck threat.

**David St-Louis:** May 1st, 2022

Finland vs. Czechia - U18s

This was a better performance from Kemell as he showed elements in his game that we didn't see frequently enough during the season: his ability to create off contact, to drive the net, establish body positioning and find rebounds, and seal opponents off the puck on the wall, steal it, and pass the puck inside. He plays with blinders sometimes, not aware of opponents on his back or on his shoulders, but there are enough higher-end NHL elements there to make him a top-11/12 pick in this draft. I'm not as enthusiastic about his whole game as I was before, however. I think he's going to be a backchecker/forechecker, off-puck scoring threat in the NHL, a volume shooter mostly, who will lack the wall and playmaking and finer rushing game to really become a constant creative force that will be able to drive his own line.

**J.D. Burke:** April 28th, 2022

Finland vs. Canada - U18s

Real land of contrasts type of performance from Kemell. Started off strong, scoring the first two Finnish goals with a pair of blistering wrist shots that beat the goalie clean, including one off the rush that he didn't break stride to release. There was the usual display of handling skill from Kemell to sustain offensive zone possessions, but almost always from the perimeter, and often to little effect - a lot of flash with very little substance. Then Kemell started turning the puck over almost every time it landed on his stick in the second and third periods, getting a little too cute with his passing attempts, going for unnecessarily difficult plays rather than settling for the high-percentage options readily available to him. Worked a little bit harder on puck retrievals and in the defensive zone than I'm accustomed to seeing, so credit there. Then there was the overtime breakaway goal to seal the Finnish comeback win over Canada and a place in the medal round, a beautiful set of dangles before he roofed the puck on Reid Dyck.

**David St-Louis:** April 28th, 2022

Finland vs Canada - U18s

Much better performance from Kemell. He made Canada

pay for everyone of their too creative plays and errors. His shot is a giant threat: can fire off passes, off the toe directly, and pick his spot. He has the handling skills to beat goalies 1-on-1. He stepped up when his team needed him and ended the night with a beautiful goal. I still have questions about his game, however, and they continue to be left unanswered. Kemell only wants to face the play. He moves the play suboptimally as soon as he has defensive pressure on his back and he's turned toward the boards. He doesn't turn to escape pressure on the walls and doesn't try to manipulate defenders or escape them on the boards. He has the tools, the handling skills and the desire for physicality to build that wall game, but his game is pretty far from an NHL-ready one so far. I liked the playmaking skills in this game: he completes his deception and understands the receiving conditions of teammates, trying to improve them as much as he can by delaying his play and fully selling his fakes. He also showed he can dangle through defenders himself. He spots weaknesses and exploits them. A lot more good in this performance. The creation and the goal-scoring showings, those were reassuring.

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - U18s

Really quiet game from Kemell, showing he isn't a player you can really rely on to carry a team against a better formation. He needs players with whom to build offensive chances. I'm not sure he's at 100 percent right now. He had a couple of rush chances and made some plays out of tight spaces. He solves them more through his passing than by establishing body positioning, but I think that physical side will surface as he ages.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Finland vs. Switzerland - U18s

This performance hasn't erased any of my doubts. Au contraire, it just increases them. Kemell can't create plays on his own all that well. The conditions weren't there for him to do so, and you have to keep that in mind, but top prospects find ways to open plays. He doesn't. Is Kemell just a shooter, and not an elite one, an above-average one, getting the right opportunities to score? Is he going to push a first-unit power play guy out of his spot in the NHL to become the main firing threat there? Is he going to be Mike Hoffman with more defensive engagement and better passing skills? He's technically proficient, but I'm not sure we can say he has above-average skills overall as he doesn't know how to set things up.

## Joakim Kemell 2021-22 Liiga pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 3 || Base XLS: 100% || Impact XLS: 75% || XPR: 61 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**Lassi Alanen:** February 22nd, 2022

Kärpät vs. JYP - Liiga

Kemell continues being a bright spot on a bad team (which also sold a majority of their best players). Despite JYP losing 6-0, he still managed to have a positive CF% and xGF% at 5-on-5 and was also a part in generating all the chances while he was on the ice. He's playing with notable energy and edge, always finishing his checks and being annoying to play against. Off-puck instincts were on display on a few occasions. He clearly has a good understanding of what's going happen around him and identifies the best play quite often off-puck. On-puck, that's not always the case but he's shown more playmaking flashes in the previous month, leveraging the shot threat and proceeding to find a teammate in the open. There was at least one clear occasion where he likely would have just fired the puck in October, but this time he baited the shot on the point and slipped the puck across his body to an open defenceman instead.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 3rd, 2022

JYP vs. Ilves - Liiga

Kemell's production has dropped off noticeably over the past two months, although he was apparently only partly

healthy during that time and should be fine now. Though there was bound to be some shooting percentage related regression, he's still doing a lot of good things. His off-puck play is high-end. He takes away passing lanes with his stick, keeps a tight gap in the NZ and does not show any hesitation about physical play. He created multiple breakups throughout the game by engaging physically in the NZ or OZ. It was a match between one of the best and one of the worst teams in the league, but Kemell still managed to create some offence, too. He made an elite OZ play by reading the defenceman behind the net, spinning to cut off the defender's escape route and establish body position, creating a takeaway and immediately finding a passing option to create a scoring chance. There was also a dynamic rush where he made the defender cross his feet with a series of crossovers, forcing him to take a penalty. He still has some weird moments with execution and he still shoots a lot from low-danger areas.

**David St-Louis:** December 27th, 2021

Finland vs. Austria - World Juniors

Same issues. Great ideas; poor execution, both in terms of choice of moves and technical breakdowns. His game is full of European patterns that just don't translate all

that well to smaller ice. He looks tentative and has trouble moving ahead of checks to attack open ice, but the reads are great more often than not; teammates also miss him in scoring positions. The breakouts on the half-wall have given him a lot of trouble, mostly because he lacks immediate options. Kemell has shown he can make plays through opponents in this tournament, slip pucks in between sticks and skates with his backhand or forehand, but when there is no immediate play to make, he struggles to hold on to the puck, protect it, and elude defenders or forecheckers.

**David St-Louis:** December 26th, 2021

Finland vs. Germany - World Juniors

A tough game with the puck for Kemell, but a great game without it. One play encompassed his night. The puck was on the half-wall in the offensive zone. It had just moved to the control of his team. Kemell deceptively attacked the far-post, timing himself perfectly in a pocket of space. He got the puck, in a perfect position for a catch-and-release shot, but instead of firing at the open net, Kemell tried to go to his backhand to manipulate the defender and the goalie. The move failed. Kemell's skill seems more limited than ever in this tournament. His hockey sense is still clearly there; he can play at this level, but he lacks the technical ability to execute his ideas at this pace. It's a problem.

**David St-Louis** - December 8th, 2021

JYP vs. Pelicans - Liiga

My mental picture of Kemell is changing. I didn't see the great off-puck mover and shooter in this game. I saw a player who abused the European ice to find space for himself and move the puck and who made a lot of inefficient decisions. With the way he is playing, Kemell won't ever be a possession player in the NHL. There are too many dumps and wide rims; that's his way of escaping pressure. He has the physique to maybe start playing a more physical, close quarter, short-passing game -- and the vision, too. But some of his patterns might become too entrenched to remove. I have a lot of doubts about his game suddenly. There is a good amount of skill there, though, and an ability to read openings and rotate to the right spots. Is that second overall worthy? Probably not, but this draft looks really weak.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 8th, 2021

Pelicans vs. JYP - Liiga

Kemell was on the ice for all three Pelicans' goals against, which is never a good thing. On the other hand, both teams got their fair share of chances, which JYP slightly

edging in terms of xG while Kemell was on the ice. There were quality flashes of Kemell's off-puck instincts and he got a decent number of chances throughout. He was first to a loose puck in the OZ, getting to go to 1v1 with the goalie, but couldn't finish from backhand. He was making some solid feeds off the rush and created nine controlled exits and entries combined. He is way more of a dump-and-chaser compared to someone like Lambert, though, and likes to rim the puck around or try to flip the puck high to the NZ in the hopes of someone from his team recovering it.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 4th, 2021

Sport vs. JYP - Liiga

Kemell was playing his second game back from a month-long shoulder injury, which caused him to miss the most recent U20 Four Nations event. Good news is that the injury hasn't made a difference in his level of physicality and aggression. He laid a big open-ice hit in the third period and played with the usual aggression along the boards, always looking to hit on the backcheck. On the other hand, he looked a bit rusty in other areas. For example, he whiffed on two different one-timer opportunities, which isn't common for a shooter his caliber. I didn't count a single shot or shot assist from Kemell at 5-on-5, despite them playing against one of the weakest teams in the league (to be fair, JYP is also among those teams). He also made some handling errors and bad passes. At the end of the game as JYP was looking to score without a goalie, his pass to the point was bad and intercepted, resulting in an empty-netter for the opposition. You have to cut him some slack given he returned to play just yesterday, but it was one of his worst games of the season.

**David St-Louis:** October 27th, 2021

TPS vs. JYP - Liiga

To appreciate Kemell, you really have to focus on him away from the puck, as he is not a dynamic puck carrier like Brad Lambert. Kemell commands and controls the game with his off-puck presence, his positioning, timing, his change of pace, his body orientation -- the way he always give options and connects himself to the team's offensive structure. His puck protection looked effective in this game; right mechanics and he held onto the puck for the right reason, to allow his teammate to get in a cycle position. Kemell doesn't overhandle -- another element that separates him from Lambert. He doesn't try to make the complex play, but advances the offence through passing. If something is not open immediately, he reloads the puck back

or rims it around. He weaponizes space with and without the puck. In other words, there are a ton of signs of high hockey-sense, of a prospect who doesn't force the game, but takes advantage of its opportunities. Is it enough to make him a high NHL scorer? I doubt it, but he has tools to offer too: above-average shot (he scored on a one-timer in this game and I think the puck didn't even land flat on the ice before he fired), above-average skating and hands, physical skills, passing skills... He is not necessarily a manipulative playmaker at this level, but he is young still and producing a ton. Maybe we see him become more of a creative player as he ages. The numbers and the hockey sense and the tools could be enough for him to earn the 2nd overall slot on our draft board.

**David St-Louis:** October 20th, 2021

KooKoo vs. JYP - Liiga

A game spent defending. Kemell played with Lambert so the disconnect of his line was anticipated. They just didn't manage to manufacture much. Kemell struggles to do it himself. He just launches pucks at the boards when pressured, hoping to create favorable races for teammates. This use of space works in European hockey but not NA one. I like his awareness -- he plans his touches, knows where space is -- but there are some mechanical breakdowns: handling moves he tries but can't pull off, imprecise passes... His scoring at higher levels will surely be teammate dependent. He needs to be set up to play his off-puck, connecting game. Otherwise, he is ineffective.

**David St-Louis** - October 15th, 2021

JYP vs. Saipa - Liiga

Kemell doesn't work his hands and feet as well as Lambert. That's for sure. He is more of a "enter a wide glide on inside edges and try to deke the puck through the triangle" kind of guy. He has a fast reaction, some quick moves to pull the puck away from defenders; his hands will serve him well in the NHL, but he's not a projectable dangler. He has some good crossover patterns and he is explosive with them, but I don't really see him as a transition player either. I'm not sure what role exactly Kemell will fill in the NHL. Is he only a finisher? And probably an average one...considering the lack of significantly above-average shot? Kemell might get his top-6 role taken away from him when the things he can do turn out to be more limited than expected.

**David St-Louis:** October 13th, 2021

Jukurit vs. JYP - Liiga

I have seen better performances from Kemell. It wasn't a bad showing, just a bit uneventful. Kemell is not dynamic, but his tools all project as at least average. He builds scoring chances through his passing ability, give-and-goes, and seems to always think about the next play. His supporting ability from the wing is one of the better in the draft. In the offensive zone, he has that hunter mentality away from the puck, picking his spots to attack pockets of space and jump on opponents as they try to initiate a breakout. His management of space, his ability to avoid getting into checking range and remain open, is also above-average, something that will serve him in the NHL. Is he a top-line NHL scorer? I still have my doubts.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 9th, 2021

KalPa vs. JYP - Liiga

It was a bit more quiet game from Kemell, until it wasn't. He was the main orchestrator of an incredible comeback, with JYP scoring three goals in the last few minutes with Kemell being involved in two of them, both scored without a goalie. He tied the game with a rather harmless-looking wrister from near the point with just 20 or so seconds left on the clock. Then, he scored the game-winning goal in overtime while on the power play, smashing a one-timer from his usual spot on the left side that went just below the cross-bar and instantly came out. There's certain clutchness to Kemell's playing and it's not a surprise that he's always on the ice when his team is looking to tie the game or sometimes even protect a lead late. The shot is a major threat from almost every corner of the OZ. Earlier in the game, Kemell had some issues with forcing and overhandling, turning the puck over in one bad spot in the DZ which resulted in KalPa scoring.

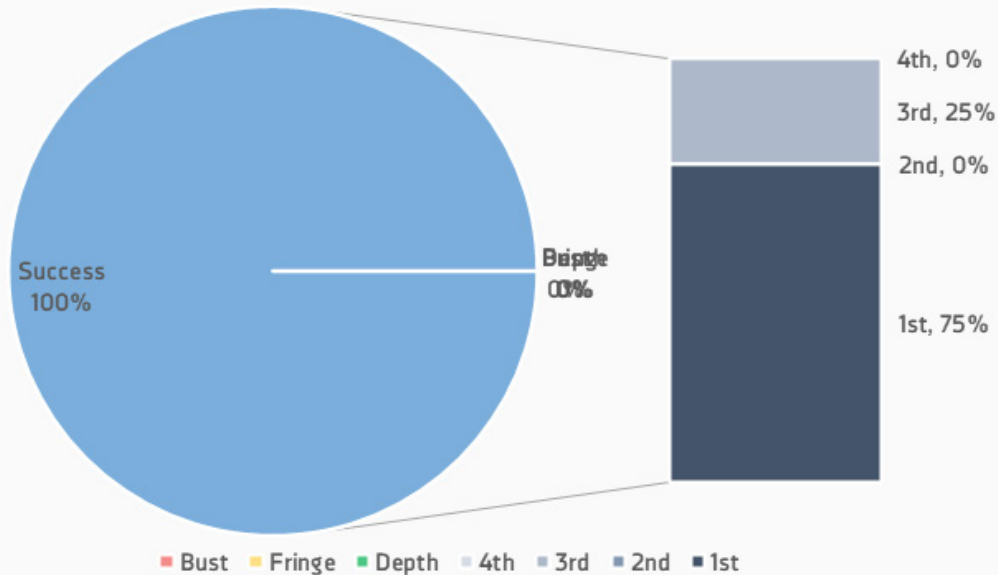
**Lassi Alanen:** October 6th, 2021

JYP vs. Ässät - Liiga

Another really impressive game from Kemell. He was a consistent threat offensively and ended up scoring the game-winning goal for JYP, beautifully cutting to the middle from the left side, gliding to the slot, and beating the goalie with an accurate wrister. He was involved in pretty much every scoring chance his line did generate. With a speed advantage, he's got enough quickness to beat defenders outside, which he did once at 4-on-4, creating a high-danger chance for himself. His handling skills have been impressive as well and he showed ridiculous levels of confidence, calmly toe-dragging the puck around a forechecker in his own end before going on the attack. Seven controlled zone entries at 5-on-5 should tell you a

## Joakim Kemell 2021-22 Liiga pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



lot about his involvement in transition. He's also effective on the forecheck, once pressuring and pinning a defender so well he resorted to throwing the puck towards the slot where a JYP forward was and ended up getting a really good chance. Defensively, I'd like to see a bit more scanning. One play struck out where he lost track of his man on the point who was activating while Kemell was still keeping his stick towards the point. Still, really impressive effort overall. He's a top-5 pick based on his early season play, I think.

**David St-Louis:** October 6th, 2021

JYP vs. Ässät - Liiga

Kemell was the best player on the ice for many of his shifts. He has a high-level understanding of the offensive play. In this game, he saw advantages and abused them. He manipulated the opposition through his passing, with give-and-gos, and also with his movements off the rush. He changed lanes to open space for teammates and created 2-on-1s to beat defenders. In the opposing end, he consistently moved the puck inside space, forcing opponents to rotate and adjust, and he provided good passing options by moving his feet and playing between checks. This facet of his play could become even better as the season goes on. Based on this game, I would project his skating as about NHL average. His quickness from a start could improve and he could use more crossovers as he attacks between blue-lines. Defensively, Kemell rotated and supported teammates well. He was puck watching a couple of times, but this will probably be an easy fix considering how aware

he is offensively.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 25th, 2021

JYP vs. Tappara - Liiga

Wearing the golden helmet given to the top scorer in each team, Kemell continued to produce as he scored in the third period, stealing the puck from the defender near the blue line, getting into a breakaway and scoring with a quick and effortless top-shelf wrister. Kemell's line was able to hold their own against Tappara's for the most part. He continues to create in the OZ in pretty much every game I watch. He's got the quickness to gain space, but most importantly, he's willing to play in the middle. His handling under pressure was good on multiple occasions. There were some odd dump-ins but also some good plays in transition, once gaining the NZ and then the OZ as the only JYP player against three to four opposing players, being able to establish a cycle. The effort level and willingness to engage physically were also there and he's able to play off contact pretty well. Continuing to be impressed.

**Daniel Gee:** September 24th, 2021

JYP vs SaiPa - Liiga

Kemell's unbelievable habits and separating tools made the winger a constant threat in this game against SaiPa. Detail-oriented far beyond peers of the same age group, Kemell was a force when exerting sustained pressure against SaiPa. Constantly open, activating soft areas of the ice, Kemell is superb off-puck in terms of pass support. Posted mostly on the left-hand circle, Kemell had a plethora of

dangerous sequences. In the first, he had a high-danger chance after floating into the hash marks, jumping on a rebound and quickly executing a great catch and release play. He leveraged his shot throughout this game from the left-hand circle, mostly on the powerplay. While his left-arm flares out late on some shots, and when he does leverage his unlocked arm, he gains a distinct lean to the right (lack of strength to stay balanced), he possesses a hard release, full of weight-transfer and throughout puck placements. What's probably equal in impressiveness is Kemell's adaptability and tool blend in the offensive zone. He can pressure push on the forecheck, execute small area handles under pressure, reads pressure well and leverages it, and can pull off some impressive passing plays while draped by defenders. He deked the hell out of a defender on a 6-on-5 empty net sequence late in the third. An inside-outside move broke the attackers ankles and he blended his shot instantly to take advantage of the now open lane. An active scanner, he sometimes forgets to protect the puck, which can lead to some turnovers -- projection wise I doubt this will be an issue. Absorbs pressure fairly well, however.

In transitional scenarios, Kemell was just as dangerous. Off-puck he files wings and the dotted-lines, stick set ready to receive passes or activate below the goal line for retrievals. On puck, he's a relative sauce master, especially on the backhand. He had a ludacris backhand saucer pass while going off on a change that sent a teammate on a rush -- this was through layers and perfectly weighted. A stand out shift occurred in the first. On the powerplay, he took a pass on the nearboards near SaiPa's blueline, stopping up after the entry, floating a perfect pass into the slot for a teammate who was driving hard. Later in the third, he once again was on the near boards on-puck, he actually head-checked to scan for support, cut hard into the high slot on the entry, walked the line and sent a hard slider on net as support crashed deep -- the problem solving to create a dangerous chance and wait for support was wonderful.

Fan of his defensive game as well. He head-checks constantly, flaring out high to force shots and bad decisions. There were a few flashes of proactive movement as well. Keeps good body positioning in transitional scenarios and will pop into a backwards glide to clog up the NZ. Skating is a bit concerning, his knees are rarely engaged, and when they are, he collapses heavily at his hips. Feet are pointed outwards on forward stride, limitations push-off potential. Smart enough to overcome deficiencies and I would expect these to be cleaned up as he gets older. Top-end of the draft player.

**J.D. Burke:** September 18th, 2021

JYP vs. KooKoo - Liiga

Talk about a land of contrasts type of performance. Kemell looked an awful lot like an 18-year-old playing in one of Europe's top professional settings through about the first half of this contest, overhandling his way into turnovers, hanging on the peripheries, struggling to get involved at all offensively. Then JYP went to the power play, and Kemell sent a beautiful wrist shot on goal, top-corner for the tally. That seemed to shake the cobwebs from the Finnish youngster. He was full value from that point onward. Habits were exceptional, scanning for options off of the puck, managing space well, providing support valves to linemates. Skating looked great in this contest. Got a wicked one-timer off in the third period. Even his weaker performances flash top-five if not top-three pick quality. Hell of a player.

**David St-Louis:** September 17th, 2021

KooKoo vs. JYP - Liiga

Kemell has great habits on the ice. He takes pucks in movement, scans for space, scans for teammates, and defenders. He knows the position of most pieces on the ice and connects plays. His one-on-one capabilities are limited due to somewhat average skating and elusiveness, but he can beat the opposition with his passing. His shot mechanics are above-average, but he wasn't all that effective at creating lanes on the powerplay in this game. His overall skill-set is a bit vanilla. He's mostly a "sense greater than skills" player and not all that manipulative. I think his scoring is probably partly luck driven, but I'd have to talk with Lassi to really confirm that. I wonder if he is capable of playing the same "positioning" chess game at a higher pace.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 15th, 2021

TPS vs. JYP - Liiga

Kemell logged over 17 minutes of ice time in this one and he had been promoted to the top power play unit, which is a testament to his success in the first two games of the season. He was left pointless in this one, but had good flashes. Kemell's volume shooting continues to be what it is; he's always looking to hammer the puck and the top power play unit was basically running through his shot and one-timer threat. They weren't able to set up good cross-ice passes for him, but he did still have a few good chances and almost buried one in the first period. He's a volume shooter at 5-on-5, too. When there's no ob-

vious choice to carry in the OZ, he's always launching the puck towards the net. Most of the time it doesn't result in anything, but he did create one chance by doing it, with the puck bouncing in front of the net from a block. Kemell's scanning habits in DZ on the breakout were decent, though he could have turned back to his own zone instead of trying to exit with a clear man disadvantage. He also turned the puck over a few times on entries, which is going to happen when you're looking to deke defenders 1-on-1 as often as Kemell does. Skating projects to be at least NHL average, maybe above-average. His acceleration with crossovers was noticeably good in few spots in this game. He also laid one of the better hip checks I've seen in a while as defending the rush as the lowest man; this man doesn't lack confidence. Kemell finished his checks and his hustle off-puck was solid throughout the game. Most of the time, the line that he plays in flows through him and he's the most noticeable player on it, and it was true in this one, too.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 11st, 2021

JYP vs. Kärpät - Liiga

Another Liiga game, another Liiga goal. Seems like Kemell is just going to score in every game from now on, eh? Maybe not, but he's been very promising in his first two games of the season. He's showcasing good timing in the OZ and the ability to get himself open in the slot area for quick shots. There were a couple of occasions where it was pretty frustrating that he didn't get the puck when open. He showed good speed with the puck and the ability to beat some defenders wide with his skating. He doesn't really slow down that much with the puck compared to without it. He managed to score from near the blue line after firing his usual curl-and-drag wrister that happened to surprise the goalie five-hole. He also added a primary assist later in the game from the net-front scramble. There are some moments where he looks a bit green and takes too big of a risk, like cutting to the middle and almost losing the puck in front of his net on the breakout, etc. Kemell is looking like an easy first-rounder at this point. The real question is how high should he go.

**Cam Robinson:** September 10th, 2021

HIFK vs. JYP - Liiga

A very solid showing from Kemell in the season opener and just his second career Liiga contest. He was active and engaged in transition, hunting for soft pockets and getting himself set and ready to unleash his favourite weapon. He tallied an exquisite even-strength goal in the

second frame. As he was gliding north, he redirected the point shot through his legs and against the grain. He was unafraid to engage physically in the corners and even in open space. I still wonder about his ability to spot lanes and use his mates effectively, but he wasn't as singularly focused on firing it as he had been in previous viewings. If he can maintain this level of play, its hard to imagine he sees any further U20 time.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 10th, 2021

HIFK vs. JYP - Liiga

Kemell was skating on JYP's third line in their season opener and managed to score their first goal of the season, bringing him to two goals in two games for his Liiga career. His goal came off of a pretty redirection from the slot, tipping in a shot from the point. Kemell was among JYP's best forwards in this one. It's encouraging to see that he's looking comfortable at this level and is already playing the way that he normally does. He was asking for the puck a lot, putting himself in good positions in the OZ to receive the puck for one-timers. His transition game was pretty sound, recognizing the middle option on the breakout and creating some success with dumping the puck in the opposite corner. Kemell's skating looked mostly good and it shouldn't prevent him from having success at this level. He was trigger-happy like he normally is, but didn't play as individualistically as he sometimes does against his age group. Not that he could do that at this level with any kind of success, but it's good to see him being able to adapt as quickly as he has. He was positioned on his usual spot on the power play, getting a few one-timers off from the left half wall. He made one pretty big open-ice hit against a bigger opponent -- cool to see him bringing that element of his game, too. The off-puck play was mostly decent, too. He could close in on defenders at the point a bit quicker and more aggressively at times, but his NZ defence remains strong. Based on this, I'd give him more ice time and maybe try him on the PP1. Strong start to the season.

**Lassi Alanen:** August 6th, 2021

Slovakia vs. Finland - Hlinka Gretzky Cup

Kemell scored once on the power play in Finland's 6-2 loss against Slovakia in the U18 Hlinka Gretzky Cup semi-finals. This was a pretty average game from Kemell by his standards. He stands out at this level during almost every shift. He plays with pace and is always looking to push play forward. His skating is good for this level and he's able to push past defenders off the rush. I wouldn't



say that he's a high-end skater, though, and sometimes he plays like he is one and that leads to turnovers. Kemell is also skilled with the puck and can make dekes at high pace or handle and protect the puck while circling in the OZ. Then again, he has a strong habit of holding on to the puck for too long or trying to deke and rush his way through multiple opposing players instead of opting for the simpler, yet more effective play like a drop pass or simple outlet. From what I've noticed, this habit always gets stronger when he's playing against his peers. He has shown some growth from his days in the U16 and U18 levels, but it's still something he needs to work on: to find a balance between using his individual skill and utilizing his teammates. Kemell's shooting volume has been through the roof in this tournament and that was evident in this game, too, even if his line didn't generate that much offence this time compared to the previous outings. Toning that down a bit in favour of more passing would serve him well, even if he has a hell of a shot. He was able to hammer one home late in third on the power play, displaying his one-timer prowess. Kemell's physical play has also been noticeable throughout this tournament. He takes the extra strides to close on the opposition to disrupt plays, which I like. His neutral zone defending is good since he forces so many dump-ins with his presence. The game got pretty heated in the third period with Finland being down by a lot and Kemell looked visibly frustrated. He made a couple of very questionable hits/cross-checks, and got a two-minute minor on one of them.

**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

Finland U18 vs. Czech Republic U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

I'm starting to get the sense that every Kemell report I write is going to be more or less the same, but that's to his credit. His habits remained exceptional in this contest, through all three zones, and his puck skills allowed him to carve his way through the Czech defence on a shift-to-shift basis. His work rate was exceptionally high in this contest, allowing him to draw a penalty by keeping his feet moving

through contact in the centre lane of the offensive zone. Had an exceptional shift on the penalty kill, eating about a minute with his work in the offensive zone holding the puck. His one-timers remain a work in progress. He just can't seem to get the timing right on those, and he must've misfired on like two or three glorious opportunities. Completed some highly difficult against the grain passes on the rush. If not for my reservations about the extent to which he relies on his handling to produce, Kemell is a no-brainer top-five, maybe even top-three pick.


**J.D. Burke:** August 2nd, 2021

Finland U18 vs. Russia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Just a fantastic display of plus-level habits from Kemell from puck drop to the final horn, during which time he picked up the one goal, a tap-in at the net-front set up by his linemate below the goal line. I was prettywhelmed by Kemell's physical tools. Everything looks about average or slightly above average, save for his puck-handling skill which struck me as uniquely high, but his mental processing power elevates them to such intimidating heights. Great dot-line use through the neutral zone to cross defender's feet. Took a lot of pucks to the inside in the offensive zone. One thing really stuck out in this performance and it was Kemell's decisiveness. When he sees an opening, there's no hesitation. He attacks.

**David St-Louis:** May 6th, 2021

Finland U18 vs Russia U18 - U18

A relatively quiet performance from Kemell compared to Lambert's. Although, a few times, I found myself confusing them; Kemell also has above-average speed, but he doesn't have anything close to the same rushing potential. What he does have is his understanding of space. He scans for his next play, for his space before getting the puck, and makes constant second efforts on the backcheck and forecheck to steal pucks after his team loses it. He communicates defensively and generally shows quick game processing. 



11  
Rank

A  
Grade

5  
Skating

5.5  
Puckhandling

6.5  
Shooting

6  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Passing

6  
Physical

5th  
Best Motor

4th  
Best Shot

2nd  
Best Power Forward

# CUTTER GAUTHIER

C/LW | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. JAN. 19, 2004  
WEIGHT 201 SHOOTS LEFT

"We gave [Gauthier] three things to be a power forward. Ask yourself every game: Am I moving my feet? Am I playing physical? And am I getting to the inside? Narrow the focus on those three things. When you watch [Gauthier] now, I think he nails those three things." - USNTDP U18s Head Coach in March 2022

SHADES OF: Max Pacioretty, Tomas Hertl

81% 2022 XLS  
67% 3Y REGR. bXLS  
48% 3Y REGR. iXLS  
1.55 SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	54	34	31	65
USHL	22	19	9	28
WJC-18	6	3	6	9

> Committed to Boston College

## Scouting Report

There's something to be said for a complementary player who excels in that role, and Cutter Gauthier is that player in the 2022 NHL Draft. Every line he plays on is better for having him on it.

It's the versatility that really stands out in this regard. There isn't a single role or task that the coaching staff can't assign to Gauthier with some degree of confidence that he'll rise to the occasion. He can play any forward position, is every bit as enthusiastic about the defensive details as he is finding the scoresheet, is an absolute menace on the forecheck, and boasts a nice set of hands and a lethal shot.

That shot is the basis of Gauthier's offensive projection to the next level, though. You don't score at nearly a goal a game clip against USHL competition without a wicked release and his qualifies. He pushes his hands in front of his body, elevates his top elbow, and powers through the lever-action release on his wrist shot. It's easily an above-average NHL-level tool as currently constructed.

You couple that release with the soon-to-be Boston College forward's willingness to play the net-front and an almost preternatural knack for being in the right spot at the right

Games Tracked: 13 | Minutes Tracked: 185.3



time, and the projection only gets that much better. Which, of course, says nothing of his ability to steal possession with his physicality or a well-timed stick lift.

There is some playmaking skill in Gauthier's game to go along with that finishing touch, but it's hardly his selling point. He's a dextrous distributor, capable of feathering the

puck through numbers with any pass for the occasion, but he lacks the high-level sense or planning to project as a top-flight playmaker at the next level. Not at this stage in his development anyway.

His skating probably falls in that same range -- about an average if not slightly better projection. Gauthier covers plenty of ground, but his upright stance limits his explosiveness and takes away from his ability to shield the puck.

Overall, though, there's a lot to like. You go through our reports, and you'll sense an early appreciation for his game from our group that only got stronger with each viewing. First, Gauthier looked like a mid-round pick. Then, by December, a mid-first-rounder. Now, a player just outside of our top-10, and one that we could easily see going a fair bit

higher than that come July 6th in Montréal.

It's easy enough to understand why the league's power brokers might have an even greater affinity for Gauthier's game, too. We may see him as more of a skilled grinder with finishing ability than a pure power forward in the throwback mould, but there's more than a handful of teams out there who go in the opposite direction of us in their assessment of his game.

On the low-end, Gauthier is going to be that middle-six winger with the ability to play anywhere in the lineup that coaches just love to have on their roster; the high-end, a top-line power forward capable of taking over a game or a playoff series. Time will tell where he lands on that spectrum.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

USA vs Germany - WJ18

This tournament is making sour on Gauthier a bit. The lack of dynamism and the occasion plays he forces and misses, they worry me a bit. He will develop the physical and small-area skills and the shooting skills and connect plays and all of those things are worth quite a bit, but his hockey sense is probably closer to average than significantly above-average.

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Czechia vs USA - WJ18

When I watch Cutter Gauthier play, I sometimes think of Tyler Boucher. Will a team step up to select him just as high, because of the pro-build, the physicality, and the flashes of skill? Maybe. The issue is that Gauthier can't solve any situation with his skating. He's all hands and passing, which limits his ability to create plays at higher level. His skating form is projectable but his motor is pretty low.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

Gauthier has flashes of high-level skills: playmaking abilities and shooting. But he's still the slower-moving partner of Cooley who is there to complement and connect and finish plays, more than a driver. I like his skating posture, however, and I think he will improve his motor, which will make his skating NHL average. He knows what plays to make and anticipates the position of teammates. The hockey sense is above-average. The physical game is strangely not there, except for the hitting. That's an issue. He will need to learn to protect the puck.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Thomas Vanek

YEAR: 2002

SIMILARITY: 87%

2 R.J. Umberger

YEAR: 2000

SIMILARITY: 70%

3 Chad Rau

YEAR: 2005

SIMILARITY: 70%

4 Kyle Okposo

YEAR: 2006

SIMILARITY: 67%

5 Zemgus Girgensons

YEAR: 2012

SIMILARITY: 63%

6 Jason Gregoire

YEAR: 2007

SIMILARITY: 62%

**Cam Robinson:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

I'm having a difficult time equating what Gauthier can achieve now while stapled to Cooley's side vs what he's likely to achieve as a middle six forward in the NHL. He clearly has a great release and the hands to set up plays and create pockets to unleash it. But the skating prohibits bursting into holes, beating defenders wide or with sharp cuts to the inside. Unless that changes, his success will hinge on his ability to flex next to a speedy, skillful pivot and be afford the minutes needed to show off his specific skills. Of course, he could add a gear and change this predictive path, but if he doesn't, I think we see a more physical Tanner Pearson than a high-impact top-six player. And hey, there's still value in a smart, two-way player who can rip is when given time and space. Just maybe less so in then top-15.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

It's tough to think of an area that Gauthier doesn't impact. Defensively, he's diligent, sometimes proactive, and armed with well-timed stick lifts and hits. In transition, he chang-

es directions, makes plays through defenders, defers when possible, and takes control of the play when necessary. His give-and-go has improved so much over these two seasons. In the offensive zone, he does everything. There's high-volume shooting, but he's also become more selective about pulling the trigger. For his assist, he walked off the wall with his head up, saw Logan, and then went backhand-forehand to adjust the release point of his pass to prevent a turnover. His shot's clearly a 6.5 or higher, depending on how much weight we apply to expected development (i.e., skating growth will likely improve his lower body inside his shot, unlocking new shooting skills). And he has many ways of getting inside: spinning off defenders and driving the middle, give-and-gos, handling skill, and off-puck movement to stay an option. He's pretty clearly a top-15 player in this class; too much versatility to not fill a role and enough skill to work his way into a team's top-nine, if not top-six.

**David St-Louis:** February 25th, 2022

USNTDP U18 vs Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Gauthier is always the complementary piece of every line he's on. It's not necessarily a bad thing. His game is more scalable than most. He's physical, a quick passer, and he understands how to create advantages for teammates in general and when he has an advantage, too, like a speed difference. He attacks the net when he can, challenges defenders to create space for teammates, and uses his physique along the boards. Easy projection, but his game lacks the "special" that we associate with top prospects. More of a top-25 pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

The usual performance from Gauthier. He's such a consistent presence. Clearly an NHL-calibre shooter with passing skill and improving play selection. Still takes the odd low-percentage shot, but nothing that suggests a lack of awareness or poor judgment. He's creative, adaptable, and finds ways to create advantages, whether that's with a quick breakout pass to the middle, a give-and-go in the neutral zone, or a look off to the middle. Then, he relocates to get open. Threw a hit that garnered a penalty, but his physical game will ensure that he can carve out a role in the NHL. More likely, he ends up in a team's top-nine, bringing shooting, defence, and a bit of playmaking to every combination of linemates. He's a top-20 pick.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

So Gauthier got to play with Cooley, so that was really fun

to watch. Cooley's pace wasn't a problem for Cutter, who demonstrated equal pace and playmaking ability. Gauthier also showed some shiftiness that I hadn't fully appreciated until now, exploiting overcommitting defenders in the offensive zone and taking ice between the dots where it was available. Oh, did I mention he had a hat-trick? There was a diversity in how he scored too, a nice one-timer, a slick backhander, I mean, the kid may be branded as a two-way guy but he can score. He's not in Nazar or Cooley territory, but he's the next man up. A first-round pick in my opinion.

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

3 goal performance from Gauthier. He's effective and he has skill, especially of the shooting category (can fire in-stride, pick his spot, with a short-draw, in traffic). I like him better than other players of his style in the draft, like Nathan Gaucher. Gauthier has more offensive abilities. He makes some bad decisions with the puck, is a bit risk-averse (like the time where he could lob the puck to a teammate across the ice for an almost sure goal, but decided to fire from a low-danger area instead), but he processes the game quite quickly. He needs an option open, otherwise, he tends to get rid of the puck. He doesn't create anything himself. He recognizes and takes advantages, but that's it. That, and his tools -- besides the average, high-stance skating -- makes him one of the better prospects in the draft.

**Cam Robinson:** February 4th, 2022

USNTDP vs Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Well, this sure was an eventful outing for Gauthier. Playing up on the top line, he was creating chances all over the ice. He put 14 attempts at the net with 10 hitting the mark. He was skating well and showing strong form on his crossovers in transition. I saw some feints in transit to make defenders miss that I hadn't seen in previous outings. He snapped a quick shot on the PP in the first, made a nice play to his backhand on a 3v2 in the second to grab his second of the game (this was a weak one that the netminder should've had), and finally his third showed nice form - picked up the puck going against the grain in the ozone, shifted his body and got his hands out in front to get a good shot off. Followed it up and banged home the rebound.

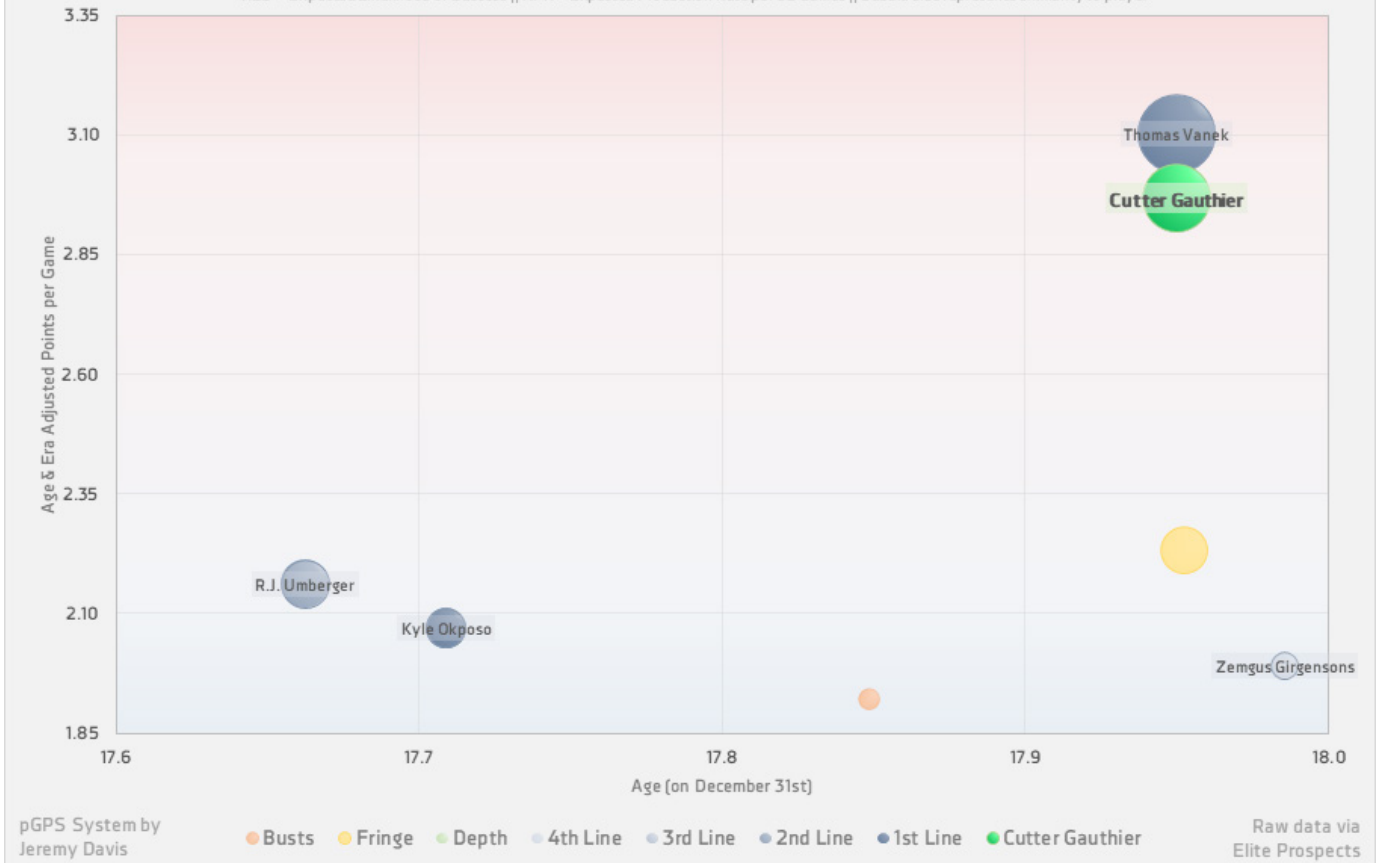
I was impressed with his awareness, speed, and hands in this one. And as usual, he was smart away from the puck and found himself on the right side of the puck. He also threw in weight around a bit. Standout performance.

## Cutter Gauthier 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 6 || Base XLS: 81% || Impact XLS: 75% || XPR: 63.4 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Gauthier continues to rise on my NTDP forward power rankings. He's so good defensively, using his body well along the boards and in corners to win puck battles and move up ice. Offensively, he's incredibly efficient. The puck is on his stick and off his stick in transition, but he also recognizes when he has pockets of space to initiate offense himself. Gauthier is unafraid to drive the puck to the net and protects the puck nicely when he chooses to do so. He moves well for his size and seriously looks like a future top 9 forward in the NHL.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Gauthier's a machine. Impacts every game, although the way that he does it often changes. It's impressive. In this game, he was part-shooter, part-playmaker. Shot-passes to the inside and quick plays off the boards to the middle. Accurate, too. The shot remains his most exciting NHL tool. As he develops his skating, the shot's only to get better. Right now, he already has a quick wrister, an adaptable two-touch shot, and several tricks inside the release to mask his intentions. Couple the shooting game with an inside-driven style and it's easy to see how this style works in the NHL. Is he a play-driver in

the NHL? Not sure. But he'll play for sure. Working in his favour is that the playmaking keeps improving. And on a line with Snuggerud and McGroarty, he was clearly the driver. Top-nine upside.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 8th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Gauthier was the third best forward on this roster and was a huge offensive catalyst for the NTDP when Cooley and Nazar weren't on the ice. He's just such a complete talent; he's quick, strong, crafty, and good in his own end. Maybe he doesn't have the offensive mind that Cooley or Nazar possess, but he's reliable with the puck; there were a few times I saw him drive wide, circle back, and hit a teammate. That's translatable. In his own end, he's always scanning the zone, he's helpful in corner battles, and keeps engaged to take away passing lanes and tie up loose sticks. Seems like the type of player every NHL team would want...

**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

A bit like Snuggerud, Gauthier is hard to evaluate. He doesn't get as many eventful puck touches per game. You only see his skill in flashes. He adapts to the play well, finds passing

lanes and teammates under pressure; he can connect plays, but often just settles on the easy one without attempting to manipulate, even if he can do it (but maybe not as fluidly as, say, Nazar). He lost the puck in a dangerous spot a couple of times because he thought he had more space than he did and some of his passes were intercepted. Overall, his skill level projects as above-average and his decision-making and play reading, too. He could be a nice project in the second round, a player who might explode with more opportunity.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Gauthier's so reliable. He's disruptive on the backcheck, forecheck, and in DZC. Doesn't needlessly chase or over-extend, instead striking a balance between pressure and positioning. Handling skill, usually set up with a change of pace to bait the defender's stick, featured more regularly in this game. The standout play saw him recover a puck that he threw in the slot, deke around pressure, and then shoot under the defender's stick for the chance. Timed off-puck movement to push away from the net led to his goal, a catch-and-release wrister. A couple of passes that were too hard or inaccurate, but his playmaking continues to improve. All-in-all, a well-rounded player with an easy path to top-nine scoring potential.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18 - USHL

Gauthier is a bit bland as a player. He doesn't really go out of his way, out of the structure to create. He complements plays, can link them together, showing awareness of options, and some deception to veil them when appropriate. He supports plays well, anticipates them (like the drives of Lane Hutson), and holds the puck, looking for a good play, not just a play. He lacks a bit of aggression and the extra skill level that really make top prospects and his physical techniques, his puck protection, could also improve. I'm not convinced he's a top forward in this draft, a first-rounder, but he's a decent bet for me in the second.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Gauthier scored twice in this game, including one where he beat three players before firing over the goaltender's shoulder. Nothing too fascinating about his handling or skating form; his effectiveness was the product of keeping his feet moving when attacking space. Deceives just long enough to convince defenders, but I'm not sure it'll work at the next level. Scored with both an inside and outside leg

wrist. His lack of lower body flexion hurts both, well, in theory. He keeps his hands high, and leans his torso over the stick instead of creating that flexion through his lower body, but he doesn't lean too far one way or the other. Lots of interesting passing ideas but he failed to connect on most of them. Inefficient performance overall, but he's consistently a transition threat because of his desire to attack the middle. Top-nine upside; probably a first-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Honestly, Gauthier might even be more consistent than Cooley – he's consistently effective offensively. And his flashes of offensive upside also look a grade or two than Cooley's. He doesn't just beat players into lanes, he creates them. Well-timed slip passes out of a fake shot are one of his go-to tricks, which set-up one of the best scoring chances of the game. But he doesn't require space or time to make his passes, also showing the ability to identify the best option before or during the pass reception. The shot's an absolute weapon, highlighted by a subtle step-in wrister where he moved the defender's stick before shooting under it. The shot's bolstered by his off-puck movement and timing. He's successful both in the middle of the action and at the end of it. And he's an aware, active defender, especially in puck pursuit. He's a first-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Gauthier's still figuring out how to maximize his skills, which is a scary proposition because he's already so effective. Much of his offensive impact is built around his shot: finding space, shooting off the pass, and in-stride wristers in transition. Makes a lot of his releases inside crossovers or strides, or even with a bit of blade deception to keep goaltenders guessing. A high-volume shooter, but it rarely seems like he's leaving value on the table. That's because he sequences really well; never stuck on one idea or play. He shoots, gets the puck back, passes, gets open, and makes the right read on the next touch. The skating skill and handling that I've seen in previous games didn't factor tonight, but that's part of the excitement about projecting him. There's a clear route for him to become more dynamic as his ankle flexion and hip engagement improve. Absolutely smoked some guy in the NZ after getting out of the penalty box. He looked like a first-round pick.

**Cam Robinson:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP - USHL

A strong performance in this one even though he looked a little less confident to make moves in transition. His shot is really heavy and he's able to get it off in a variety of ways. It's a skill that should help him transition effectively. He showed off the quality spatial awareness and timing on his first goal as he kept sliding into soft spots and waiting for an opportunity to pounce. He timed it well to clean up a rebound at the netfront. He made a nice play at the defensive blueline to force the defender to make a poor cross-ice pass which was intercepted. He jumped into space and corralled the pass for a clean break from centre where he showed the heavy and accurate wrist for the goal.

Stepped out of the box and sent a man to heaven with just a massive hit as well. This kid is a rare combo of size, skill and reasonable skating. There's clearly another gear or two left with the skill portion and even his stride could lengthen up and add more dynamism. I like him.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 26th, 2021

Buff State vs. NTDP U18s - NCAA

I know this might be a biased sample point because Buff State is so bad, but Gauthier really turned on the jets in this one. He showed some shiftiness in his skating that I hadn't seen before, I wish he'd employ it more often against better competition. Through quick jabs to the middle and hard crossovers in the opposite directions, he was dancing around defenders and creating pockets of space for himself to give out dimes to his supporting teammates off the rush. What I once thought was average skating ability could be above average, I just want to see him show that same skill against D1 and USHL competition. Might be a high round pick, I loved what I saw from him.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 5th, 2021

Adrian College vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Gauthier was so good in this game. He's an average skater, but he's smart off the rush and in zone, he moves well off the puck to make himself a threat. He earned himself a goal by crashing the net and picking up some loose change. I think his shot is an asset too, he whipped a few on net throughout the game and his release looked fast and clean. I'm not sure where he goes in the draft, but he looks like a pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Gauthier didn't pop in this game like he did in yesterday's contest, but I still thought he was impressive. Scored with a

wicked wrist from the boards, setting up inside crossovers and going across the net over the goaltender's shoulder. Lucky to go in, but he gave himself a chance on the only real play he could've made in that position. Threw a lot of pucks in the slot, connected with most, but rarely cleanly. He has the right idea but seems to hurry his passes a bit. I didn't much handling and transition skill in this game -- he's content being a secondary player. He's definitely a draft pick, but my thoughts on his skill level vary so much.

**David St-Louis:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - NCAA

Good game from Gauthier overall, showing a lot off the rush. He scans a lot on breakouts and finds the right options and has no problem retaining his vision even when on the backhand. He also connected plays off the rush. I remember one sequence in particular where he attacked the middle of the ice, received a pass coming from the wide lane and two touched another pass to his teammates in the other wide-lane. He was under quite the heavy pressure, but it didn't prevent him from executing the next play. He also made slot passes. In the offensive zone, he can leverage options to create better plays. Skills looked average to slightly above-average (NHL projection).

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Gauthier showed a lot of playmaking skill that I haven't seen from him previously. He went forehand-backhand for a quick pass around a defender to a teammate into the slot, spotted teammates through traffic, and regularly tried to make the best play in a given situation. Now, many of the passes didn't click, but he stayed active regardless. He moves with the play around him, finding space across the ice. The shooting mechanics are clearly above-average in the NHL, maybe even around a 6. He explodes his shots, even off the pass, dropping his weight quickly while keeping both hands in front of his feet. As he continues to improve his skating, the shot will only improve. This game made Gauthier look like a potential late-first-round pick.

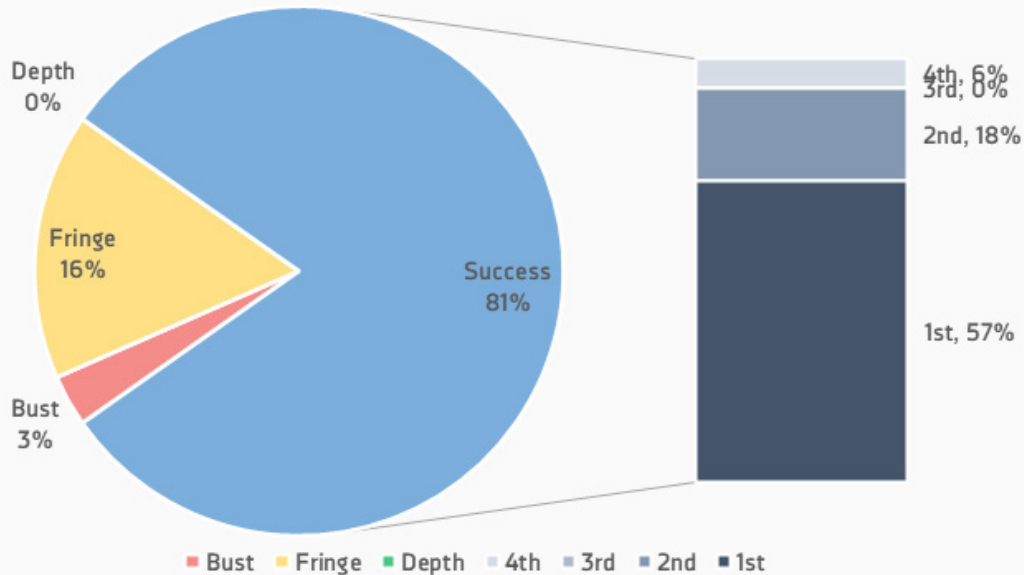
**David St-Louis:** October 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Cornell Big Red - NCAA

I don't have a lot to say about Gauthier, as he only appears in flashes in the game, but I like those flashes. His handling skills project as above-average for me and he connects transition plays well. He scans for teammates in retrievals and as he skates up-ice and he doesn't try to force entries when they are not there, à la Frank Nazar; he delays, buys

## Cutter Gauthier 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



a second, and then finds support. Some smart plays in his game, but he doesn't look like a main creator.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Gauthier's certainty not shy about shooting, and it's no surprise given his upper body mechanics. He pushes his hands in front of his body, elevates his top elbow, and really powers through his release. The feet are a bit of mess, but it's no surprise his skating woes. Handling ideas are more advanced than his actual skill. Seems somewhat aware of pressure and how to escape it. Off-puck instincts aren't advanced, except in transition where he consistently falls off the radar and re-emerges around the net with perfect timing. There's defensive value here, too. He wants to be involved in the forecheck and backcheck, about as much as his feet will let him. Shows some timing on his checks/engagements. He has one of the widest range of outcomes in this group. If his handling and passing skills flashes become consistent features of his game, he's a late first rounder. If not, he's probably more of a late second or early third, dependent on skating improvement.

**David St-Louis:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Gauthier doesn't create much, but he is good at hitting the plays that are there. He passed to an open McGroarty in the slot in the first frame for an assist. It wasn't a difficult pass, but he managed to pull off harder ones later in the game. He is aware, even in traffic. He knows his outlets. I

would rate his hands as above-average. Not sure about his skating. Hips are raised. Defensively, I think Gauthier was the best player on his line. He supported defencemen and stuck to his man inside opposing rotations. There is pace to his game. Not overwhelming pace, but he plays at a higher tempo, executes faster than many of his teammates.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

A good, simple game from Gauthier. The kid makes correct decisions consistently. He maneuvers through traffic and uses high-end stickhandling ability to navigate pressure and find outlets through transition and in the offensive zone. Demonstrated some really good vision and smarts. Loved his defensive game too, he's a dogged forechecker and operates at a high tempo that makes him hard to play against. Definitely a pick, where he ends up remains to be seen.

**J.D. Burke:** September 25th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

I'm not really certain of Gauthier's skill level. Didn't see much in this game to indicate it was particularly high, anyway. Granted, Gauthier scored a goal in tight (barely) with some crafty stickwork, so credit where it's due on that play. Showed some strong transition habits -- dotted line usage, changing speeds, dragging the defensive front, etc. -- through the neutral zone. Works hard on the forecheck. Struck me as more of a Zach Hyman-type than a really high-end driver.



**Mitchell Brown:** April 17th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Gauthier was the NTDP's best forward in this game; just a monstrous offensive performance. Set up a pair of 2-on-1 chances, including a goal with a look-off slip pass under a defender's stick after a perfect shot fake. Otherwise, primarily looked to shoot, taking some dumb ones in the process. Shooting lacks some refinement, especially on the top hand. It's mostly a sweeping shot, except for the odd moment. Give-and-go game in transition. Lacks ankle flexion and struggles to complete crossovers. Lumbering overall but has some pace tools like in-motion pass receptions and handling. Hand-eye coordination to grab a trio of interceptions on the forecheck. Most seems mostly positive. Looks more like a facilitator at the next level but he seems to have the inception of top-nine skills.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Gauthier had some great moments, but he was consistently held back by inconsistent decision-making. The best example was his handling decisions. In the first and third periods, he kept trying to dangle through defenders without much success. In the second, he just starting hammering the puck away, showing a complete lack of patience. Right now, he's a very straight-line, single-speed attacker when dangling isn't an option, leading to outside lane chances because his physical tools allow it -- not great. Some retrieval skill, but he can't bring the puck to the middle from there. Tools are first-round-calibre, decision-making isn't close yet.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Gauthier runs himself out of space frequently. When his

hands don't work, the rest of his game doesn't. He just skates until he's forced to rim the puck or shoot. Can't change pace. Doesn't look for teammates early/before his possession. Some defensive engagement as usual, especially on the backcheck. Physical and closes space quickly for player with inconsistent skating posture. Didn't look like a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

Gauthier's skill really popped in this game. Beat defenders, cut inside, and looked to shoot. Shot lacks consistency but there were flashes with that top hand pushed off his hip during release and elbow raised. PPG with a crafty set-up: From a sharp angle, he stepped inside while faking the pass, then pulled the pass into a shoot and beat the goalie five-hole. He shot it at the perfect time, too. Off-puck awareness and timing were both strengths. He has a real shooter's mentality, flaring wide for space instead of hanging around the net or trying to arrive late in transition. Handling skill to quickly turn pass receptions into shots. Took pucks while moving, even if his skating's a bit limited (lacks ankle flexion, hip depth, and toe snap). Definitely a player to watch. He has top-nine skills.

**Russ Cohen:** December 15, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Cutter Gauthier was playing the top line center role to perfection. He was smart in the defensive zone breaking up plays and played strong along the wall winning puck battles. He scored with his wrist shot. It was replayed it was so fast even on the replay. It's one of the best if not the best in this draft class. He went net front to create screens. He has a simple technique, in a non-cheating way, that helps him win draws with fast hands.





12  
Rank

A  
Grade

6.5  
Skating

5  
Puckhandling

5  
Shooting

6  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Passing

7.5  
Physical

1st  
Best Motor

4th  
Hardest Hitter

3rd  
Best Two-Way Forward

4th  
Best Power Forward

# MARCO KASPER

C | RÖGLE BK

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. APR. 8, 2004  
WEIGHT 187 SHOOTS LEFT

He'll play in the league. He's super competitive. He has good speed and good hands... The fact that he could play such solid hockey against men in Sweden and at the World Championships tells me that he could be a really useful forward in the NHL. He'll fit on any line." - Eastern Conference Executive in May 2022

SHADES OF: Zach Hyman, Brendan Gallagher

74% 2022 XLS  
52% 3Y REGR. bXLS  
26% 3Y REGR. iXLS  
1.51 SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	12	6	7	13
SHL	46	7	4	11
WC	4	0	1	1

## Scouting Report

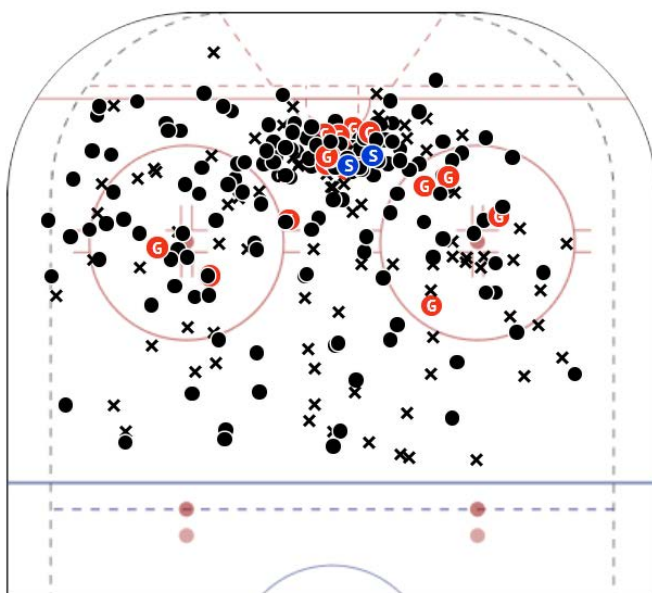
If you're looking for a throwback forward in this year's draft, look no further. Marco Kasper is as violent and competitive a hockey player as you'll find in the entire class.

He plays every shift like it's his last and it's taking place in Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final. Nearly every one of our staff's Kasper viewings starts with the Austrian winger taking a run at someone on his first shift, and the hits just keep on comin'. They're a part of his game from puck drop to the final horn, no matter the score or the stakes.

As Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown noted in a mid-season Scout's Notebook article, there's a real method to the madness, too. "Kasper's physicality isn't mindless. It's integral to his game. He seems to thrive when turning hockey into pinball," Brown wrote. "Because when he's locked into the physical aspect, he's also winning footraces on pucks, turning board battles into inside-lane attacks, and stretching the ice with well-timed sprints to the opposing blue line."

It's the net-front where Kasper's sturdy, physical brand of hockey is most effective, though. Just check out the InStat shot chart from all of the 6-foot-1 winger's season, and you'll find

SPOTS ON ICE



that only three of the 19 goals he scored last year occurred away from the blue paint.

That he managed to play such a taxing game almost exclusively in professional men's league settings this year -- internationally and at the club level alike -- just makes it

that much more impressive. There's punching above your weight, and then there's what Kasper did with Rögle BK and Austria this season.

And while it may have been true at one point this season that Kasper's game lacked another dimension to add to his physicality and close quarters scoring, that's no longer the case. His skill and sense are never going to rate as elite-level tools at the professional level, but they've grown to the point where they're now comfortably average-to-above-average projections.

His rush patterns through the neutral zone are far more diverse and manipulative than the straight-line attacks of the season's first few months, and his pace with the puck has followed a similar trajectory. Some of the more advanced playmaking opportunities still elude Kasper, but he's regularly finding teammates through traffic and even showing a bit of a delay game with the puck.

You just can't tell the story of Kasper's season without acknowledging the leaps and bounds that he's made with the puck on his stick. At this point, there just aren't many holes left in his game, period. Every tangible component of his profile is at an average-to-slightly-above-average level, and the intangibles are all at an elite level.

You talk to the people who've gotten to know Kasper the person as much as they have the player, and they just rave about his work ethic, coachability, competitive nature, and generally great demeanour. The next bad thing we hear about Kasper will be the first.

Where we once saw Kasper as a bottom-six, checking line winger at the NHL level, he's grown so much in such a short time that a complementary role in a team's top-six doesn't seem out of the question. And there are many teams in the league who hold him in even better esteem, so don't be surprised when he goes higher than where we've ranked him.

## Game Reports

**Jimmy Hamrin:** May 23rd, 2022

Austria vs. Great Britain - World Championship

Kasper's all around game has been showing at this event. In this game he worked hard all over the ice, positioned himself well and created some offence. I also like that he delivered a hard hit on the forecheck only five seconds into the game. Hard work is a habit and he is always turned on. He shows awareness when he is on the ice and he is always on the move with knowledge of where the play is heading. His awareness with the puck is not always strong and has not have the ability to manipulate, change pace and be a strong playmaker. He has a soft puck touch and high speed and takes the puck to the inside as a habit.

His speed looks good at this level but with limited room to improve that technique. His agility, balance and acceleration skill are strong assets though.

Kasper is a safe bet to make the NHL and he should be picked in the middle of the first round. He lacks the dynamic details offensively for a top 10 pick, but after that he will meet the expectations. He can move up and down the lineup and be used both as a winger and centre.

**J.D. Burke:** May 23rd, 2022

Austria vs. Great Britain - World Championship

Austria is giving Kasper a little more free rein than was there with Rögle this season, and he's taking full advantage of it at this tournament. The result is that is that this is the best I've felt about Kasper's sense and skating all season; he seems like a much more complete player than I perhaps gave him credit for. He's consistently creating passing opportunities with pace, showing some problem

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1	Mika Zibanejad YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 92%	2	Magnus Paajarvi YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 88%
3	Mattias Tedenby YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 81%	4	Jacob Josefson YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 81%
5	Nicklas Backstrom YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 79%	6	Elias Lindholm YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 77%

solving ability, and getting to loose pucks first. This hasn't come at the expense of Kasper's bread and butter, which is the physical side of the game. He's just as violent as ever, and remains a menace on the forecheck and a lot to handle at the net-front. He actually picked up a chance early in this game with a well-timed off-puck drive to the net-front but the British goaltender was up to the challenge and made the save. Kasper picked up a secondary assist in this contest, an against the grain slip pass in the neutral zone that started a scoring play for Austria. You just know he's going to play in the NHL, but the question remains how high in a team's lineup. Is he more top-nine or top-six winger at the NHL level?

**David St-Louis:** May 17th, 2022

Austria vs. Czechia - World Championship

Kasper continues to look like an NHL player in this tournament: the forecheck, the backcheck, the defensive positioning; he's so responsible as F3 already. And he also

recognizes opportunities to jump ahead of the play and get pucks. He still misses some more high-end plays (doesn't see them), but the rush patterns and rush spacing should allow him to generate some scoring chances in the NHL in transition. The skating looks significantly above-average, projection-wise. He will be hard to deal with in the NHL and if the skill and manipulation patterns can continue to improve, watch out.

**David St-Louis:** May 15th, 2022

USA vs. Austria - World Championship

A great performance from Kasper. He had no problem matching the pace of the game or USA opponents physically. He played his usual style, but also showed straight skill, too, here, pulling off a dangle through his feet and some manipulative rush patterns. He has an understanding of how to create gaps and lanes, something that I didn't see before. He move one way to drag a defender that way and then attacks the other lane and can make some look-off passes. His pace, net-front, and retrieval game are enough to make him a first-rounder in this draft, but with the added layer of skill? He's a worthy top-15 guy.

**Lassi Alanen:** May 14th, 2022

Sweden vs. Austria - WC

Kasper managed to bring his usual skill set to the WC level while playing on a clearly weaker team. He had one bad turnover at the DZ blue line, resulting in a high-danger chance for Sweden, but other than that, he didn't make any glaring errors, brough a combination of solid puck play, forechecking and physicality. Kasper even made some solid passing plays in this one, even if he's not going to be a manipulative NHL-level playmaker. The play didn't die on his stick and instead he was advancing it consistently. Skating looked above-average, especially his straight-line stride and speed. He might have a reasonable path to a complementary middle-six role, even if the more likely outcome is a bottom-six forward.

**David St-Louis:** April 12th, 2022

Rögle BK vs. Oskarshamn - CHL

I'm impressed. Kasper is limited, but he's really good at what he does. The pace of his game and the physicality will make it easy for him to translate his game to the NHL. He worked the net-front area all game and did so with appropriate technique intensity, arriving when pucks got there, establishing body positioning, presenting his stick for deflection. He's already a useful, reliable SHL forward at his age. The playmaking instincts are not there, but he

flashes some clever ideas like drop passes. It's pretty clear that he will be a straight-line, puck retriever and protector, net-driver in the NHL. If he plays that type of game well enough, and improves defensively, too, and his puck management, he could become the complement to a skill-line, a Zach Hyman-lite type (as he lacks the same skill level).

**David St-Louis:** April 8th, 2022

Rögle BK vs. Oskarshamn - CHL

Kasper is Kasper, but I'm becoming more of a fan. That level of energy is a skill, and it's one that is pretty hard to teach. I bet his motor continues to improve, too. The handling skills are there, but he just doesn't see plays or know how to create them -- he's always at the net. If he wants to score there in the NHL, he will have to hone his timing as he's often aimlessly battling with defenders, but I really like how he tries to win inside positioning and get in shooting lanes to screen, rebound, or tip. The skating is probably a 5.5. I may have overrated it a bit due to the high stride rate.

**David St-Louis:** March 25th, 2022

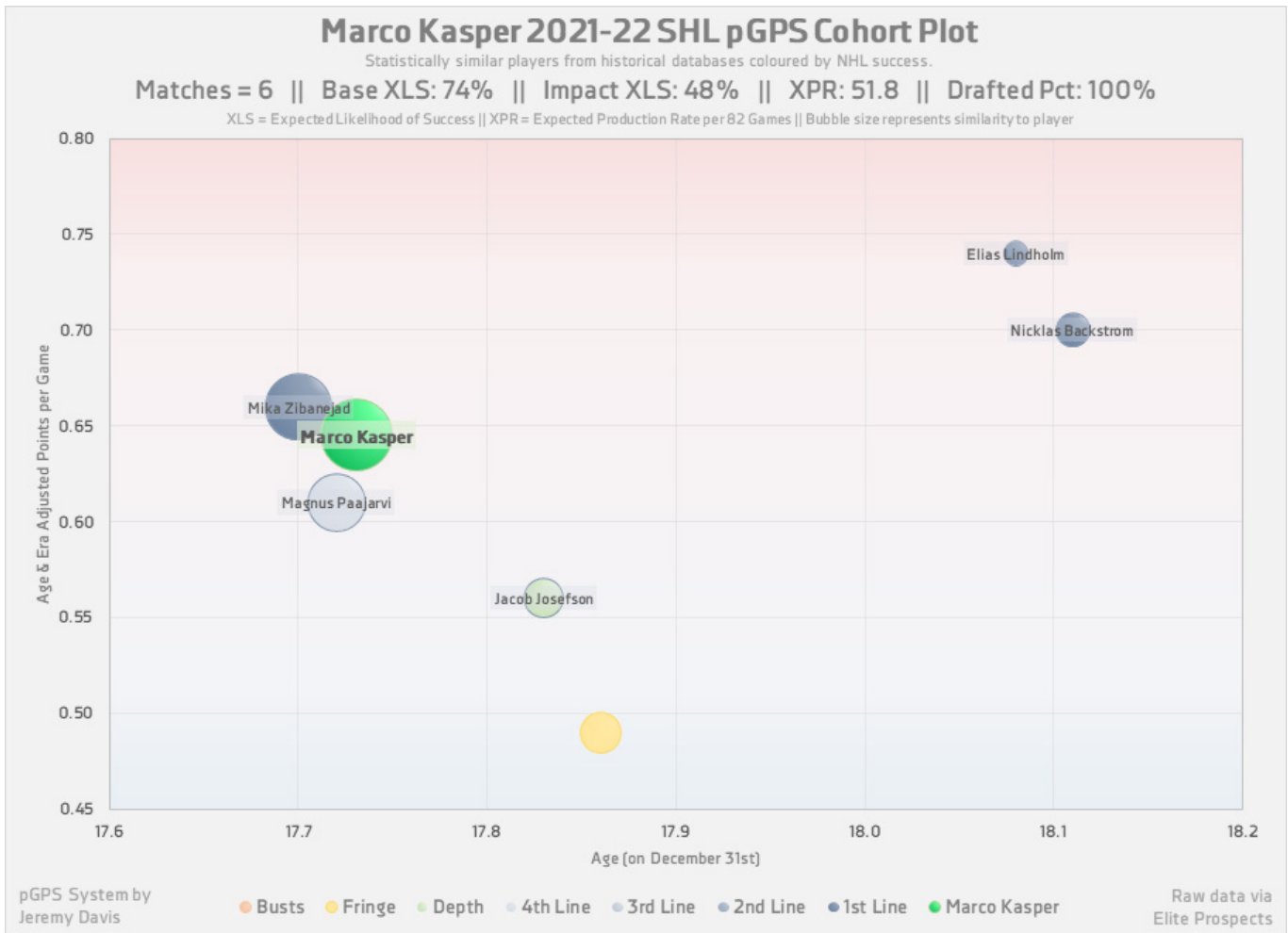
Rögle vs. Skellefteå - J20 Nationell

Kasper looks like a 4th-line left wing checker. I'm going to watch more of him for sure, but his game is not hard to grasp. He zooms in on the forecheck, rotates well, battles for pucks, makes hard cuts to the net, and then pursues the puck on the backcheck. The offensive instinct is problematic: badly setup dangles and missed opportunities. He didn't seem to have a ton of chemistry with his line-mates as they didn't pass to him when he was inside space either. The skill is average, but the pace and skating stands out, especially with how hard he can turn. Seems like a strong player. He was the culprit on one of the opposition's goal, not checking his man in front of the net.

**David St-Louis:** January 22nd, 2022

Rögle BK vs. Linköping - J20 Nationell

Everything about Kasper screams NHLer. He's physical and capable along the boards, even in terms of manipulation; he recognizes the angle of defenders coming at him and knows how to beat them and escape them. He passes to the right areas, knows the next logical play in the offensive progression. He goes to the net, hard and often, and with purpose: to screen, rebound, and score. He has good first touches: takes them inside when possible and leads to next play. And he cares about defence, even going out of his way to help and cover for teammates. Enough skill, great habits, and the physical NHL game. He could be a top-20



pick even if the upside is more limited.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 21st, 2022

Rögle BK vs. HV71 - J20 Nationell

Kasper played centre in this game. He showed a good two-way game and played with speed and urgency in all three zones. He carried a lot of puck and showed a good understanding of the game. He creates space for others both with and without the puck. With the puck he tends to attack the middle which shrinks the defence and then he drops out the puck to a winger who gets an open lane to skate with the puck and shoot. Kasper often drives to the net and takes a north direction which opens up space behind him.

His skating is above average and he has good puck skills. His physical and strong forechecking game disappears at centre. He does not retrieve as much puck by battle or force turnovers as he does when he plays at wing. He positions himself well defensively and rarely engages deep in the offensive zone on the forecheck. He gets the puck mostly by going deep in his own end to get the puck and to gain speed and travels with the puck through both the breakout and the offensive zone entry. If a passing option is better he usually finds it and delivers. This type of play will not

translate well to senior level where you rarely see players continuously travelling like that. At this level it is quite effective and shows his motor and will to drive play. For the future I see him as a strong forechecking winger with a high grade of competitiveness and some scoring touch.

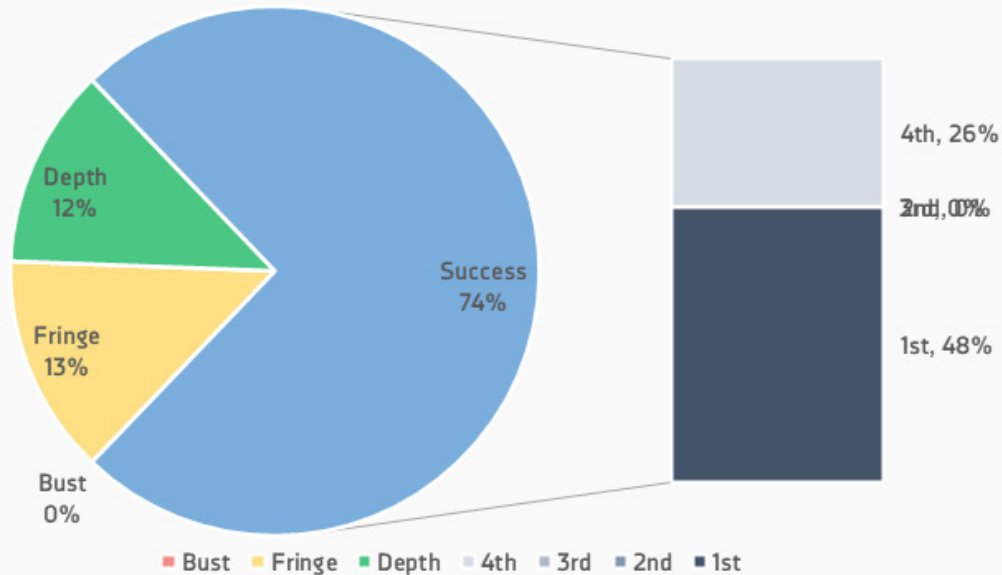
**J.D. Burke:** January 11th, 2022

Frölunda HC vs. Rögle BK - CHL

There may not be a more violent forward in this year's draft than Kasper. It's not just the way that he applies himself on the forecheck or the big hits or the rough stuff after the whistles. It's the connective tissue between every part of his game, for better and worse. Where others seek space off the puck or look to separate from their opponents, Kasper plays in the opposition's face every time he's on the ice. This isn't really a compliment. Far as I'm concerned, it's a pretty limiting factor for his upside at the next level. It's not without its utility, though, as Kasper often finds himself spending entire offensive sequences in the homeplate area or the net-front. Good place to be. I'm not sure his skill really popped in this contest, but his puck touches were limited. Made some great defensive plays, including a perfectly timed intervention low in the slow to rob a sure goal. Hard to imagine this player de-

## Marco Kasper 2021-22 SHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



veloping into more than a bottom-six forward at the NHL level without significant development.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 11th, 2021

Rögle BK vs. Skellefteå AIK - SHL

Kasper is violent. He tries to take someone's head off every shift. Many of his attempts miss, and the ones that connect often don't have a massive impact because of his length of strength. But the physicality also has practical purposes. He wins battles by winning positioning and refusing to budge, sometimes combining some crafty handling to escape. If he can't win the race, he times his stick check at the point of least resistance to maximize his odds of winning possession. Never short on effort defensively, but he skates in straight lines and puck carriers and gets taken out of the play as a result. Offensively, there wasn't much in this game. Limited off-puck movement and timing, but his line spent most of the game in their own zone. I'm unsure about the skill level. Perhaps more of a second-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 8th, 2021

Växjö Lakers J20 vs. Rögle BK J20 - J20 Nationell

Kasper actually passed up a few opportunities to hit people. That was a bit unexpected, but he got a few big hits in and several smaller ones. He plays fast, too. Some DZC details to clean up, but he's involved but he's always involved in the backcheck and forecheck. It's easy to see NHL coaches playing him. How high in the lineup? I'm not sure. He plays a bit too fast with the puck sometimes,

but he's inside-driven, understands how to protect the puck, and brings a bit of creativity. The off-puck offence lacks consistency, but it's there: he pushes off his check to deflect the point shot and switches between scoring and supporting position proactively. In general, he positions himself to get the puck back. He has some tricks as handler, like hesitation moves and the inception of lane deception (i.e., faking taking the inside before going wide), but he has some difficulty handling the puck inside turns and under pressure. I don't see any notable shooting or passing skill. He's probably more of a third or fourth-line forward. Perhaps that's a first-rounder in this class, but he's more of a second-round-calibre talent.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** November 30th, 2021

Timrå IK vs. Rögle BK - SHL

Marco plays on the third line and gets regular rotation and also got some time on the power play. He played late in the game and got a shift in the overtime as well.

Kasper skates fast with long strides. He could add some more power in his first strides but when he is up to speed his speed is really good. He is quick and effective in all directions. He can carry the puck over distance. His agility in tight spaces could improve but he shows good lower-body balance and can cover the puck well and stand his ground in physical battles.

Kasper has good puck control, makes simple passing plays and is not easily stressed with the puck. He does nothing overly creative in the game but takes the puck to the net and shows good hand-eye coordination in traffic and is a

dangerous presence around the net. He has a quick wrist shot but only has one clear scoring chance in the game.

Marco is a smart forechecker. He sticks to the system and does everything with 100% determination. He sees where the play is heading and gets in the way of passing lanes and puts good pressure on the opponents. With the puck, he is not stressed and makes smart effective plays. When there is not a play there he dumps the puck and when he can drive with the puck, he drives with the puck. On the power play he played close to the net and behind the goal. He got himself open in passing lanes and passed the puck with one-touch passing. In the breakouts he often makes it easy for the defenders in being available for an easy pass. He also helps out when a teammate drives the offensive zone entry being open for a pass close to the blueline with timed speed. His vision is above average, all in all. I also like how he skates smart and does not rush into situations, both with and without the puck.

Marco's standout asset is his competitiveness. He hits, checks and crashes the net without hesitation. He does not give up on a play and is strong along the boards for his age. He competes hard for loose pucks. It is not hard to see why the coaches play him this much (for a 17 year old) in this league as he does everything a coach would want him to do.

To summarise, Marco Kasper is a power forward in the making. He has no clear weaknesses in his game and his vision, with and without the puck, is good enough for him to become an NHL player. He will not be an offensive topline driver but a good middle six forward that can play in various roles. His determination and competitiveness adds well to good foundations in skating, stick handling and hockey sense. For the upcoming draft, he looks like a solid pick in the second half of the first round.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 25th, 2021

Rögle BK vs. Malmö IF - SHL

Kasper's quite the player. He's very physical, ramming players into the end boards and trying to beat them down with his stick. He plays fast, with a high stride frequency and stretching the ice. But he doesn't mindlessly fly the zone, finding ways to disrupting the puck carrier while staying up the puck. Inconsistent stride extensions and depth, but I think skating will be more of a strength than a weakness at the next level. Shots requires some tweaking. Struggled with pass receptions, usually by getting too far ahead of himself. Looked more like a checker than a point-getter at the next level in this one.

**Cam Robison:** November 6th, 2021

Rögle BK vs. Linköping HK - SHL

Oh, I like this kid. Physical, unwavering pace despite being a teen in a man's world. He was active in pursuit of the forecheck and was heavy along the board. Threw a big reverse hit that caught the defender completely off guard. Grabbed the tying goal on a in-tight roof job that showcased his awareness and his quick hands downlow. Skating looks pretty good - he's not a blazer, but the mechanics look fairly clean and he has pop from a standstill. Could be more of an energy type long term, but we'll see. Further creativity may show itself as he continues to adjust to the pro ranks.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 6th, 2021

Rögle BK vs. Linköping HK - SHL

What a way to start a game. Kasper chose violence, laying a rather big hit near the boards and followed that up with an even bigger one in open-ice. He also laid on a big reverse hit in a corner battle. Kasper scored the game-tying goal in the third period, retrieving a dump-in below the goal line, making a quick cutback behind the net before noticing the extra space given and roofing the puck from close range. It wasn't his best showing consistency-wise. He had some trouble with pass receptions and didn't get many puck touches despite playing close to 18 minutes. The coaching staff seems to have a ton of trust in him, though, and he even played a shift in overtime. His skating remains a strength. Good ankle flexion, explosive first steps, good top speed. The offensive upside is a bit of a question mark, but I have a lot of time for his game.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 30th, 2021

Rögle BK vs. Djurgårdens IF - SHL

Over 12 minutes of ice time for Kasper in this one. His team was stuck in the defensive zone for large portions of Kasper's shifts, especially in the second and third period. Kasper's most impressive plays happened in the first frame. He got a scoring chance from a rebound and another time he crashed the net off the rush, but wasn't able to convert the cross-slot pass into a shot. Kasper's off-puck instincts seemed legit. He was supporting well, adjusting his pace at times to make himself available. He seemed really inside-focused and was going to the net a lot. Kasper's skating seemed strong. His quickness and top speed both grade very well relative to his peers. Kasper played with a ton of pace, too, keeping his feet in constant movement and making his decisions quickly. Kasper struck me as a very projectable player.



13  
Rank

A  
Grade

5.5  
Skating

5.5  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Shooting

6  
Hockey Sense

6  
Passing

6  
Physical

# LIAM ÖHGREN

LW | DJURGÅRDENS IF

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. JAN. 28, 2004  
WEIGHT 201 SHOOTS LEFT

SHADES OF: J.T. Miller, Timo Meier

63%

2022 XLS

33%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

13%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

1.15

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	30	33	25	58
SHL	25	1	1	2
WJC-18	6	3	6	9

## Scouting Report

All Liam Öhgren did last season was put up ridiculous point totals in nearly every setting that was fortunate enough to have him.

His 58 points in 30 J20 Nationell games in Djurgårdens' was the fifth-highest mark in league history among first-time draft-eligible prospects, and his 1.93 points per game the new record for per-game scoring. He finished second on Sweden's Hlinka-Gretzky bronze medal-winning roster, and fourth on their gold medal-winning U18s squad.

Perhaps the most impressive stat of all, though, is Öhgren's 33 goals in 30 regular season contests in the J20, 28 of which came at even strength; that number grows to 35 goals in 36 games if you include the postseason.

The only place where Öhgren failed to find the scoresheet with any regularity was in the SHL with Djurgårdens men's squad; a league where first-time draft-eligibles usually don't even play and on a team so poor that their season ended with relegation to the HockeyAllsvenskan.

Everything happens in motion for Öhgren. He gets moving as pucks arrive at his position, skates through his passes, and doesn't need to break stride to get off his shot. He plays at such a heightened pace that the puck often flies from his stick no sooner than you realize he's even secured possession in the first place.

This breakneck pace was a bit of a double-edged sword for our staff. On the one hand, we came to appreciate the

urgency of Öhgren's game and how it resulted in offensive opportunities nearly every time the puck touched his stick in the J20 circuit. On the other hand, it made getting a read on any of his non-skating tools a tad bit difficult.

"The shorter and less frequent puck touches make it harder to evaluate the range of his tools, but with the right development, most of them should become above NHL average in a few years," Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis remarked in a Scout's Notebook article. "Öhgren can offer speed, handling skills, and even a physical presence. His strong skating posture and his knee and ankle flexion allow him to protect the puck against opponents down low and chase them on the forecheck. If they take too long to move the puck, they usually end up plastered on the boards.

You can credibly count Öhgren among this draft's dual-threat scorers, but his shot is doing far more damage than his setups. The 6-foot-1 winger has a wide array of releases suited to any situation and has shown an excellent knack for changing the angle or the release point on his shot to take advantage of developing screens or windows in the defensive coverage.

Now, there's a bit of a catch here, and it's that Öhgren didn't always play with the same level of enthusiasm in the defensive zone as he did the offensive one. His physicality and his off-puck sense are such that the basis is there for at least an adequate level of defensive play as he rises up



the ranks of professional hockey, but the work rate wasn't always there in our viewings. That's going to have to change for Öhgren to play a high-leverage role in the big leagues.

The other concern among our staff is that the Swedish forward wasn't always much of a planner with his puck touches. It wasn't uncommon for Öhgren to run out of time

or space and have to circle back or turn the puck over where even a little forethought would've made all the difference.

There's no such thing as a fully-formed player at the NHL Entry Draft, though, and Öhgren will have plenty of time to round out his game en route to a productive career as a middle-six scoring winger in the NHL.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Niclas Bergfors YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 81%	2 Alexander Steen YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 80%	3 Oscar Johansson YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 72%	4 Simon Hjalmarsson YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 70%	5 Victor Ohman YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 69%
6 Frans Nielsen YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 67%	7 Kalle Olsson YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 67%	8 Jonas Johansson YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 67%	9 Carl Soderberg YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY: 65%	

## Game Reports

**Lassi Alanen:** May 1st, 2022

Sweden vs. USA - U18s

Öhgren stepped up when Sweden needed him the most, scoring twice and adding a secondary assist in the gold medal game. He fired a quick-release wrister from the half wall on his first goal and finished the second one in style after a successful 2v1. Öhgren's small-area skill was on display during multiple shifts. He can make play-advancing passes under pressure or gain the zone in a 1v3 situation and manage to start a cycle. Skating looks above-average, probably 5.5 or 6 on our scale. Plays with pace, but can also slow things down a bit when required. Easy to envision him as an effective forechecker at the NHL level. I liked his defensive zone play for the most part, too. He hasn't been at his best at this tournament, but ended it on a strong note.

**David St-Louis:** April 30th, 2022

Sweden vs. Finland - U18s

Öhgren has 1-on-1 skill, but I haven't been all that impressed by his attempts to pull those off in this tournament. His moves have mostly failed him, which doesn't reassure me on his potential to become a creative playmaker at the next levels. What continues to shine is his small-area passing and his ability to find pockets of space to support plays.

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2022

Sweden vs. Finland - U18s

Öhgren is not making as many plays as his teammates. The plays he does make are mostly subtle, especially off the rush. He manipulates gaps by attacking ahead of slowing down; he moves the puck laterally to beat defenders. He has some planning abilities, something I underrated. Overall, this tournament makes me realize I might have overrated Öhgren's skill but underrated his hockey sense. I don't think he will

be a flashy playmaker at the next level, but a connector, a player who creates passing plays, with some deception, and retrieve pucks on the walls to move them off it. It has value, but top-6 value? I'm still not sure. I still like him more than Östlund but the gap is closing and it's hard to justify Öhgren being that far from Kasper, too. They might end up filling the same role for different reasons. Kasper's game has more certainty, too.

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Sweden vs. Switzerland - U18s

Öhgren is not as flashy as Östlund, which sometimes makes you wonder when evaluating him: is he really worth a top-15 pick. He seems capable of more, but is rarely the main driver when playing with someone like Östlund. Öhgren's skating is more of a 5.5. He has puck protection abilities and slip/saucer passing abilities. I'm not sure about his overall off-puck anticipation, but it seems good enough. He can manipulate, leverage scoring chance into better ones, and instantly ID teammates. I might have overrated him a bit. Oskar Olausson, another toolsy player with some manipulation abilities, is in the back of my mind when watching Öhgren.

**David St-Louis:** April 10th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs. Linköpings HC U20 - J20 Final four

There is so much to love in Öhgren's game. He can recognize seams and create them, pass under or around sticks, leverage advantages (turn an advantageous situation for himself, like an open lane to the net, into a better one for a teammate), protect pucks (to an extent), and react very fast to catch back pucks in one-on-one situations. He plays a much more mature game than his teammates. Not his best performance of the season, but a ton of very interesting flashes. A top-15 pick in this draft for me.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 10th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs. Linköpings HC U20 - J20 Final four

Gold medal game. Liam played on one of the top lines. Liam got a tough start with a hard hit that shakened him up. He did not look like himself for the rest of that period. It was a 50/50 situation by the boards on the offensive blueline. Liam was first to the puck but it cost him a hard hit from a big defenseman who came in with high speed and power to the situation. He got better during the game.

The team mixed up the lines and in the third period Liam finally got a chance to play with William Eklund on the power play, they had good pressure but the finishing product was not as strong as you would hope. Liam played high on the right circle. He took some shots but his one-time slap shot is not as strong as his wrist shot. His wrist shot could benefit from a much faster release when he plays on the power play. He can manipulate the goalie and wait in the right moment to shoot but when it comes to shot speed from standing still it is underwhelming.

Liam got a lot of ice time in key situations and competed hard but could not score. He had some good shooting opportunities but his shot was not at his best today. The opponents played a tight defensive system that was hard to penetrate but Liam showed up a couple of times getting through the defence down the middle with some dekes and a dangerous shot. He has the ability to create chances out of nothing. When he shoots while skating his release is very quick.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 9th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs. Rögle U20 - J20 Final four

Liam is always on the move and finds himself open quickly when Djurgården wins the puck for the transition. His speed is fast and he can separate at this level. On higher levels, he will need to use his brain to be a step ahead to go off on a breakaway for example. The forward leaning skating makes balance look shaky sometimes. He keeps balance but can lose a stride or two.

Liam is very impressive in the way he manipulates defenders with his hands. He had a sequence where he took a tough route to goal needing to beat three-four opponents in the middle after entering the offensive zone. With two impressive stick handling moves he did beat them all and fired off a dangerous wrist shot. The smooth, short, soft and quick puck control in tight spaces is one of his biggest strengths as a player. Liam also had a strong power play assist where tricked the defence for a shot then made a precise pass to give a teammate an open net on the far side of the goalie from his standpoint. He had some really good passing plays and was always dangerous in rush plays.

Liam turns his head to look for a smart option but most of his smart plays are repetitive plays. He knows which plays are effective in most situations when he can't find a creative option. So even if he gets checked and his plan A does not work, Liam often has another option in the back of his head.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 8th, 2022

Brynäs U18 vs Djurgårdens U18 - J18 Final four

Gold medal game at J18 level. Liam scored a goal and created some strong chances. He scored on a one-timer in the slot and had some impressive performances to create for himself. He competed hard, won a lot of battles along the boards and drove play. He was strong on the puck. He creates space with smart puck handling leaning forward with long and quick movements to move the defence. He mostly decided to shoot and took some shots from low percentage areas where there were better options.

Liam often makes smart plays though, especially in tight areas. He brings power and competitiveness to his line who should dominate at this level and did so. The opponents played tight on Öhgren but he was able to open up space for himself and others nonetheless.

Not one of his best games all in all but he brought a lot to the table and was one of the best players on the ice.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 30th, 2022

Djurgårdens U20 vs. Mora U20 - J20 Nationell Playoffs

Details, details, details. Öhgren's a master of both getting open and puck retrievals. For the first one, he constantly flips between supporting and scoring positioning at the perfect moment. He shrinks the distance between himself as the puck carrier when necessary, and also extends passing windows with tons of smaller adjustments. Controls his speed. On retrievals, he establishes positioning first. He'll overskate the puck to cutback into it, ensuring that his back is to the defender upon first touch. He times his cutbacks with the defender's movement. And he plays with their expectations – he fakes the cutback, or stops it halfway through before continuing on his original path. Both passing and shooting skill. Makes plays immediately out of retrievals. Makes the best pass, even if it's not the most immediate one. He's clearly an advanced thinker who plans his plays. Hook, slip, and backhand passes, even under pressure. He looks like a slam-dunk to become a top-nine forward. Details, skill, and tools.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** March 23rd, 2022

Timrå U20 vs. Djurgårdens U20 - J20 Nationell Playoffs

Öhgren had another strong night in the J20 league. Best player in the game. This was in the first play off game and

## Liam Ohgren 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 9 || Base XLS: 63% || Impact XLS: 27% || XPR: 46.5 || Drafted Pct: 78%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



he showed up with three primary points including two impressive goal performances. Liam is very strong for his age and scored those goals with strong balance, being strong on the puck, competing hard and with soft hands finishing the play. That combination will translate well to next levels.

All in all in the game, he was on the move and created a ton of chances. He shows a lot of poise with the puck on his stick. He cheated sometimes defensively to get an early separation on the attack. His team dominated the game and he was their most dangerous forward. He controls the puck with ease at a high pace and shows good vision. He does not showcase an elite hockey sense and took a couple of shots where he had better options on the play. The opposing goalie had a lot of awkward movements in his game and maybe that made Öhgren think he could score more angles than usual. But I like how he moves all over the ice and uses all ice surfaces. He does not only drive to the net, he can slow down the play also when needed to.

One question mark for me with Öhgren is how much he benefits from being physically early developed and strong for his age. The quickness in his hands and his offensive vision are translationally good so I do not think it matters that much in the long run. His skating is strong but his technique could be better and if he does not add much strength in his legs

he will not have separation speed at high levels. He will need to rely even more on his hands and vision there. It does not hurt that his wrist is dangerous from various distances either.

**Daniel Gee:** February 13th, 2022

Djurgårdens U20 vs. Växjö Lakers U20 - J20 Nationell

Öhgren was a monster in this game, an effort that resulted in multiple high-danger chances and goal scoring. What's immediately striking about Öhgren's on-puck habits is his penchant to hold onto pucks, exploit his handles, and execute a play from the proactive patience. The skill stacking is remarkable between his physical tools and his sense-based decision making. This was most apparent in the large-ice sustained offensive zone sequences. Whether he was executing a give-and-go, attacking into poorly contested areas of the ice, or supporting teammates' battles, the money of Öhgren's play was positioning and reading off his teammates.

On one first period shift, he read a won retrieval in the near corner, shifted to the right-hand circle and loaded his stick -- arm tucked and in one-motion he caught and released the centering pass for a bar-down goal. He constantly is ready to shoot off-puck, setting his body proactively. On the power-play he is frankly even more dangerous; he will handle past aggression waiting for open lanes, use eye-line misdirection

to complete layered passes, and he funnels pucks out of the end-boards into crease crashing chaos sequences. Öhgren had one shift in the first where he carried the puck in on the far boards, faked a shot and manipulated a defender with a drag to the inside, launching into a backhand pass cross crease that was intercepted. He then won a retrieval shortly after. Cut out of pressure, and continued the cycle. A wild shift. His release on third period shot was absolutely wicked -- unlocked top arm, tonnes of downforce, and a violent wrist-roll.

The issues in Öhgren's game come in the form of some missed scanning habits. Much of the time, pass execution can be shaky at best during faster sequences, like on the transition. His stride is also an issue; he heel kicks heavily as he recovers and his footwork is sloppy/unrefined. There is some ability to separate in his game, however. This is all fine at J20 Nationell level, where he has a runway and can slow down the game, but I question how this will limit him at higher levels. His sense and tools will probably prevail though -- looks like a high pick. Absolutely dominated in this one.

**David St-Louis:** January 29th, 2022

Djugårdens IF vs Örebro - SHL

Öhgren continues to show slick passing skills and abilities to cut around defenders even at this level. There is not a lot of planning to what he does -- he lacks that high-end element -- but the tools are as good as ever, the speed to chase and push transition plays, the handling skills to evade opponents, and the blossoming physicality. He's a forechecker and back-checker when he plays in the SHL and the limited minutes makes it hard to really evaluate his game completely, but his ability to skate and handle with some of the best Swedish players is reassuring. At the very least, he will be able to do the same in the NHL and find a niche down a lineup.

**J.D. Burke:** January 13th, 2022

Djurgårdens U20 vs Rögle U20 - J20 Nationell

Another strong performance from Öhgren. His offensive instincts are through the roof good. He does a great job of supporting the puck carrier, finding soft ice, and controlling his speed and spacing to give himself the most space with which to operate. One such play in the third period yielded a scoring chance in tight on a rush play. Picked off an attempted exit pass and led a 2-on-0, but made one pass too many and failed to even create a shot on goal. I've really come to admire the way that Öhgren works his way through his reads with the puck on his stick, not settling for the first option and instead making the best play possible. Picked up an assist on Djurgårdens empty net goal to seal the deal.

**David St-Louis:** January 13th, 2022

Djurgårdens U20 vs Rögle U20 - J20 Nationell

Öhgren pretty much play a pro game in Junior. Limited, quick touches into space for teammates, behind him mostly, because that's where they're open. That means that his teammates have to do a lot of the heavy lifting to create (and they're not particularly great at it) but his play style will translate to higher levels, albeit not spectacularly. He makes good decisions, fast decisions, and has the tools to protect the puck. He moves his feet to improve his offensive looks, finds passing lanes, and can thread the puck through defenders. Lots to appreciate. He pre-scanned a lot this game, too. I value that. It leads to good decisions at higher levels, too, to an ability to increase and slow down pace based on the demands of the situation.

**David St-Louis:** January 9th, 2022

Djurgårdens U20 vs Örebro U20 - J20 Nationell

A quieter showing from Öhgren, but it's not every game that you can score a hattrick. His tools still look above-average; he can protect the puck with his hands, with his feet, with his acceleration and combine handling and skating move. The hockey sense is still average, maybe even below that to me. He doesn't really know his space and can take a while to execute plays -- he doesn't prepare them at all. Because of that, he is not effective in the bumper position; he needs to develop a catch-and-release motion and scan the ice around him and the goalie to position himself as a shooter or at least threaten to be one to open space for teammates. I saw him leverage a decent scoring chance for himself into a better one for a teammate. Maybe the hockey sense is more than average; he needs to add more scanning and care more about building his mental map of the ice.

**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022

Djurgårdens U20 vs Vasteras U20 - J20 Nationell

I'm reading Jimmy's report on this game and I fully agree with his take on Öhgren's NHL translatable skill -- the shortness of his puck touches. It moves on and off his stick. He also goes to the right areas, plays physical (finishes hits), and seems to possess above-average tools. His game just seems easier to recycle into something useful at the next levels. I'm not sure he has the offensive instinct to really become a top-6 contributor, but he could connect plays in the NHL or exploit advantages already set for him and use his speed to check. He needs to become more responsible defensively -- some offensive cheating in this game.



**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 7th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs Västerås U20 - J20 Nationell

Liam played on a familiar line with Noah Östlund and Jonathan Lekkerimäki in this game. The line dominated and Öhgren ended up with three goals. Besides the goals, Öhgren actually had many quiet shifts in the game. He moves well though and plays with good puck support. He goes down deep in both ends to help his team.

A good NHL translatable skill is that his puck touches are short. He knows what to do with the puck when he gets it and finds space to add space to the attack. He had one sequence where he got the puck in the right circle surrounded by opponents. He made a few simple quick dekes with good control and found an open teammate behind the defence and created a scoring chance. His hands seem soft even when he is at high speed or in stressful situations, that will certainly be helpful at higher levels.

He probably will not be a big goal scorer in higher levels but could definitely become a decent one. His shot volume is low and shooting percentage high. His quick release is his strength. At junior level he does not need much room to score and the puck goes quickly off his stick. In the three goals he scored in this game his timing in the slot was excellent. One of the goals he stood open for a couple of seconds before banking it in. Those opportunities are rare at higher levels.

His skating is a strong asset and of good NHL-calibre. He is naturally explosive with good technique and lower-body strength. The strides are long and can generate good speed. The stride is not perfect though and a bit sluggish. I am not

sure he will have strong separation speed at higher levels. It will depend how much more room he has to develop speed with that technique.

**David St-Louis:** November 20th, 2021

Skelleftea U20 vs Djurgårdens U20 - J20 Nationell

Öhrens skating is clearly above-average for me. His joints all stack over each; he has ankle flexion, knee-bend, relatively good back angle...He is a similarly sound technical handler. I generally liked his awareness in this game; he can ID many different options and pick the best ones. He has puck-protection moves and escape moves, too. Even his playmaking is interesting: his passing time, some deception. A technically sound player who is relatively smart about the offensive game.

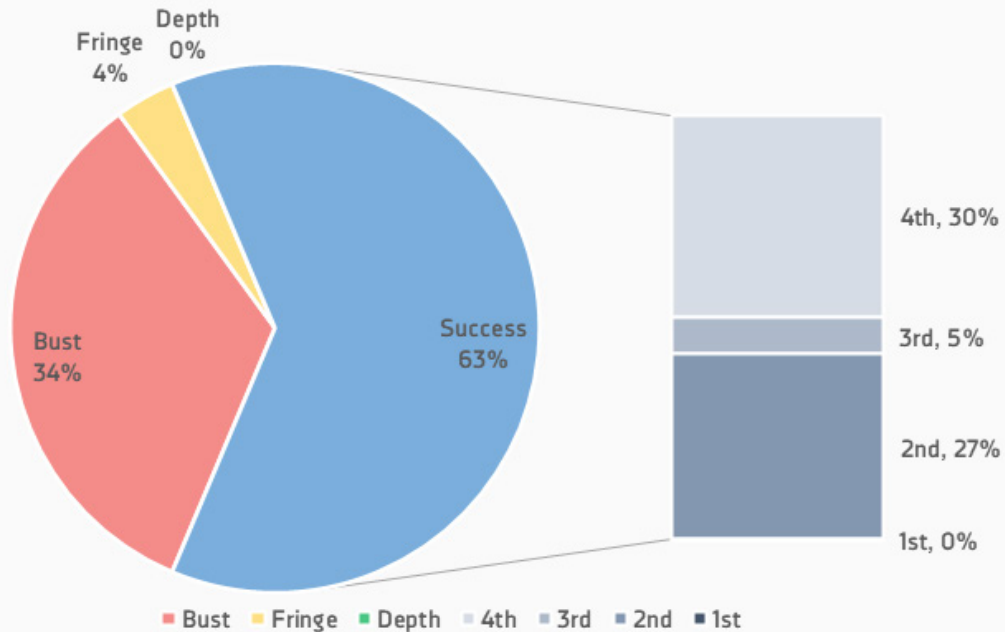
**David St-Louis:** November 19th, 2021

Skelleftea U20 vs Djurgårdens U20 - J20 Nationell

Öhgren was slow to react after getting the puck on a couple of occasions. In another league or at a higher level, the lanes would have closed on him, but at the J20, it didn't matter. I liked his frequent scanning. He spotted teammates in high-danger areas and passed to them at the right time. He showed he could manipulate defenders and create lanes, but he also missed some occasions to provide better passing support. He looks like a skilled player, capable of passing just as effectively with both sides of his blade. I especially liked one neutral-zone rush where he held the puck a couple of extra beats to attract a defender and made a slip backhand

## Liam Öhgren 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



pass under his stick. He scored from the bumper position in this game.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 14th, 2021

Russia vs. Sweden - U20 Four Nations

Öhgren had good flashes in this one. He played on the left wing and received ice time on the power play, playing in the middle of the box. Öhgren's skating looked above-average for this level. He's got good knee bend, decent ankle flexion and his explosiveness was noteworthy. There were a few moments off the rush where his skating and handling looked particularly impressive and dynamic. His hands were separated from his feet and he looked really comfortable with multiple series of crossovers. When he gained the line, though, he wasn't having much success connecting with his linemates, often going for drop passes that he tried multiple times. He made some good passes on the PP and managed to get a secondary assist in the process. He scanned relatively well on breakouts, but wasn't having much success in them -- either his linemate couldn't receive the pass or he missed his target by a little. Could have been more assertive defensively.

**Daniel Gee:** November 13th, 2021

Sweden vs Finland - U20 Four Nations

Öhgren is honestly a fascinating prospect. A bit hard to read at first due to a myriad of errors at the onset of the game, Öhgren settled down and put together a strong performance.

On-puck Öhgren looked a bit clumsy in transition initially -- stamped mainly by a mess of puck handling and a lack of

control on his first carry, attempting to pop the puck through a defender's leg and turning the puck over. His handling in general isn't poor -- he possesses full range of motion, carries the puck in his hip-pockets and pre-scans through secondary threats. In the third he protected the puck at his hip on the near boards, deked to the inside and passed to a teammate cross-ice (it was deflected away). Regardless, he has a tonne of good transitional habits. He has a great lead of pressure -- on one shift he carried the puck in off the RW, cutting back and connected a pass to his point man. On another, off the LW, he layed a drop-pass back as pressure converged. Some manipulation examples in this game as well. In the second Öhgren attempted a weight-shift based hesitation play but was easily pushed to outside. Later he showed some passing skill, executing a slip to a man in the dotted-lines, driving the net thereafter. Skating blends and projects really well. Ankle flex, knees bent over toes, long, powerful extensions with some limited heel kicking. Posture is a bit hunched at times. Öhgren was also a fairly competent forechecking threat, crashing through defenders.

Öhgren's play in sustained pressure is strikingly simple. He essentially plants in the hash marks (bumper), loading his stick, pivoting and fighting off pressure while waiting for passes through the dotted-lines. Adept at moving into pass lanes, he really wasn't rewarded for any of this work in the game. His best chance of the game was a downhill shot off the right-hand circle. His shooting mechanics are wild -- arms unlocked, downforce pushing through on his bottom hand, synced lower body weight-transfer -- absolute bullet of a shot.

Should be able to project up defensively. He scans constantly while occupying high-danger areas in the slot. Wins puck recoveries, harasses on the backcheck, and supports battles when he can. Looks like a first-rounder based on the tools and projectability. Maybe a middle of the lineup player.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 4th, 2021

Leksand IF vs. Djurgårdens IF - SHL

Öhgren looked very good here. He played around 13 minutes, all at even-strength, and made some great plays in the process. By-far the best one came from a strong forechecking effort, hunting down a puck that was chipped out from the defensive zone, winning it from the opposing defenceman in the OZ, cutting back and making an excellent cross-ice backhand pass for a one-timer chance while pressured. Öhgren's explosiveness is really notable and his motor is impressive, which makes him a rather strong forechecker even against SHL-level competition. He also had some sound small-area passes, being indicative of his smarts. Öhgren had some shooting opportunities off the rush, once being blocked and once just missing the net. I liked how he pre-scanned before pass reception on the breakout, once recognizing the situation and slowing things down before connecting with a cross-ice pass that beat the entire forecheck. Defensive effort was solid, too, and he scanned quite a bit. Battling along the boards was a bit hit-and-miss, some good moments with establishing contact and some weaker ones where he was off his balance. I liked his OZ off-puck routes for the most part, too, and he was doing a good job at making himself available. He's looking like a top-15 pick in my eyes.

**David St-Louis:** November 2th, 2021

Djurgårdens IF vs Farjestad - SHL

This performance raised some hockey sense concerns for Öhren. He was a beat late behind the play most of the game. Normal at this stage of his career, but Östlund isn't. He doesn't support the play with the right routes or the right body positioning and doesn't anticipate what comes next. He can speed up and down the ice; his posture is explosive; his skating looked like a 7 in this game, and he can also slip the puck around opponents, but his supporting game has to improve. He cares about the defensive game, though, even if he could become better at cutting passing lanes.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 16th, 2021

Djurgårdens IF vs. Timrå IK - SHL

Liam plays on the fourth line with limited ice-time, 08:50 minutes. He did not earn himself any extra time in the game and was held on the bench on one or two shifts for his line.

But in the third period he got to play when other players were held on the bench.

Liam skates leaning forward with a short stride. Still, the speed is quite good. He is always on the move and accelerates fast when he gets some room with the puck. The few times he had the puck he controls it well and shows good hand-eye coordination. He turns his head and wants to make a play. He shows that he can make smart non flashy plays as well as he can see an opening in the offensive zone when it appears.

In the forechecking he checks tight with speed and he finishes hits without hesitation. One thing I notice in this game is that he rarely wins the puck while checking or hitting. He does what's expected of him but nothing more. Even if he lacks strength due to age he should be able to at least be stronger on the puck with his stick.

Öhgren shows that he understands the tactics and he plays to the situation. One example late in the third period while his team was ahead he backchecked in the middle when he detected that the center in his line lost his position and with that prevented a turnover.

All in all, he shows flashes of skills as well as a good understanding of the game, with and without the puck. I would like to see him compete harder for the puck and be more desperate in the checking situations. His only hits were when the puck was going away from situations and the opponent was vulnerable after just playing the puck while in 50/50 situations he was a bit (but enough) passive to not be effective. If this is a pattern in his games, it will drop him in the rankings as his competitiveness is one of things he needs to have to become an NHLer with the style of play that he has.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 12th, 2021

Djurgårdens IF vs. Färjestads BK - SHL

Liam plays on the fourth line with regular rotation and a total of 09:24 min in the game. He also got a shift on the PK. He competed well in the game and was a difference maker on the ice. He hit the post with a shot from range and drew a penalty for his team.

Liam is a strong skater. He skates a bit leaning forward with his upper body with a trailing stride but with a lot of speed. You can see a natural explosiveness combined with an effective north-to-south stride. He shows strong lower-body balance and is quick in all directions. The leaning forward style makes his first steps from standing still a bit ineffective as the stride becomes a bit shorter but his explosive legs makes him fast in the longer term.

Liam has good puck control and a dangerous wrist shot. He shoots with a quick release, he drags the puck closer to



his body to gain power to the shot. His shot is also quite dangerous from distance as well. He controls the puck with ease and seems natural for him to travel with the puck with his head up. He has good control both close to his body and far to the outside.

Öhgren has decent awareness around him, he makes quick decisions on the forecheck and is successful in doing so. He reads and has good timing in his checking game to get an edge on the defense and makes trouble for the opponent. In his own zone, he turns his head and can detect where the play is heading. He can also make quick decisions with the puck. He is not overly creative and plays more of a simple game with the puck. I do not see a strong playmaker, he drives the play more with skating, energy and competitiveness.

Öhgren is a strong competitor. He has good size, he checks hard and is often the first player to the puck along the boards. He shows strong awareness and competes hard in every situation. He is athletically ahead of his development curve but still has more strength to build as you can see him being a bit light in some physical situations.

All in all, Öhgren is a fast puck skilled winger who plays with energy and strong competitiveness. I do not see an offensive driver in the long run as the hockey sense is average, but a good complementary player on an offensive line or a strong middle six forward. He has potential to reach the NHL in that kind of role. For the draft he is a good bet in the second round.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 9th, 2021

Djurgårdens IF vs. Frölunda HC - SHL

Öhgren only played 8 minutes in this one, but had some nice flashes along the way. His skating stands out; solid posture with good bend from the knees and the ankles. He can be a bit hunched over at times, but the explosiveness was impressive and he's definitely a strong athlete. I liked how often he scanned in all zones, playing pretty competent defensively given his lack of experience at this level. I could see him becoming a plus-level transition player given his skating, handling and scanning habits. Öhgren played with a ton of pace, too. Made one strong play off the rush, gaining both blue lines before dishing a cross-ice pass for a scoring chance.

**J.D. Burke:** August 4th, 2021

Sweden U18 vs. Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Some really interesting plays from Öhgren in this contest. There was a rush play in the first period that stands out for its creativity. Made a slick hook pass after a violent weight shift away from pressure to push play forward and create a chance for his linemates. Showed some real puck skills and patience on a partial breakaway but got absolutely robbed by the Slovak goaltender. Made a great read high in the offensive zone to intercept an attempted breakout pass, then set up his linemate for a Grade A scoring chance. His offensive instincts really stood out in this one.





14

14  
Rank

7.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

A  
Grade

7.5  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

1st  
Best Straight Line Skater

2nd  
Best Four-Way Mobility

2nd  
Best Transition Forward

# BRAD LAMBERT

C/RW | PELICANS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. DEC. 19, 2003  
WEIGHT 183 SHOOTS RIGHT

"Showed his upside at the juniors but was very inconsistent in league play. The speed will take him far though. I wouldn't touch him in the top-10, but he's a first rounder." - Western Conference scout in May 2022

SHADES OF: Mat Barzal, William Nylander

13%	22%	9%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
Liiga	49	4	6	10

## Scouting Report

That we could get to the 2022 NHL Draft with Brad Lambert barely clinging to the fringes of the top-10 would've seemed impossible as recently as a year ago. But even that might be a generous assessment of his stock based on our staff's conversations with industry sources.

It's been quite the fall from grace for Lambert, who was once thought of as Shane Wright's primary challenger for the first overall pick in this year's draft.

Even a cursory glance at his Elite Prospects player page helps tell the story of his free falling draft stock. The first thing you'll notice is that Lambert produced less in his draft year (10 points in 49 games) by raw and per-game points than he did in his draft-minus-one season (15 points in 46 games) despite playing in three more contests. Never a good sign.

Keep digging, and you'll find that he flew from JYP Jyväskylä to the Lahden Pelicans at about the halfway point in the season, reuniting with the organization that housed him for his age 14 and 15 seasons. The decision to join the Pelicans following a mutually agreed-upon termination of his contract with JYP was supposed to be the change of scenery that spurred Lambert to more productive ends. If nothing else, he'd get more ice-time, or so that was the thinking at the time.

The results? Same ol', same ol'. If anything, one could make a case that Lambert's fortunes took a turn for the worse. He was playing 14:07 a game in all situations with JYP, scored six points in 24 games, generated seven expected goals, and helped his team control 52 percent of the shot attempts at evens, according to our partners at InStat. With the Pelicans, Lambert played 14:21 a night, picked up four points in 25 games, scored 4.6 expected goals, and saw his team's share of the on-ice attempts drop to 43 percent.

Elite Prospects' Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen tracked every one of Lambert's games last season. His data set tells the same story -- Lambert's outputs mostly suffered the mid-season transfer to the Pelicans.

So, I guess this is the part of the scouting report where you begin to wonder why we've still placed him 14th overall on our final board? It's simple, really. For all the red flags we've already addressed (and the many more that we've yet to broach...), Lambert remains one of, if not the most singularly skilled player in this draft.

Certainly, the 6-feet-tall pivot is the best mechanical skater and handler in this draft. There's no real debate there among our staff. He flies up and down the ice with perfect skating

posture, ample flexibility through his ankles, knees and hips, and a stable upper body. His top hand is pushed out, free from his torso, and he cradles the puck at the heel of his blade with quickness and precision that most players can't match.

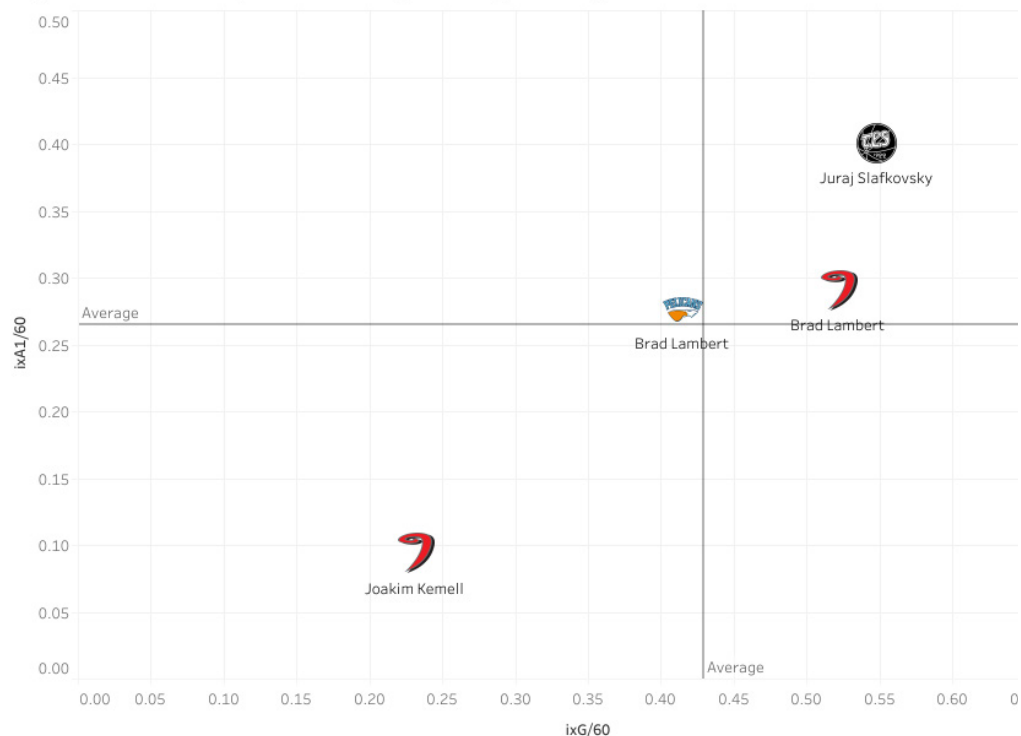
That these considerable physical gifts haven't conferred enough of an advantage to produce strong surface level or underlying results in the Liiga is perhaps a bit peculiar, but hardly a mystery.

Lambert, as currently constructed, is less than the sum of his parts. So much of his supreme ability is undone by a desire to make highlight-reel plays where simpler ones would suffice. To borrow a line from Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis, "Lambert abuses his skills to the utmost degree."

Many on the team side have come to view these deficiencies as revealing a lack of hockey sense, perhaps fairly, too. Lambert's sense checks out as an about average projection for us, but it's not at the level necessary to play centre in the NHL. Not in a high-leverage part of the lineup anyway, and that's where someone with Lambert's skill level will need to play to succeed.

His is one of the more fraught projections in this year's draft, and we think that the wide range of rankings in the

Liiga 2021-2022: Expected Primary Points (5v5 only)



public sphere and the esteem in which the industry holds him speaks to that. Lambert will need to modulate his pace better, learn to handle contact, get inside with more frequency, and simplify his game to really be a top-of-the-lineup player at the NHL level.

There's a lot of work ahead for Lambert and whichever team drafts him, but the payoff could be so rich as to make any team that passed on him from about third overall onward regret that decision for a decade-plus.

### Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Lauri Tukonen YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 95%	2 Sean Bergenheim YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 95%	3 Jesse Joensuu YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 94%	4 Ville Hamalainen YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 93%	5 Teemu Laine YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 92%
6 Iiro Pakarinen YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 91%	7 Jani Rita YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 91%	8 Petteri Nokelainen YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY: 91%	9 Tuomas Pihlman YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 91%	10 Rasmus Kulmala YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 89%

### Game Reports

David St-Louis: April 16th, 2022

Finland vs. Sweden - U20 Four Nations

A better performance from Lambert on certain elements: supporting ability, playmaking, getting off the wall. He's still a bit too much of a periphery player, a bit of an offensive cheater, and he still doesn't know when and how to involve teammates. And he still doesn't know how to set up his

rushes all that well, but the skill continues to shine. He's so much more skilled than everyone else in the draft class. I'm not sure how much that is worth in the end, but the perfect skating and handling technique and the separation ability certainly gives him much broader and shorter development pathways. Some hockey sense concerns; he's more of a 5 for me now, an average thinker of the game, but again, as he

can get to spots others aren't able to, and as he can separate from defenders and acquire more speed, things others can't do, he will have more evident plays to make and easier ones.

**David St-Louis:** April 15th, 2022

Finland vs. Slovakia - U20 Four Nations

Much, much better game from Lambert, especially in his support and small-area play. He showed a lot more promising elements: cutting players at the hands, giving close support to teammates, attacking pockets of space, some defensive moments, adaptability in passing (finding a new target when one is closed)... My main issue is his inability to complete playmaking sequences, his lack of deception and the mechanics of his passes. Why saucer the puck to a teammate when there isn't a stick in the way? Lambert is a bit too caught up in his own skill at times. He needs to use them in more productive ways, use his movement to shift the defence in zone but combine it with look offs and anticipation to hit the right target.

**David St-Louis:** April 14th, 2022

Finland vs. Czechia - U20 Four Nations

Lambert continues to attack traffic with the puck even when he doesn't need to, in the offensive zone. He doesn't really know how to create scoring chances. Plays have to be there for him to make on his first touch of the puck. All contact plays are difficult for him. His rush game, especially one-on-one, recognizing space, creating it, and speeding past -- those elements were on point. Lambert continues to be mostly a solo-creator for me.

**Lassi Alanen:** April 14th, 2022

Finland vs. Czechia - U20 Four Nations

Lambert was skating on the right wing on the second line and got shifts as the net-front/behind the net guy on the power play. Had a very slow start to the game, failing to advance the play a few times and not connecting his one-touch passes in transition. He was also regularly outmuscled off pucks when he tried to protect possession in the OZ, causing Finland's attacks to dry out early. Also turned the puck over once in OZ, resulting in a rush chance and goal for the opposition. Then again, he did have some better moments later on in the game. He entered the zone, did a cutback and found a second wave option and executed the pass from under the defender's stick, resulting in a primary assist. He's still an excellent puck rusher who was always tasked to gain the zone on PP and did so with a high success rate. He's not even close to maximizing those tools, though, and it's a bit scary in a bad way.

**David St-Louis:** March 12th, 2022

TPS vs Jukurit - Liiga

A poor performance from Lambert overall. His main issue is that he doesn't make teammates better. At all. His plays have poor timing, poor anticipation; he's locked into his own patterns and expect others to follow them and he approximates a lot of his moves. He has the speed but his rush patterns aren't sufficiently developed; he's not creating 2-on-1s, involving teammates, and imbalancing defenders as much as he could be. His defence was again a positive point in this game, but he's just lost offensively. His teammates are also not setting him up, but in this game, he was the main reason why his line wasn't generating anything.

**David St-Louis:** March 11th, 2022

TPS vs Pelicans - Liiga

Lambert scored off the rush in this game. He got a bit lucky as he managed to poke the puck out of reach of two defenders (he didn't necessarily dangle them) and the remaining defenceman gave him the space to cut inside and get a better look at the net. But still, his speed and shot was on display. I liked his awareness of teammates through



## Brad Lambert 2021-22 Liiga pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 13 || Base XLS: 13% || Impact XLS: 0% || XPR: 23.1 || Drafted Pct: 92%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



the game, some of his passing plays, and his defensive engagement; he pressured well on the forecheck and caught to many on the backcheck. The issue is that he lacks an engaging game and physical skills; he has a lot of trouble winning pucks by establishing body positioning and creating off contact. His game is played mostly on the periphery; he misses numerous occasions to support inside.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 26th, 2022

Pelicans vs. JYP - Liiga

Lambert had one of his better games with Pelicans this season. He was trying more stuff in the offensive zone, finding a quiet area in the middle and having more success with his passing. There have been many games where he just circles around the OZ and throws a backhand pass towards the slot that gets picked off, but now his actions seemed to have more purpose and higher percent intent behind them. Had one point-blank chance in front of the net but didn't realize he had quite a lot of time and rushed his shot a bit. Only adding one point in 15 or so games is on the lower side for Lambert, even if he hasn't been that great in every game. This was one where he could have easily snatched a few points with better luck.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 5th, 2022

HIFK vs. Pelicans - Liiga

Lambert looked better in this one compared to my other latest viewings with Pelicans. He scored his first goal with the new team, banking in a rebound after a point shot. He also created one high-end look for his linemate, recovering a chip-in entry, shoulder checking the middle to find the open option and executing the pass well on backhand. Decent success on exits, more limited on entries, which is pretty unusual; HIFK did great job at taking away space and playing tight NZ defence. Lambert is still not on the same page with his teammates at times and I don't think that he's that great off-puck offensively, not finding space in the middle and instead being stuck to wanting the puck back in the perimeter.

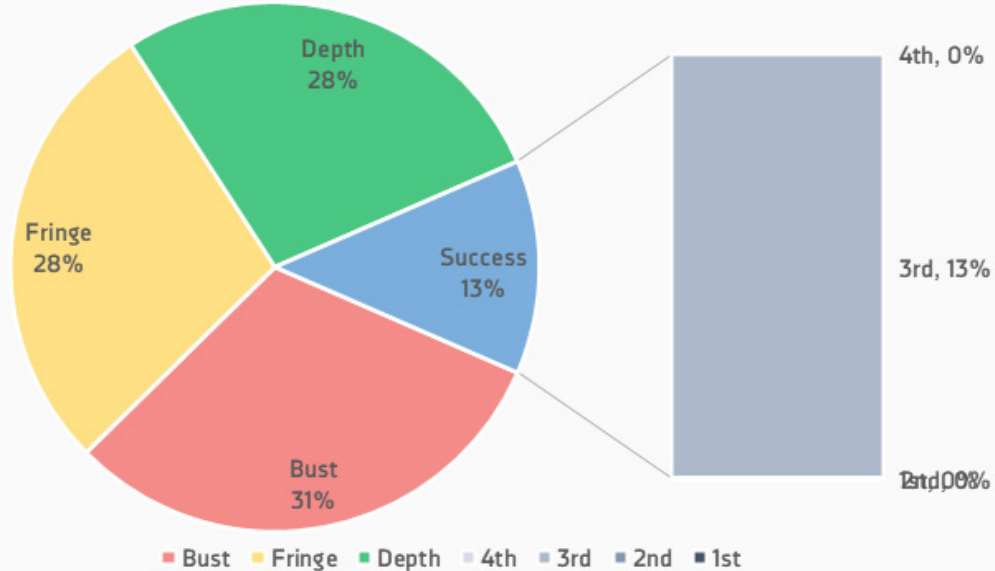
**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Pelicans vs. Vaasan Sport - Liiga

Good and bad moments, like usual in Lambert viewings. His defence remains pretty loose, but at least he closed out on his check mostly at the right time in this one. The reason he is not scoring is partly because of his support. His teammates just don't read the game well; they miss occasions to give him the puck and miss occasions to receive it from

## Brad Lambert 2021-22 Liiga pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



him, like blatant ones. Lambert could also do a better job of pre-scanning for his space to make plays (he forfeits puck he could turn into better plays), but like usual, I love his tools. The skating and handling is high-end, best in the draft, and he shows moments of anticipation and abilities under pressure: establishing body positioning, backhand slip passes... He even started making strategy dumps and rims in this one. The flashes of better decision-making and the fact that he lacks teammate support ease some of my concerns about his game. Honestly, it might be time to move Lambert up our board since he is almost a safer bet to take, as a player who actually wants to make plays and has the tools to pull them off in the NHL, than all the other vanilla forwards of the draft.

**David St-Louis:** February 2nd, 2022

Pelicans vs. Ässät - Liiga

The mistakes are still there, but I like Lambert's game better now, maybe just cause he's a breath of fresh air in this draft, an actual very skilled prospect! Lambert had a few small-area plays that I didn't see from him in the first half of the year, puck placements into space, reverse plays, scissors and his off-puck game looks to be developing to an extent, some good transition defence and actual efforts to get open in the offensive zone and in transition, which net him a couple of great scoring chances. He's clearly not a finisher, but has so much potential to develop in a bunch of ways due to his tools. I'm getting more optimistic about his hockey sense projection than before: more scanning and a bit more productive plays. His teammates don't support

him at all. We saw what could happen to his game when he has legitimate timely options. I don't know. Still not a top-3 prospect for me, but I'm way more comfortable with top-5, even considering the resistance to change he might have. At some point, you either pick skill, him, or you pick a middle of the lineup player. They each have the same certainty, too, as Lambert does have somewhat of a fall-back game. He pressures more. There is a bit of defensive upside there, too. Not a lot, but with his speed, he has recovery and forechecking abilities.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 28th, 2022

KooKoo vs. Pelicans - Liiga

Lambert continued to struggle to create offence at 5-on-5 with his new team. Second game in a row with no shot attempts or shot assists at even-strength. Didn't also receive any ice time on special teams today. Pelicans simply got caved in when Lambert was on the ice. Hard to say how much of it has to do with him, to be honest. He still had some good moments in transition, being able to escape pressure with crossover-heavy skating and handling. There were at least few noticeable spots where his teammates just couldn't play the game at the same pace as him. For example, his linemate couldn't pass the puck to him quickly enough in the NZ and when he eventually passed, Lambert already had to stop before the blue line to avoid going off-side. Lambert had some good backcheck moments, utilizing his skating and taking the extra strides to close in on the puck carrier and create a turnover with the pressure. On the other hand, he had some bad moments in the DZ, not covering for his



defenceman while an open player was in the slot or starting to glide when he could have taken away his man as a passing option off the rush.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 20th, 2022

Pelicans vs. Kärpät - Liiga

Lambert was back on the wing in his second game with Pelicans, and it wasn't a very pretty one. Sure, he made some solid plays on the power play and rang the post with a inside-leg wrister off the rush on PP, but at 5-on-5, it was bleak. He had no shot attempts or shot assists, only one entry and had trouble moving the puck out of the defensive zone with control. Moving to wing wasn't able to hide some of the defensive deficiencies; multiple times Lambert was caught positioning too high and holding his stick on the wrong lane (trying to take away the defender instead of taking away the middle) while a player was open behind him. There were at least a couple of occasions where Kärpät was able to convert a one-timer chance due to that. Not many puck touches in the OZ.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 18th, 2022

Lukko vs. Pelicans - Liiga

This was Lambert's first game with his new team as he decided to make yet another team switch and return to Pelicans, his original club where he left a few years ago. At 5-on-5, it was probably the most productive game of his season in Liiga in terms of generating chances. I liked how he used his teammates more in the OZ, connecting for a couple of nice give-and-go plays. He also got a high-danger look after a good forecheck/interception where the defender made an ill-advised d-to-d pass and was probably not anticipating Lambert getting in the lane so quickly. There were some rough shifts, too, where his line was in trouble in the DZ. The opening shift was a horror show in that regard, for example. I don't like Lambert as a center right now, which he

was back doing after a long break. He might get more puck touches on the breakout, which is positive considering his abilities in transition, but the DZ play can be rough at times.

**David St-Louis:** December 27th, 2021

Finland vs. Austria - WJC-20

Lambert can use his speed to check. Is it new or is it just the different environment and system he plays in now? I think it's the second one. He is still a below-average physical player (his puck protection game is dangling and cutting back), but it's not as much of a weakness when you consider that, even in the NHL, Lambert will be an above-average player in terms of elusiveness and escapability. He will be able to evade defenders. And if he does learn to cut them at the hands, too...Watch out. Contrary to his two teammates, Koivunen and Helenius, Lambert holds the puck a bit too long at times; he could use more chips into space, too. Those have lead to some great chances for his line, as they have great support and connection. They are first on every puck. Lambert's skill advantage allows him to get to areas and generate gaps with the opposition that others can't. It's so evident in this tournament against these weaker teams and paired with skilled teammates. Lambert escapes traffic, creates space and odd-man situations, that he then turns into great setups. This formula is partly translatable to the NHL. I still want to see how diverse he could potentially be in the top league, as teams will figure out his advantages and respect them, leaving them without an ability to create them often enough to produce at a high level.

**David St-Louis:** December 26th, 2021

Finland vs. Germany - WJC-20

Well, looks like Lambert is a transformed player when he has options to use off the rush. He attacked more inside (when clear occasions to do so), and showed his constant rushing skills, too. He was used as the drop-man on the powerplay,



the guy tasked to carry the puck through the neutral-zone wall on the opposition. Lambert already does that at an NHL-level. He could get any NHL team in the offensive zone with his combination of perfect handling and skating technique. What I liked above all were his second actions, the way he constantly moved his feet after one of his plays to support the next one.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 26th, 2021

Finland vs. Germany - WJC-20

One of the best games Lambert has played this season. Yeah, he could have pushed more often towards the middle and was stuck on the perimeter a few times (which has been the issue for the entire season and more), but his speed and skill were a deadly combination in transitions and he did convert quite few of them into scoring chances. The assist in the third period was gorgeous, delaying a fake shot before passing under the defender's stick to the back post for a tap-in. Some other moments were very electrifying, too, where he put together sequences of crossovers and handling. Found good chemistry with linemate Ville Koivunen who seemed to be on the same page for most of the time in the OZ.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 26th, 2021

Finland vs. Germany - WJC-20

Effective tournament opener from Lambert. Set up a goal by taking a pass in the hip pocket, delaying just enough to fake the shot, and then passing cross-slot. Had a couple of looks of his own, including a quick handle into a shot around the defender. The speed that he strung together the tricky pass into a deke into a shot was special. Shot lacks some refinement, for sure – tending to bend his knees inwards and keep his top arm tucked to his body. Had a few opportunities to get the puck to the inside which he didn't take, and he dead-ended himself with possession after gaining the zone.

Seems like a player who struggles inside space, even with his dynamic tools. Not much on the defensive end. Execution scream top-10 pick but the tools did.

**David St-Louis:** December 23rd, 2021

USA vs Finland - WJC-20

Pre-tournament game so obviously the timing wasn't all there for Finland, but there were some nice moments from Lambert. He is clearly the most skilled or at least technical player on the ice on his shifts. His movements doesn't always improve the offence (as he tends to fade into wide space and the top of the zone), but he tried to use teammates and generate screened shots. He also used his speed to catch up to opponents and engage them physically. Lambert is an inefficient offensive player, but he has all the tools to generate a high amount of opportunities, even in the NHL.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 10th, 2021

KalPa vs. JYP - Liiga

Lambert had multiple high-danger chances to convert into his first 5v5 goal of the season, but his shots just aren't finding the net this season. He had very good moments off the rush, trying to push more to the inside and use his shoulder and body to protect the puck. He still relies a lot on the stop, turn and pass to the second wave or point sequence, but it's good to see at least a somewhat more aggressive player. His off-puck instincts and vision for give-and-gos is still a question mark. Something that goes unnoticed quite a bit is how many breakups and steals Lambert is able to make when he gives a good effort off-puck. He's a victim of puck-watching a lot once the play gets to the defensive zone, but his skating allows him to log multiple takeaways per game.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 13th, 2021

Finland vs. Sweden - U20 Four Nations

Lambert wasn't supposed to be on this roster initially and instead was originally on the challenging U19 roster, but Joakim Kemell's injury gave him a chance with the main team. Skill-wise, he's easily a top-nine player this year, but the coaching staff seemed to want to teach him a lesson. He was a healthy scratch in the first game, but played on the top line in this alongside Rätty and Hirvonen and played the bumper on the top power play. Lambert had multiple good scoring chances, being set up by his linemates. He created a couple of chances for them, too, playing pretty well together with them. His awareness seemed a bit better compared to Liiga viewings, though it could have just been having better linemates, ie. having more passing targets (and more space due to U20 hockey being more chaotic). Skating and handling are elite tools at this level, it's just about how to use them to the benefit of him and his line. Off-puck effort was okay. Backchecked hard on a couple of occasions and forced breakups. Could have benefitted from a one or two-touch release on the PP.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 3th, 2021

Ilves vs. JYP - Liiga

Pretty usual outing from Lambert. He had some flashes of promising playmaking, but he doesn't generate much in the way of high-danger attempts. He's often looking to pass the puck to the point instead of trying to push towards the middle. He's not much of a scanner or planner either. He's very reliant on stopping and turning after he enters the zone. When he does try to rush the net, he doesn't have the puck protection skills or strength to pull it off. When he has space, he can maneuver his way through the neutral zone with the best of them. How translatable is his skill set, though? He needs to learn to create offence in different ways.

**David St-Louis:** October 31st, 2021

TPS U20 vs. JYP U20 - Liiga

Every time I watch Lambert, I always think: "Oh he isn't getting the right puck touches, not getting the puck in the right spots to use his skills, teammates aren't supporting his style of play..." It's still partly true, but the bigger answer is that Lambert doesn't actually know how to play a team game all that well. He really needs great off-puck line-mates, players who absolutely get the "right place, right time" concept as otherwise Lambert just gets lost in his own skill. Speed, speed, speed, weave, no option, turn, no option, throw puck somewhere. He had a great occasion to show passing manipulation in the offensive zone in the 2nd frame and just missed the execution. Not sure if he didn't see his teammates in a high-danger spot or just overhanded. He lacks the little

connecting skills that make players easy to play with. He's such a complex picture to figure out.

**David St-Louis:** October 27th, 2021

TPS vs. JYP - Liiga

Unfortunately, it is getting hard for me to see anything more than a player who skates and handles fast, who learned to use crossovers to the maximum and the perfect techniques at a young age, abused them to increase his stock and his scoring, and is now at a lost as to how to create offence in the professionals. Of course, his line-mates don't always help him; they can't play the game the same way he does, but still, Lambert has to learn better awareness habits. He NEVER scans before getting the puck; has no idea who is coming for him and where his options are. His space management is poor. He is always in problem-solving mode. The good news is that he processes fast; the bad one is that his competition does too to an extent and he is also weaker than them. He missed too many passing windows to my liking in this game. I still love the skill, but I'm starting to seriously doubt if he will be able to adapt his game to the demands of higher levels. He doesn't seem to get it.

**David St-Louis:** October 7th, 2021

JYP vs. Jukurit - Liiga

Lambert continues to show he is one of the best handlers and skaters in the draft. He can separate his upper and lower body, twist one or the other, scan inside his moves, while retaining perfect control over the puck. He also has an understanding of angles, of how to approach defenders to keep them guessing and move around them. Unfortunately, he often manipulates to gain the wide lane, not center ice. He is mostly a periphery player at this stage and one who has trouble orchestrating full plays. He can rush the puck in, pull off an escape, and connect with a pace, but rarely in succession. His low point totals are mostly explained by a lack of off-puck abilities. Lambert supports plays late and doesn't see them develop. He dominated through superior skill all his career and now those aren't enough. Will he figure it out?

**Lassi Alanen:** October 6th, 2021

JYP vs. Ässät - Liiga

Lambert is clearly frustrated out there. He was throwing some weird late hits, not at all common to him. He had some good moments. He's able to cover a ton of ice with his skating. The form continues to be excellent with the knee bend and ankle flexion. There were multiple solid support plays off the puck, being first on pucks in NZ and DZ down low. With



the puck, he had some solid moments, too, setting up one excellent scoring chance with a nice pass. It's not resulting in goals, though, with Lambert only having one assist this season so far. If his support was sound in NZ and DZ, he was rather late on plays in offence, which limited his line's ability to create. He's not very hard on pucks, either, and can be pushed off too easily. Doesn't initiate contact, which doesn't help in that department. The tools are there and he likely should have more points, but I'm not sure about how he's improved from last season.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 25th, 2021

JYP vs. Tappara - Liiga

Lambert was moved to the wing during the game -- a good direction to go to in my opinion. This way his defensive shortcomings weren't as apparent, even though his line did still get caved in pretty hard at 5-on-5. Lambert had some flashes in transition, but it was a sub-par performance by his standards in that regard. In the OZ, he's way too easily forced to the outside and his ability to stay on pucks along the boards was pretty weak, which led to multiple turnovers. No shot attempts and only one shot assists during 10 minutes of 5-on-5 ice time.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 24th, 2021

SaiPa vs. JYP - Liiga

There were some really impressive plays by Lambert in this one. His transition ability did shine through on multiple occasions. Once JYP gets the puck in the defensive zone, Lambert explodes to the middle lane and is an easy passing target for either one of his wingers. Usually, he follows that up by carrying the puck through the neutral zone and then looks to pass at the blue line or right after. There was one occasion where he faked going outside and scooped the puck behind the defender to the middle, following that up by a backhand pass to the second wave -- really impressive stuff. The skating and hands are there and he's making some plays in transition. He could have more points with these skills alone. After the play settles in the offensive zone, he's pretty much stuck to the perimeter. Defensively, it's still a trainwreck. There was one specific play where he just watched the puck at the net-front and allowed a high-danger chance. He's just not Liiga level defensively at C.

**J.D. Burke:** September 18th, 2021

JYP vs. KooKoo - Liiga

Hardly a perfect performance from Lambert, but I'm constantly in awe at his singular skill as a handler and as a skater. He may be the most gifted player I've scouted in

that regard. It's a bit of a blessing and a curse, though. Tries to take on numbers with dangles and suffers his lack of discretion on a regular basis, turning over the puck more often than you'd like to see. Plays at a breakneck pace. Skates through passes, skates through shots... everything Lambert does, he does in motion. Almost connected with a one-touch, cross-ice pass on the rush to set up a tap-in goal. Pulled off a ridiculous dangle between his own legs in space to get around a defender at one point, but lost the puck as another converged on him. His line generated a tonne of offence in this contest, they just couldn't find the back of the net.

**David St-Louis:** September 17th, 2021

JYP vs. KooKoo - Liiga

Lambert is one of the most toolsy prospects I've seen in recent years. His skating and handling are textbook. He has perfect knee bend, a lot of ankle flexion, and the stability of his upper body allows him to retain full control over the puck as he switches direction and cuts inside the space of defenders. In this game, he created entries by attacking open ice and by using his speed. I need to see him beat more opponents with deception and pace and lane changes before projecting him as a top NHL rusher, but he seems capable of all those things. He was behind the play at times, especially, in the offensive zone. He has to scan more to find his next play and advantages, like open space in the slot, before getting the puck. And he has to better move away from the puck to support teammates and build more scoring chances in this league.

**David St-Louis:** September 15th, 2021

JYP vs TPS - Liiga

When Lambert is on the offence, the offence is one-and-done, or more precisely, zero-and-done, because what he does rarely leads to scoring chances. I'm not sure it's entirely his fault, however, as he isn't matched with players with similar speed, skill-level, and mentality. Lambert is a rusher, but he rushes so much, so fast that he also evades teammates. He finds himself alone in the offensive zone, in the wide lane, and has to somehow find a way to pass to teammates arriving a couple of steps behind inside defensive layers. It's not going to work. Lambert is not adaptable. He knows only one way to play the game -- the way he has always played the game -- be faster, more elusive, more skilled than others. It doesn't work at this level.

Lambert hasn't developed off-puck instincts. He doesn't scan for the next play, which slows down his execution and closes lanes, and doesn't really know how to position to best support the play. He doesn't foresee what he should do next,

besides the obvious system rotations. His lack of awareness also limits his skill display. He can elude pretty much every Liiga defender in tight with his skating, but he lacks a feel for how those defenders are approaching him and where the next option is, and so he just ends up turning back inside checking pressure.

Lambert is a frustrating player to watch and he has the makeup of a frustrating player to coach in the NHL. This lack of adaptability, this desire to play the game one way will create fit problems for teams. Of course, despite all that, he remains probably the most purely skilled prospect in the draft and a fast processor of the game, too.

Will his decision-making improve if he learns to scan more? It's hard to balance his skill-level with his shortcomings. No idea where to rank him.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 11th, 2021

HIFK vs. Kärpät - Liiga

This was another outing with good flashes but an inconsistent end product. Lambert's transition numbers are going to be great this season. His crossover-heavy skating style and good handling allow him to beat most of the forecheckers. He created five exits and four entries, all through the middle. There was one highlight where he beat two forecheckers, rushed down the middle, dishing the puck to his wing on an entry, and skated the middle lane, almost receiving a pass back that could have resulted in a high-end chance. Most of the time, though, his rushes didn't result in much concrete. Lambert is too easily kept on the perimeter once the play reaches the offensive zone. He can make the occasional cut to the middle, but it has mostly just been passes to the point. Defensively, he's just outright bad and it's costing his team at 5-on-5. He's not scanning enough, reacting to threats quickly enough, or engaging physically to make stops. We'll see how long he gets to play as a center with these on-ice results.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 10th, 2021

HIFK vs. JYP - Liiga

Lambert centered JYP's second line in today's Liiga opener versus HIFK. Overall, it was a very meh performance from Lambert. There were a couple of nice flashes, but his overall game wasn't impressive. He has those dynamic qualities you are looking for in terms of his skating and handling, but they didn't accomplish much. There was one good OZ sequence where he went inside-out on a forward and got to a good shooting location, but was ultimately deflected by the defender. There was also a partial breakaway that didn't result in a shot. Lambert turned the puck over multiple times while trying to enter the zone, not connecting on his drop

passes notably. There were some ideas but the execution was lacking. OZ cycles didn't result too much either. Lambert is also very green defensively, especially when playing center. He missed some coverages and played too high, not making any stops either. It was telling that his line didn't get to play many minutes in the latter half of the third period with the game being tied. The expectations are high, of course, but no matter how you slice it, you want to see more from a talent like Lambert.

**Cam Robinson:** September 10th, 2021

HIFK vs. JYP - Liiga

Liiga opener today. Lambert skating at 2C position. The flashes were there in this one, but the overall compete level was missing for too many stretches. Few players boast the hands and feet that Lambert has. He has excellent body control in-flight and in possession. He used those physical tools to create several high-danger chances for himself - a partial break that showcased his quick acceleration and flight; a darting, inside-out dangle then cut back in for a deflected shot in the high slot, and another cross-slot drive that failed to hit the target. He was on the right side of the puck defensively early on, but made some glaring turnovers while trying to enter the zone that were quickly transitioned back against. Outside of those aforementioned positive offensive plays, it was rather vanilla. I question his vision and overall IQ when it comes to seeing and using his mates, but he has flashed impressive passing in the past so it's not a lost cause by any means.

**David St-Louis:** July 24th, 2021

Finland U20 vs Sweden U20 - WJSS

Lambert's play selection is poor. Really poor. Every part of the decision-making process needs work. He has to scan more, understand expected rotations better, learn to anticipate reactions, and plan ahead. He is going through scripts with no adaptability to the actual game, missing close to one good, evident opportunity per shift. Passing when he needs to shoot, turning back when he needs to skate ahead...Skating and handling are clearly above-average, but they won't matter if he doesn't learn to think the game. One thing I really like about him: his understanding of angles. Lambert knows he has to approach defenders at an angle to better turn their feet and attack past them. He doesn't do the last part all that often (again, missed opportunities), but he has the first part of rush dangles down.

**David St-Louis:** May 6th, 2021

Finland U18 vs Russia U18 - U18s



Lambert is an incredibly inefficient player. He started the game by using his teammates, by making passing plays, but as soon as Russia took the lead, Lambert tried to force his way in the offensive zone every time he touched the puck. He has the speed to do so, but he doesn't really know how to use his speed to create. He attacks at angles, but mostly to the outside of defenders and he doesn't really manipulate their feet, just outspeeds them with crossovers. He doesn't adapt to the game, doesn't manipulate; his tools control him; not the other way around. His awareness has to develop, too, as he doesn't always look before passing and sends the puck to the other team. All in all, skills are really impressive, the speed, the agility, the handling, the perfect techniques, but not sure what Lambert is besides a skills coach dream.

**Lassi Alanen:** August 19th, 2020

JYP vs. Ilves - Liiga

It was Lambert's first game with JYP's organization and also the first time he was playing center at Liiga level. Based on what I saw in this game, I don't think he should be playing down the middle once the regular season begins. Defensively, he was watching the puck too much, missing assignments, and playing a bit carelessly in front of the net. He was often the last forward back, which is not ideal for a center. Offensively, Lambert managed to sneak in a secondary assist and had a couple of fun sequences with the puck in which his offensive skills showed through. Once moved to the wing, he can have more defensive liberties and focus more on what he's good at.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 29, 2020

HIFK vs. TPS - Jr. A SM-liiga

Rather sloppy game from Lambert. He threw pretty bad blind passes in the first period which cost his team the possession. Defensively there's a lot of work to be done if he's going to play center in the future (part of me thinks he could be a more natural winger). He was almost always last on the backcheck and often committed too hard to chase the puck around on the forecheck. Lambert's elite skating ability was noticeable in transitions where he carried the puck from blueline to blueline a couple of times. As stated before, Lambert's passes in the offensive zone were hit-and-miss in this game, though he made one nice feed that resulted in a good scoring chance. He's got dynamic puck skills but he wasn't able to show them too much in this game. He also got pushed off the puck too easily, losing his balance in board battles. His line did dominate the shot share, but they also gave more high-danger chances than they created.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 28, 2020

JYP vs. HIFK - Jr. A SM-liiga

Really good offensive game from Lambert who recorded six shot assists (including one medium-danger and one high-danger) and was as involved in transition game as usual. Showcased high-end stick skills by dangling through multiple opponents and by having the ability to hold on to the puck under pressure. Just a fantastic skater with acceleration, agility, and top speed for days. Misplayed situations defensively. He doesn't engage the body a lot. He

can float defensively, which should not happen as a center.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 14th, 2019

KalPa vs. HIFK - Jr. A SM-liiga

Lambert had a decent game for his standards. His start was a bit rough, as his attempts at crossing the neutral zone were stopped and he was rubbed off pucks pretty easily in the corners. As the game progressed, he did start to get in the zone, making excellent passes in the offensive zone and showing his speed all over the ice. There was a fun sequence in OT where Lambert left the ice slowly right after an offensive zone faceoff and his teammate flew from the other side of the bench towards the offensive zone, getting to a breakaway and scoring the game-winning goal.

**Lassi Alanen:** August 30th, 2019

TPS vs. HIFK - Jr. A SM-liiga

There were more decision-making issues than there usually is with Lambert. He was attempting stuff of the rush that has a very low-percentage chance of working out in his favor. According to my tracking, he recorded five failed controlled entries, which is a new high mark for him this season. When he got to the offensive zone, though, he was dangerous with sneaky passes to the point or cross-ice to the half wall. There were also moments when the stuff that he attempted did work out, ie. dekes under the stick.

**Lassi Alanen:** August 27th, 2019

Kiekko-Espoo vs. HIFK - Jr. A SM-liiga

Lambert was centering HIFK's top line in their U20 season opener against Kiekko-Espoo. The 15-year-old was one of the most noticeable players on the ice, opening the scoring in the first period with a beautiful individual effort on the power play. Lambert is already one of the best skaters in the entire U20 league. His ability to generate speed using crossovers is elite and his edgework is exceptional. Lambert's speed allowed him to intercept plays in the neutral zone and backcheck effectively. He generates tons of offense at even-strength for both him and his linemates. He is a dual-threat as he can make very creative passes but also pick corners with his wrist shot. Lambert didn't look physically overwhelmed, but he has a lot of room to add muscle as he ages. Playing center for the first time at this level, his positioning in the defensive zone was a bit off at times, but that is to be expected and he wasn't a liability. If Lambert continues to look as good as he did in this game, I wouldn't be surprised if he gets to

make his Liiga debut sooner rather than later.

**Lassi Alanen:** August 6th, 2019

Finland vs. Czech Republic - Hlinka Gretzky Cup

Being the youngest player on his team, Lambert had a very solid performance in Finland's 1-5 win over the Czech Republic. He was playing on the second line together with Aatu Rätty and Jesse Seppälä, and also got notable power play time on the second unit. Lambert's elite skill set was on display on many occasions. He is a shifty, dynamic skater who can carry the puck with speed through the neutral zone. Lambert's skill level is also dynamic, as he is able to make plays at full speed and handle the puck with notable ease. Lambert also made multiple smart passing plays on rushes to set up his linemates. Despite being one of the youngest players in the entire tournament, he has competed fearlessly, which almost got him injured at one point. Lambert should be a top player at the U20 league with HIFK next year, and he'll possibly make his Liiga debut at some point during the season. Together with Matthew Savoie and Shane Wright, Lambert is looking like a potential contender for the top pick in 2022.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 9th, 2019

Pelicans vs. HIFK - Jr. A SM-liiga

Lambert scored a goal with a beautiful wrist shot from a very tight angle in Pelicans' 4-2 win over HIFK. The 15-year-old left-winger played south of 15 minutes on Pelicans' third line and was also featured on the second power play unit. Being the youngest player playing in the Finnish U20 league, Lambert looked ready both skill-wise and physically to play at this level. His speed, acceleration, and agility looked all very good for a player his age. When he had the puck, Lambert showed excellent stickhandling and impressive puck control.

Despite his age, he was driving the play and crossing the neutral zone with the puck quite often. Confidence is clearly not an issue with him, as he was asking a lot for the puck and showed no hesitation to engage along the boards. Lambert also flashed a very good vision on a couple of occasions. He did miss a few defensive assignments, but that is to be expected from an offensive winger playing against much older competition. Lambert's point production at the U20 level has been nothing short of spectacular in the games that he has played there. I have every reason to expect that he will be a dominant player at this level next season.



15  
Rank

A  
Grade

6  
Skating

5.5  
Puckhandling

5  
Shooting

5.5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Passing

6.5  
Physical

5th

Best Four-Way  
Mobility

2nd

Best Neutral Zone  
Defender

5th

Best Transition  
Defenceman

2nd

Best Defensive  
Defenceman

# CALLE ODELIUS

D | DJURGÅRDENS IF

HEIGHT 6' 0" D.O.B. MAY 30, 2004  
WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS LEFT

"You just know he's going to play and be a useful defenceman. Really good skater... I don't think he's going to get a lot of points at the NHL level, but you know he's going to play because he's 6-foot, mobile, and very coachable."

- Eastern Conference executive in May 2022

SHADES OF: Jonas Brodin

7%

2022 XLS

6%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

2%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	43	7	23	30
SHL	7	0	0	0
WJC-18	6	0	3	3

## Scouting Report

The list of defencemen who can move the puck and defend more efficiently than Calle Odelius in this draft is a short one, and you've already crossed their paths if you've read the Elite Prospects 2022 NHL Draft Guide in the ranked order of prospects.

He's a defensive defenceman for the modern NHL. Odelius' preferred method is keeping the play out of his zone entirely. With so much of the game dictated by what happens between the blue lines, his quality as a rush defender really stands out in this regard.

Odelius maintains a tight gap through the neutral zone with his fluid backwards stride and ample four-way mobility, warding play away from the middle with an active stick, and closing with suddenness and force, always at the right moment. Most forwards will settle for a dump-and-chase play, and that's where their possession ends.

His retrievals start with a shoulder check for incoming threats and options. Then Odelius layers deception on the first touch before exploding out of his retrieval and into space. He'll bait another forechecker into the zone if only to create more of a numbers advantage up ice, and with his skating

and handling skills, it almost always works.

Now, about that skating -- Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin tagged Odelius' as an elite projection. Few of his peers can cover ground as effortlessly as he does, gliding from one zone to the next with equal parts power and grace.

Often, though, Odelius would move the puck with a well-placed, well-weighted pass. It was a little bit like watching a veteran NFL quarterback go through his progressions in the pocket as he scanned the surface for options further up-ice. Where some players settle for the first player available to them, Odelius would almost always go through his reads until he found the best one.

Unfortunately, the one thing Odelius failed to bring to the offensive zone was much in the way of offensive instincts or production. He's a mover in the offensive zone but not much of a creator. For all his four-way mobility, the Swedish blueliner often had to rely on cutbacks and spins rather than outside edge moves, limiting his options at the top of the zone.

There is some belief or at the very least some optimism among our staff that Odelius' mobility, poise, and occasional

flashes of deception will one day make him a relatively productive player in the NHL. But that's hardly a given at this stage. Not something you can bank on, anyway.

We've no such qualms with his in-zone defensive play, though. A highly engaged off-puck defender who stays a step ahead of the game with constant scanning -- Odelius nips plays in the bud before they even have a chance to develop.

There's no doubt that we're sticking our neck out a fair bit for this player. Odelius is barely even clinging to the first

round of our consolidated rankings in the Elite Prospects Draft Center, and only because of our vote of confidence in the form of a spot in the teens on our board.

Time will tell who's right, but we expect Odelius to be the defensive conscience of a second pair at the NHL level and bring high-end if not elite puck-moving skill to the table. Who knows, maybe a little offence, too. You get that player in the teens, and that's a win every time.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Nicklas Eriksson YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 97%	2 Victor Berglind YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 95%	3 Amil Krupic YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 95%	4 Filip Olsson YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 94%	5 Eric Moe YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 94%
6 Oscar Fantenberg YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 94%	7 Maksim Matushkin YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 94%	8 Calle Andersson YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 94%	9 Niklas Hjalmarsson YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 94%	10 Patrick Cedergren YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 93%

## Game Reports

**Daniel Gee:** May 1st, 2022

USA vs Sweden - U18s

Odelius was fine in this game; he had trouble defending both in transition and sustained pressure, but he didn't really break through the numerous waves of attacks.

Some worrying things in transition for Odelius in this one. First, he doesn't really lock down secondary threats -- he identifies them and stays in their vicinity, but rarely does he take their stick away or move them out of the dangerous areas. Odelius' gap was also fairly inconsistent in this one. Late processing of oncoming speed led to static pivots; he was driven wide a couple times in this game -- often in reaching posture as he pivoted. Don't get me wrong, he had his stops as well. In the third on a powerplay he was able to poke a puck away mid pivot and then drove the threat to the outside. Odelius also was extremely aggressive at times, preventing numerous entries with his stick work. Almost relies on his stick too much at times. He had a particularly bad sequence where he reached three times statically, still allowing the pass after missing each attempt. In sustained pressure he was more assertive and competitive. Had a great shift in the first where he launched into a near corner battle and was able to support a breakout off the retrieval win. Odelius did have some trouble processing on a late third period PK -- after he blocked a right-hand circle shot, he completely missed a bumper threat that moved in after. Drops into the block too early. In one first period sequence he didn't scan a backdoor threat but still dropped early, not able to pokecheck the threat anymore (at their mercy). On the same shift he chased high, had to detach to a new puck

carrier cutting up the slot -- kind of a mess. He took a really bad cross checking penalty late in the third -- blew up on the ref when he was called.

Odelius was a monster in transition in this viewing. In-motion breakouts to players across two lines, weight-shift carries with hard gap disrupting cuts, two-touch passes through tight seams. So deceptive on-puck to escape through the neutral zone but ultimately unloaded too many of these carries. Cutbacks on the farboards showed he had some delay game elements. Found teammates in stride -- all translatable.

**David St-Louis:** April 30th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - U18s

Maybe I'm overestimating Odelius's handling abilities. He loses the puck quite often inside maneuvers -- or at least he doesn't look all that comfortable keeping a grip on the puck inside his spin moves. He's skill, but not necessarily masterful technically. The weight of his passes...are a problem. Many of them are shot waist-high at teammates and way too hard. Not sure why. He rushes himself. This is turning into a negative review, but only because I'm nitpicking his game, now, as I consider him more and more like a top-20, top-15 prospect in this draft. The rush defence alone will make him a solid defenceman in the SHL and probably the NHL.

**Lassi Alanen:** April 28th, 2022

Germany vs. Sweden - U18s

Sweden rolled over Germany in the quarterfinal game, and Odelius had an overall strong performance. In one of the first shifts of the game, he sent a beautiful stretch pass



through layers to create a breakaway and a goal. Odelius' transition game will project very well to the next level. He's super mobile, has a moderate amount of deception and manipulation in his passes and has excellent scanning habits on retrievals. Rush defence will also project really well. He can cover a lot of ice in a short time period, keeps his gap tight and can make stops with his body. Though he did slip in the middle of a crossover, allowing an outside lane net-drive turned into a rebound goal – I guess that happens to everybody sometimes. Mobile at the OZ point and does make the right decision most of the time, can move the puck quickly to create shooting lanes. Rang the post with a shot from the hashmarks. A first-round talent.

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - U18s

Very strong game from Odelius, showing his high motor again. He moves ahead of the play offensively and defensively. He's aggressive (but lacks a bit of control sometimes, like the weight of his passes being off). His hockey sense is closer to average, but the mobility and the constant engagement in every play is very projectable and helps development. He's not as much of a shooter, more of a playmaker from the blue-line, a distributor who uses space and aims to keep the flow of the play. If he gets beat, he can course-correct with his edge work. He looks strong in one-vs-one defensively, too.

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Sweden vs Switzerland - U18s

Odelius had the opposite performance of Hävelid. At first, I wondered what I liked in him as his plays lacked control, but then he started playing up to his potential. His rush defence is his biggest strength: tight gap, aggressive, stick in the way but not overextended, great skating posture, shadows the movement of attackers perfectly...He has a lot of poise in transition, too, sometimes a bit too much even, taking too

long to move pucks. The one mechanical flaw I see in his technical game is his flailing upper-body, the up and down motion limit his fluidity a bit and his handling. Still, Odelius is all over the ice, in a good way.

**David St-Louis:** April 10th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs Linköpings HC U20 - J20

What a great performance from Odelius. He convinced me of his potential. In a draft with so many defencemen who forfeit defence for more offence, it's refreshing to see one who really cares about the shutdown play, who tries to move ahead of opposing rotations, who pins attackers to the boards, rams them off the puck as they receive it in between blue-lines, and who has the mobility to cover a lot of ice. Odelius can make simple breakout passes under pressure, but give him a bit more space and a speed difference and he can spin away from forecheckers too.

There is some deception in his passing. It shows up on the powerplay, which is a strong facet of his game, too. He understands the puck distribution game; he moves along the blue-line, shifts the defensive box, and gives pucks to teammates in the right spot. He attempts shots at the right time. There is a decent level of creativity there. He could become a top-4 NHL defenceman. I think around 15-20 is the right spot for him. Nothing overly special in his game, but a lot of tools and a lot of potential for better puck plays down the line, too. He should be able to follow defensive and offensive systems quite easily and make positive plays for his team in all three zones.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 10th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs Linköpings HC U20 - J20

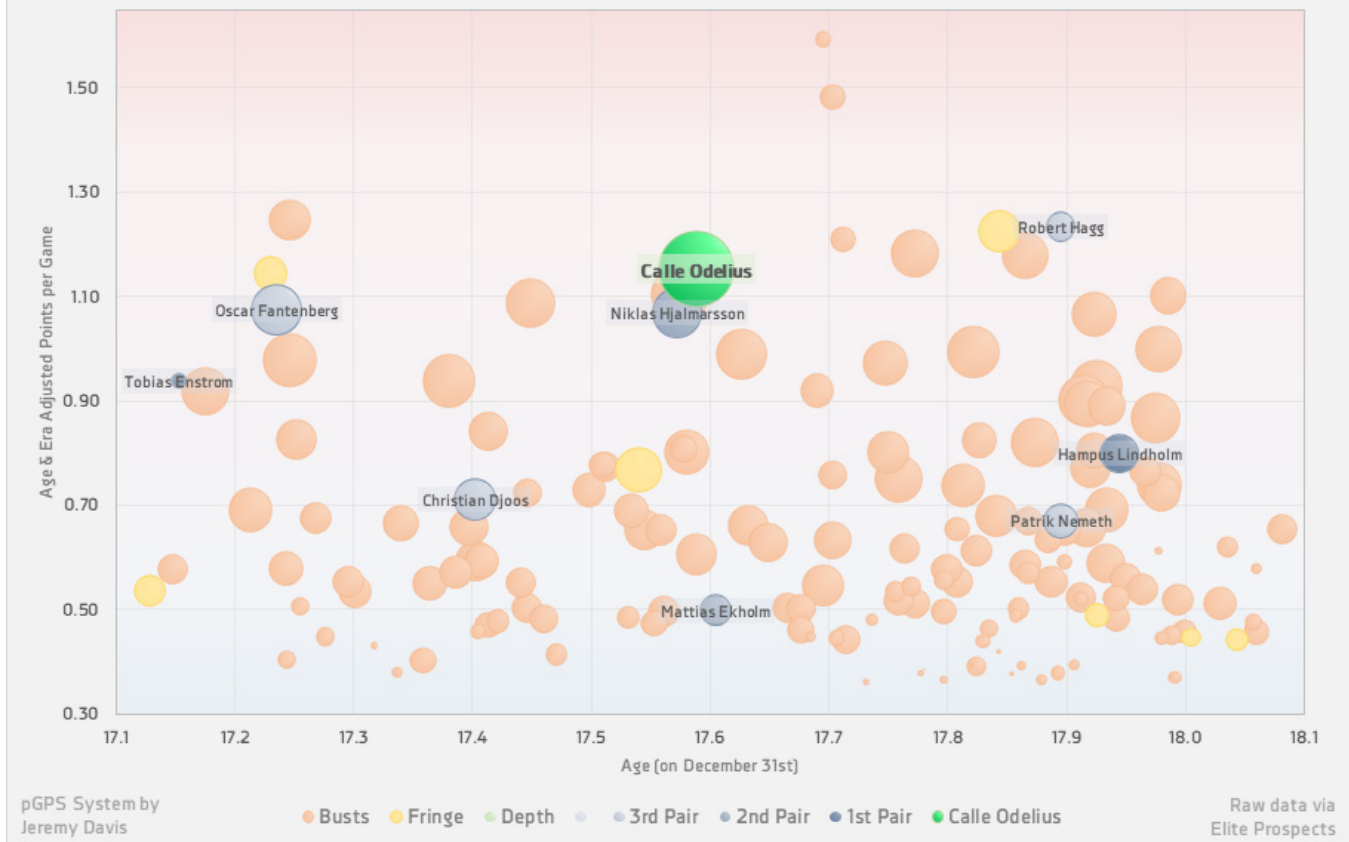
Gold medal game. Odelius played big minutes and in all situations. The team struggled and he had a tough game too handling a hard checking opponent. He got into more situations where he had to make unsuccessful breakouts just to

## Calle Odelius 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 156 || Base XLS: 7% || Impact XLS: 3% || XPR: 22.2 || Drafted Pct: 22%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



get the puck out his own end rather than starting an attack.

Still, Odelius came up with a solid effort. He was his team's best defensive defenseman. He won battles and moved the puck out of danger.

He was solid on the power play and an assist from the point. He moves well to be available for a pass but could be better in moving puck and body sideways.

All in all, he is not a player that stands out in a flashy way but he is solid and makes good defensive reads and uses his strength (particularly his skating) to his advantage.

### Jimmy Hamrin: April 9th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs Rögle U20 - J2

Odelius started the game impressively and was solid defensively. He skated the puck out of trouble, stickchecked effectively and closed gaps. He keeps playing well to his strengths and the opponents did not create much when he was on the ice.

Odelius' puck-moving was not at his best this game. He had some bad passes going to icing and he also made some bad looking plays on the point on the power play. His offensive game does not stand out and that will affect his draft stock. How high do you pick a defenseman who is a number 4-6 defenseman. High floor - Low ceiling.

### Jimmy Hamrin: April 8th, 2022

Brynäs U18 vs Djurgårdens U18 - J18

Calle dominated defensively in this game and at this level. He was not the most spectacular player offensively but used his skating and vision to defend well. Brynäs had a hard time creating chances when he was on the ice. He won battles and could vary to either play the puck or to skate away with it on the breakouts. He showed strong decision-making with the puck and drove the play from backend. Djurgarden clearly had an upper hand when Odelius was on the ice.

It is more and more clear that Odelius is a good defensive prospect with a strong chance of becoming that at the NHL level.

### Jimmy Hamrin: March 23rd, 2022

Timrå U20 vs Djurgårdens U20 - J20 Nationell Playoffs

Calle had another solid game on the top pair for his team. He played in all situations and competed hard. He did not have a strong game by his account and had some unlucky bounces but was still very solid. He has a high performance floor.

Calle showed smart decision-making and never overplayed a puck. He showed good awareness and scanned the ice well as he moved the puck. He made simple plays when needed too. His skating is very strong in his balance and he can skate



out of trouble with the puck with an opponent on his back.

His defensive game was not hardly tested as Djurgården clearly was the better team. His rush defence was not tested enough to evaluate in the game but he did stop attacks when needed to.

His puck handling is not elite and his offensive game has limits. In that way his game does not translate to a top pair at the NHL level but a solid second or third pair defenseman. His skating is such a weapon and with good awareness and decision-making where he plays to his strengths his game will translate well to higher levels.

**David St-Louis:** February 16th, 2022

Mora U20 vs Djurgårdens U20 - J20 Nationell

I still have the hockey sense doubts with Odelius, but it's hard to evaluate it because the game is so easy for him. He has above-average tools (projection) and his team gives him a lot offensive support. I like the flashes of manipulation, how he uses his teammates, activates (it got him a goal). He looks like a modern defenceman, but his judgement of plays, of gaps, of what needs to happen isn't always there. He can problem-solve in tight. Balancing aggressiveness and risk mitigation is difficult for Odelius sometimes. I don't think he's a prospect I will be able to get a clear picture of by the end of the season, unfortunately. The environment distorts his game too much. We will need a lot of collective viewings on him to get close to the truth.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 23rd, 2022

Luleå HF U20 vs Djurgårdens U20 - J20 Nationell

Odelius played big minutes and was a solid defensive player for Djurgården. He moves exceptionally well in all directions, he closes gaps defensively and is a defensive stud when the opponents try to create off the rush. Odelius positioned himself well and looked almost impossible to beat one-on-one as he was active with his stick and had such strong backwards mobility.

Offensively he shows good potential mobility wise. He can skate out with the puck and delivers good first passes, both long and short passes. In the offensive zone he keeps moving and engages in the activity making the coverage for the opposite defence harder. He moves smoothly across the blue line but he also changes position and can attack as a "forward" when his team is pressuring. His puck handling and offensive ability to create with the puck is average though. He was not good at creating or using space in the offensive end and rarely made a deke at the point. His shot was not dangerous either.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 20th, 2021

Mora vs. Djurgårdens - J20 Nationell

Odelius had an interesting showing. He's clearly a very mobile skater with promising skill level with the puck. The best part was how he was able to manoeuvre in tight and find creative solutions under pressure to escape and distribute the puck after retrievals. Scanning habits looked sound as well. On the breakout, he made some odd passing decisions, ie. deciding to pass to a pressured teammate instead of carrying the puck even when he clearly had open space. Accuracy on some of his breakout passes was a bit suspect, too. Offensively, he looked mobile at the point and did a good job at moving the puck on the power play, but contributions at 5-on-5 were a bit limited.

Defensive skating looked good, though he could have killed a few plays with a bit more aggressiveness. Didn't make many bad positional mistakes, though, aside from one badly defended 2-on-1 (jumped the gun and reached for the puck-carrier instead of just sticking to taking away the pass) that resulted in a goal against.

**David St-Louis:** January 13th, 2022

Rögle U20 vs. Djurgårdens U20 - J20 Nationell

Odelius is not necessarily a playmaker from the backend yet, but he does find lanes others don't because he is constantly moving AND pre-scanning for options. His first-touches are impressive; takes them in movement, at his hip pocket... He's engaged in the game and seems to care about the defensive game, making some interceptions, closing on checks in relatively timely ways. There is a lot of work there and we've seen other defencemen from Sweden with that kind of base and the tools explode in more structured and oriented systems at the SHL level in their D+1 and D+2. He's probably a top-45 player in this draft.

**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022

Djurgårdens U20 vs Vasteras U20 - J20 Nationell

Odelius reminds me of Nemeč in a lot of ways, another defenceman who moves on every reception, who attacks counter to feet, who make plays on first touch, who is active and engaged. Just like Nemeč, he moves to move and passes to pass ; sometimes it's good, sometimes it's poor. Defensively, he can be late on reads and overly aggressive, but he also scans for threats and intercepts passes. He is a force at this level, but I wonder how he fares against better competition, when he has to pick his spots to move and won't be creating from such favourable positions as much, like in his assist, where he could gain the half-wall, wait for a puck, and pass it to a completely open teammate net-front. Tools are above-average,



he's engaged, and active. Is he a first-rounder? I still need a better read on his sense.

**Marek Novotný:** December 12th, 2021

Djurgardens U20 vs AIK U20 - J20 Nationell

Calle Odelius had a strong game here. He is a strong skater with impressive passing ability. He was extremely reliable for his team and collected one point with a secondary assist. He was part of the PP unit with a quarterbacking role and he did well there as well. What was impressive was his hockey sense and the way he was able to keep the puck alive in the offensive zone - Odelius seems to know exactly when to step in or out. The Swedish defender was also able to carry the puck from north to south without any problem.

**Marek Novotný:** November 21st, 2021

Djurgardens IF U20 vs Lulea HF U20 - J20 Nationell

Odelius was great. He was again very responsible defensively, played a really confident game with precise passes and smooth puck-moving ability. He collected two assists and had 4 shots on goal. He was not afraid to join the team's rush, showed some nice braking and changed direction when he was under pressure. He was part of both PP and PK units and his situational awareness combined with great vision for finding passing lanes helped his team to score a couple of goals. His quarterbacking role on the PP was strong with the tight and precise work on the blueline. He sees the ice well and makes smart decisions.

**David St-Louis:** November 20th, 2021

Skelleftea U20 vs Djurgardens U20 - J20 Nationell

Odelius is a smooth skater who moves to find lanes, but plays at a generally low pace. He distributes the puck and sees teammates ahead, through defensive layers, but it generally takes him a bit of time to settle the play and find something on regroup. He is capable of quicker passing in the offensive zone, however. His gap was a bit too loose in this game, but generally I liked the defensive habits.

**David St-Louis:** November 19th, 2021

Skelleftea U20 vs Djurgardens U20 - J20 Nationell

So Odélius looks skilled and I think he knows it. He seems to aim to play with flash. There isn't anything wrong with that; it's just that he doesn't always make the most efficient play. His skating looks above-average, his handling looks above-average, and so does his passing. He can quarterback a power play, always taking up space, always activating, passing with poise, attracting defenders, uses teammates, makes some manipulative moves, and takes every puck in movement. Not sure he is a high-end creator but the willingness and the habits seem there. Most of his transition plays this game were either stretch passes or carries, again, flashy. His defensive game was less effortful; lots of puck watching, stick at the hip, puck focused, and his puck management in his zone could improve. He plays with a lot of skill on his team and I think it props up his style a lot more.



**David St-Louis:** November 6th, 2021

Luleå HF vs Djurgårdens IF - SHL

Fun game from Odelius, who finally got some minutes with the big club (8!). His execution failed him at times, but mostly this was a very reassuring performance from him. He showed that he could translate his defensive game across levels; he's still the same aggressive rush defender. The physicality was there, too. He was warped around attackers on the boards, trying his best to separate them from the puck, which he did on more than one occasion. He showed adaptability and confidence in his passing, turning back and looking elsewhere when passing lanes were closed. A very confident performance for someone who never really got to play before that.

**J.D. Burke:** November 6th, 2021

Luleå HF vs Djurgårdens IF - SHL

On the one hand, trying to get a read on an 18-year-old playing in one of the league's top professional settings in the midst of a 7-0 blowout is always going to be a fraught endeavour. On the other hand, full marks to Odelius, who somehow escaped unscathed with an even 0-0 goal differential in all-situations.

Frankly, a really solid performance from Odelius. My only quibble was that he was a bit committing in the neutral zone on one rush that could have been exploited but it ultimately wasn't, so it's all academic. He was constantly scanning in the defensive zone for threats and making proactive plays to disrupt the opposition. Showed real switchability during sustained defensive sequences. Took great lines on puck retrievals, flashed solid puck protection mechanics and elusivity when pressured, and flashed a nice delay game on the breakout. Here's the thing I love about Odelius' game: He doesn't settle for the first option on the breakout. He finds the best option. He's super mobile. What's not to like?

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 23rd, 2021

Timrå IK vs Djurgårdens IF - J20 Nationell

The skating and puck-moving from the back end stands out as excellent. Physically he is well ahead in his age group. He has the technical foundation to improve his skating even more. His play with the puck still is not creative and shows no elite abilities there. The passing and control of the puck is good, but he is not strong on the power play for example.

He reads the defensive side of the game well and plays solidly, especially with closing gaps and working with his stick. His defensive game is physical when needed too. He is good at retrieving the puck and to start an attack. When he has the chance he likes to join the attack but does play over his head. I can see a high floor in Odelius' game, but not a high ceiling. A solid bottom pair defenseman in the modern game. A good middle round draft pick.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 22nd, 2021

Timrå IK vs Djurgårdens IF - J20 Nationell

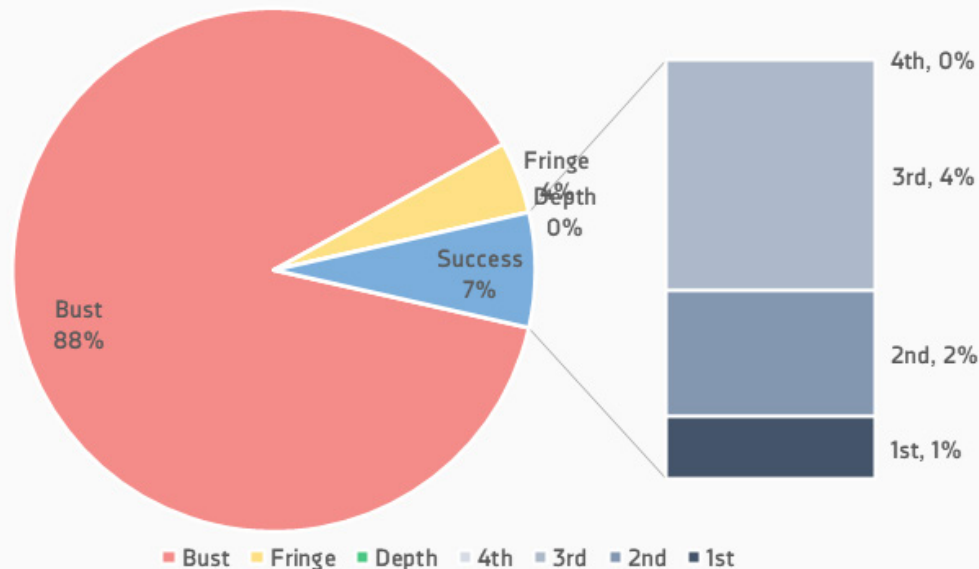
Odelius' best asset is his skating. I would rank it as elite in potential. He moves well in all directions, particularly north-to-south. He has a long powerful stride and good lower body balance. His backwards skating is good too and tough to beat at junior level as he can close gaps effectively and easily skate with the forwards.

Odelius is a good handler of the puck. His passing skills are good and can move the puck well. He does not possess elite puck skills or a creative standout. He can combine good skating technique with good puck control and transports the puck effectively.

Odelius' hockey sense is average. He understands the game and reads the situations adequately. He acts on the play and makes stuff happen. When the game is on the move, in either direction he reads it well and shows good timing in the situations. When the game is standing still he can get impatient and also lose his awareness at times. With the puck on his stick he does not show elite vision and get himself into trouble.

## Calle Odelius 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



Odelius competes well and uses both his body and stick in an effective way to defend.

Odelius is a good puck mover and strong skater but he does not stand out in either his offense or defense in an elite way. I do not see a future top pair defenseman, maybe more of 4-6 defenseman thanks to his skating abilities and other foundational puck handling traits.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 12th, 2021

Färjestads BK - Djurgårdens IF - SHL

Calle played as the team's seventh defenceman. He got ice-time in two periods and a total of 03:44 min in the game. You cannot draw any big conclusions from that of course.

Odelius shows strong skating. I would grade it as elite in potential. He skates with a long effective stride and he skates fast with ease. He got first to the puck in his battles for loose pucks. He moves well in all directions.

His few puck touches were simple plays. He moves his head well and reads the situations. He was in on a goal against where he was a bit slow to detect the danger as a player snuck in on the inside of him and tipped in a goal.

All in all, Odelius showed awareness on the ice, he competed well but what stands out with him is his skating. The question mark during this draft year will be to see if his overall hockey sense and puck skills can live up to the elite potential in his skating.

**J.D. Burke:** August 4th, 2021

Sweden U18 vs. Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Another really, really strong performance from Odelius. His command of the game in transition is undeniable. Stacks

deception onto his first touch, evades secondary pressure, and skates the puck out untouched with such ease. If there's a play to be made with a stretch pass, then Odelius is going to find a way to make it happen. Connected on a few such two-line passes in this contest. Defended really well in space, with a tight gap, not overcommitting, problem solving against numbers. Kept opponents to the outside in space. Defended well in body-on-body situations. I'm not sure Odelius brings enough to the table offensively to be a high, high pick, but I'm also curious as to whether his neutral zone playmaking can translate to the offensive zone with careful development.

**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

Sweden U18 vs. USA U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

On a star-studded Swedish blue line, Odelius was by far the best defenceman donning the Tre Kronor in this contest. He looked the part of a first-round pick in this contest. The defining component of Odelius' game is undoubtedly his transitional value. Odelius shoulder-checks for options going into each retrieval, sends false signals to the forecheckers before he's collected the puck, and makes smart plays with the puck once he's secured possession. The one thing that really stuck out to me in this contest was the way that Odelius would work through his reads like a quarterback scanning for receivers downfield. He didn't take the first option available to him but the best one, every time, and had the confidence to get the puck through sticks and bodies to move the puck up-ice. Wasn't afraid to use the middle of the ice. Plays with pace. Showed some deception from the offensive blue line to create passing lanes. Just a stellar performance.



16  
Rank

5  
Skating

6  
Shooting

6.5  
Passing

A  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

6  
Hockey Sense

6.5  
Physical

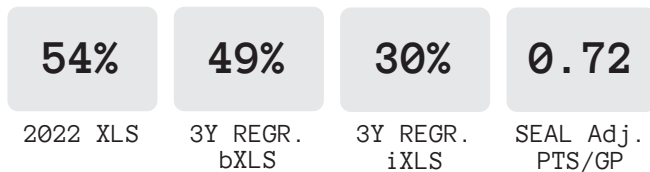
# OWEN PICKERING

D | SWIFT CURRENT BRONCOS

HEIGHT 6'5" D.O.B. JAN. 27, 2004  
WEIGHT 179 SHOOTS LEFT

"The way he can get back and retrieve the puck while under pressure is really impressive. He can maintain possession around a tight net turn or shake the forechecker with a quick cut back and a few quick strides for separation. He has NHL-level retrieval ability already." - Western Conference scout in March 2022

SHADES OF: Travis Sanheim



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	62	9	24	33
WJC-18	4	0	2	2

## Scouting Report

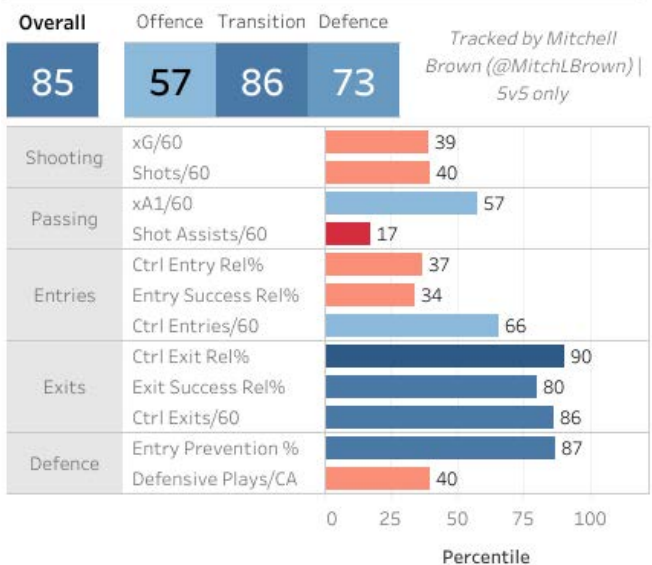
You don't draft players for what they are as 18-year-olds but for what they'll one day become as fully formed NHLers. This is especially true of Owen Pickering, who is as raw an A-grade prospect as you'll find in this year's draft.

The tools are formidable. The Swift Current Broncos defender is a 6-foot-5 puck-moving, two-way defenceman with plus-level hands, passing skill, and sense. There's a lot to work with here.

That profile makes him a pretty capable transition piece. Pickering rated in the 85th percentile by the transitional data that Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown tracked from his draft year, a combination of zone entry and exit inputs. Here's what Brown had to say of Pickering's breakout ability ahead of the 2022 U18 World Hockey Championships.

"The core of Pickering's game is what he does with the puck. On retrievals, he deceives, cuts back, then sprints to the inside. With head fakes and changes of pace, he misdirects forecheckers and then hits a teammate up the ice. When he's not leading the rush, he's joining it. And that activation interacts with his projectable shot and exciting

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 161.9



playmaking flashes."

You'll note that we haven't included Pickering's skating stride as part of his transitional skill set. That's one tool that remains a work in progress, though, that's to be expected for a 6-foot-5 18-year-old, especially one that's grown 10 inches (10!) in the last three seasons.

"I missed the last couple of months of the previous year..." Pickering told Elite Prospects Dir. of Film Scouting Cam Robinson. "Just kind of growth spurt stuff -- knee issues, back [issues]."

His pivots are still a bit clumsy, and his high stance limits his explosiveness. There just isn't much hip engagement there. Hope for improvement lies in the fact that he's still a solid 30-plus or so pounds away from his NHL playing weight, and as he adds that muscle, we anticipate his skating form will take a turn for the better. For now, it's a slight weakness, one that impacts his handling and separation ability with the puck.

That fact doesn't seem to put a damper on Pickering's enthusiasm for activating into the play at every opportunity. It seems like he's at the centre of everything whenever he

steps onto the ice, and the up-tempo, freewheeling style of the Broncos' system doesn't exactly rein him in.

The same sense and play-reading ability that makes Pickering an effective player in the offensive zone applies in his own zone, too. He anticipates developing plays well and makes proactive moves to cut them off before they can develop. And his range grants him exceptional corrective ability.

You're probably looking at a long-term developmental project with Pickering, but the payoff could be pretty sweet. Everything is there for him to develop into a well-rounded, all situations top-four defenceman at the NHL level. Perhaps better if he lands in the right spot.

That makes him one of the first round's wildcards, and a candidate to go a fair bit higher than where we have him ranked.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Brent Seabrook YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 91%	2 Mark Pysyk YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 90%	3 Kevin Young YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 90%	4 Dustin Byfuglien YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 89%	5 Andrew Downing YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 89%
6 Travis Hamonic YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 89%	7 Troy Rutkowski YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 88%	8 Eric Doyle YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 88%	9 Ryan Button YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 88%	10 Brayden McNabb YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 88%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 28th, 2022

Finland vs. Canada - U18s

A good showing overall from Pickering, but he's still very raw. He lacks the finer details and mechanics that would make his game work smoothly. His cutbacks lacks depth; he can't separate. He has deception; but not the skating to get to the right spots to use it. He has range; but lacks the finer angling and risk management techniques (it partly cost Canada a goal). But he tries to make the right plays and he can work the walls decently well. He stole the puck off a Finland forward at some point in the game by reaching with his stick and then absorbed a hit to make a reverse breakout pass.

**J.D. Burke:** April 26th, 2022

Canada vs. Czechia - U18s

This tournament really isn't doing any wonders for Pickering's stock. He's struggling to move the puck under pressure, consistently getting beat wide in space defensively, and not really showing much of anything exciting in the offensive zone. Has done relatively well during sustained in-zone defensive sequences, scanning regularly, picking up his man off-the-puck, and faring well in body-on-body defensive situations. Needs to take better care of the puck and show a little more creativity as a puck-carrier and in the offensive

zone. He's honestly looked more like a Day 2 pick than a first-rounder in this tournament.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

Not the best game for Pickering in terms of performance, but I don't really care. The projectable elements showed up again: the elusiveness at times off the rush, the fast puck movements, the problem-solving on breakouts, and the activations from the point... He defended a couple of 2-on-1s well and his rush defence in general was quite good and is physical. He lacks the finer edge work to escape along the walls on retrievals, can't skate fake and explode away. The defensive anticipation shows up, too, still.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Pickering has the play of the game. He came around the net, stepped inside, faked the pass to the boards, then sent a rocket up the ice for a three-line breakaway assist. Made a couple of slick short-range passes on breakouts, but this was mostly a concerning performance from Pickering with the puck. He mis-timed his passes or missed his target altogether. Still way too reliant on dump-ins given his skill;

he could attack the offensive zone and create with far more success. No playmaker or notable skill shown. Just simple plays from the point, although his ability to manage space and draw defenders on the powerplay should translate to 5-on-5 as the skating improves. Defensively, his corrective ability remains low. But taking more aggressive positioning in the neutral zone. He anticipates plays in 1-on-1 situations. In more complex situations, he concedes ground and plays a reactionary style. Still, he's getting better. Lots of individual skills that will benefit from being linked together. He's probably a top-20 pick for us.

**David St-Louis:** March 19th, 2022

Medicine Hat Tigers vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

The skating is still quite poor for Pickering but the form is projectable. The upper-body is straight as he handles the puck, creating a stable pocket; he uses crossovers, can shift his weight fully from leg to leg, and shows some agility. The quickness and speed is a bit of a problem, but will improve with more strength. The ankle flexion is not even that bad. The body proportions will always make him a bit of an awkward looking skater at times, but I think he can get close to NHL average. The offensive game could become high-end, as he recognizes advantages, vulnerable defenders, and knows how to manipulate them, how to move their stick away and turn their feet. He uses deception very well to hide his plays but sometimes a bit overly so, sending the puck inaccurately. He tries to hit the better option.

Defensively, he's active and ahead of the play most of the time and he knows how to compensate for his lack of mobility at this point. I'm confident in him and think he's worth the top-15 pick even if the team, even if there is risk and the team that drafts him might end up with nothing in the end. Pickering has top-pair potential.

**David St-Louis:** February 26th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Pickering spent much of the game defending. The skating was an issue, but a lesser one in this contest than others, as the Ice were mostly cycling the play around the defensive zone. Pickering could use his stick to knock pucks away from opponents ; he didn't have to try and dance with them off the rush, as much. His stick work is really a positive in his defence: He hides its length which makes attackers think they have more space than they do in reality, which allows him deceptive pokechecks. And he also anticipates passes and puck movements.

He moves and strikes preemptively, at times, which is a great sign for his NHL projection. Once again, if his skating

improve, it will free his whole game. Offensively, he showed he could manipulate feet, use teammates to improve plays and scoring chances, and slide away from defenders to create new passing lanes. He's decently agile. Pickering was also physical in this game. The high-stance prevents him from really controlling opponents on the boards.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 11th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

For the most part, Pickering's breakouts have really come along this season. He still makes the odd questionable play (off battle wins, especially, pointing to some concern about his foresight), but he beats defenders with changes of direction, deception, and pace. Draws the F1, gets them on his back, attacks the middle. As soon as he gets the red line, he loses those skills. It just turns into a barrage of dump-ins. Although, he joined the rush and set-up a cross-slot chance while staring down his defender. He has the skill. Defensively, he's much better than earlier in the year. He takes more aggressive positioning, stays on his check off-puck, and gets stops by anticipating the attacker's next move. Not a proactive defender or problem-solver by any stretch. Freezes when he's faced with a half-ice 2-on-1. Lacks the pivoting and mobility to recover. Gambles in many single variable situations by lunging or committing his weight. Still not sure what to make of him. Skating has to improve a ton, but he already has skating skills, even though his upper body always follows his lower body. Flashes of high-end intelligence and puck skills. That's probably a top-15 pick in this draft, isn't it?

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

The best of the draft eligible players in this game, Pickering's defence was notably tighter and more proactive than in previous viewings. Established his gap early before angling out the attacker. Defensive skating lacks proactivity and explosiveness, but he's far better at making smaller, less committing movements to maintaining momentum now. Off-puck awareness isn't a strength, but he consistently tries to eliminate threats. Combination of length and mobility suggests he'd have serious corrective ability, but he struggles in recovery situations - he over-extends sometimes, doesn't bother engaging others. He's all but abandoned the manipulative playmaking and delay game that made him so fascinating early in the season. Now, he's a shooter who misses the best play and a somewhat tepid puck carrier beyond the occasional shake pressure -> step inside -> activate breakout sequence. He gives up on plays too early. He'll go high because he's tall, coordinated, and athletic, regardless

## Owen Pickering 2021-22 WHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 34 || Base XLS: 55% || Impact XLS: 31% || XPR: 29.3 || Drafted Pct: 85%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



of his offensive growth. Smart development staff could help him become a legitimately creative, manipulative transition threat. Many NHL teams might just help become a tall shut-down defender who can play it safe and blast pucks on PP2.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 28th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

I want to believe, but Pickering's not doing the things that made him so fascinating early in the season. There are still the occasional slick retrievals, the cross-ice passing, middle lane use, the rush activation, and willingness to lead the rush. But he doesn't use space. Dump-ins with ample space to attack first, failed passes because he rushes the play when he has space, and so on. The offence has almost completely dried up beyond the rush activation. He's a shooter now – forget about those manipulative playmaking sequences from earlier in the year.

Still deceptive with the puck if given space, usually on the PP. Don't see how it translates to the NHL without significant improvement. The defence is much better, but still an issue. He chases, loses his check, engages at the wrong times, engages poorly, and concedes his group too easily. Other issues can be linked to a lack of strength – like when he does the right thing to eliminate the attacker's feet but then

loses the battle anyway because he can't secure the attacker along the boards. Improving his lower body strength likely opens up new skating techniques for him, which will level up the retrievals, but he still must learn how to establish body positioning while skating back for the puck. Probably more of an early-second at this stage, but bet the house on him going top-15.

**Cam Robinson:** January 22nd, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Lethbridge Hurricanes - WHL

A lot to like from Pickering in this one. He was showing his creativity on the breakout on a number of occasions – not always to success but he was trying high-level plays. There was one retrieval where he came back and had the forechecker right on his hip pocket. He threw a perfectly timed shimmy-fake and cutback to be completely free and made the outlet. Grabbed a primary helper by walking into a wrist shot fake, subtle angle change and getting it on net. Rebound out and in. Led the PP rushes showing the long stride and then opening up 10-2 to send the hard back pass for entry. Of course, some of his rush attempts were thwarted, but none cost him as he tied up the stick or got back to angle off.

The length, the skating, the confidence. You see NHL skills



on display and know there is a ton of refinement to come. Hopefully he goes to a club that nurtures his upside and doesn't try to lock him a box.

**David St-Louis:** December 17th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Edmonton Oil Kings - WHL

Pickering is a hard player to grasp. He's the kind of defence-man that you need to watch 20-40 times to accurately gauge his projection. His skating is a bit of a problem (high-stance, pivots...) but at the same time, he's quite agile. What is it going to look like in a few years with strength development and hopefully some work with a skating coach? Maybe a 5 or NHL average. Right now, however, if he gets beat, he lacks the speed out of turns or pivots to catch up to the play. He doesn't have great recovery tools. Most of his mistakes in this game were more due to a lack of awareness than poor skating. Offensively, he showed his passing ability; he moves to create new passing lanes and seems to have some anticipation of plays that will open.

**Cam Robinson:** December 15th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

I should've read Mitch's report before watching this game because peeee-yew! This was not a good showing. Pickering was upright and ineffectual throughout. He was caught extending poke checks haphazardly and exposing himself to simple dekes. He was constantly giving up too much space on entries. He tried few of the fun, deceptive plays we've come to see from him - even when they don't work, I like to see him try. Perhaps just an off night, but it was really off.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Worst viewing of Pickering so far - probably one of the worst viewings I've had from a top prospect this season. He was awful in pretty much every facet, although Swift Current spent most of the game defending. His passive gap led to him getting beat a bunch. While he's tall and mobile, he struggles to recover on plays because he sets his feet when engaging. Scanned on retrievals and did his usual deception, but was easily stopped. In one sequence, he just waved his stick over the puck with no toe-cap deception - he was easily stripped. Still, he activated, nearly connected with a pass into the slot (too late to make the read), and killed a play or two very early. The moments of experimentation seem to be slowing, and he looks worse because of it.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Pickering's clearly improving. He's increasingly less reliant on individual skill. He draws players towards him and then passes instead of trying to deke through the next layer. He manipulates incoming pressure but uses his reach instead of trying to deke through them. He shifts his weight with shocking fluidity, and uses the inside regularly. Looks for cross-ice passing options, and usually delays at the right times, too. Some eye deception to hit an open target, too. His pinches are just as frequent but better timed, allowing him to extend OZP seemingly every shift. Regular rush activation, and once engaged, he stays in. Mechanically refined shooter generating downforce by kicking out his leg and elevating his top elbow parallel to his shoulder. Some limitations remain: a poor first-touch killed a HD pass, he lacks creativity after activity, and takes too many no-chance shots with better options. This was tracking to be the best defensive game I've seen from him. Tighter NZ gap allowed him to stop a couple of Bedard rushes, Has some trouble engaging around the net, but was at least positioned to actually try. Grabbed some stops with his length, too. Then, he was faced with a 1-on-1 that started off well, but nearly fell multiple times while heel pushing - chance against. His mind was in the right place, but that's a solid reminder of how much further he has when it comes to skating. He's likely a first-rounder, perhaps in the bottom portion of our first round, but I'm sure teams will see him as a clear-cut top-15 pick. Top-four upside, but it's a really a projection of a projection.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 23rd, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Swift Current got crushed in this game, despite spending the whole game on the PP. Pickering was fine. Defensively, he's still reactionary, but manages to get stops by stepping up in the NZ (not exactly translatable) with the odd proper defensive skating sequence. He bobbled pucks, forced passes, and failed on many dangle attempts. Still, there was the awareness of backpressure, the deception, and the well-timed delays/changes of pace. He clearly understands how to create space up the ice, even if his rushing game's very individualistic. It's just one skill, but I've only seen that from a few other draft eligibles. Similarly, he uses look offs to deceive and sometimes manipulate pressure; he's very advantage focused, but he doesn't how to make the most of it. He's more of a skilled skater than a sound one, which his stride lacking hip engagement -- but his awareness of what skating technique/skill to use and when is strong. Not much offence beyond some low-percentage shots. A player took a run at his teammate, so Pickering punched him in the shoulderpads a bunch of times. The transition skill and

activation probably make him a first-rounder, but he'll likely go higher than where we'll rank him.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Prince Albert Raiders vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

This was a bad game for Pickering, PPG with a catch-and-release wrister notwithstanding. He didn't get much time in OZP. Some of that's team-related, but much of it was his own doing. I didn't see the same level of retrieval deception and awareness of pressure that I saw in previous games. Instead, he was content to rim the puck to low-value options and avoid the middle. Without pressure, he still did the usual stuff: delay to bait pressure, step inside, and try to beat the next layer. The hands remain fluid, but he turned the puck over several times by overestimating his space. More dump-and-chase focused in the NZ -- a real shame given how he was playing in October. Defensively, he's all reactionary right now. Many of his reactions are good. He breaks up plays with length and mobility, intercepts passes, and runs players into the boards. He's too committing (a product of the lack of proactivity), and is prone to getting beat by shiftier attackers. Off-puck, he's active but often chasing his check. I didn't see the first-round-calibre prospect I saw earlier. I hope he doesn't keep playing it safe going forward. Experimentation leads to development, and he needs a lot of it.

**David St-Louis:** November 12th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

I have no idea what to think of Pickering. He's all over the place in a good and bad way. His skating looks like more of a weakness than a strength at this stage, but he's 6'5" and 40 pounds lighter than he should be. Some kinks are expected, like the lack of ankle flexion. My main problems with his game are low in the defensive zone, his ability to switch from threat to threat, take away sticks, and then retrieve and move pucks. He lacks elusiveness and quickness in short races and a bit of awareness. He passed to covered teammates a couple of times, but also had sequences where he attracted pressure on himself or skated up to it, turned feet and created runways for others. Not sure what to think of the offensive game. He activates and moves laterally. He has some agility when he can retain speed and he looks like a creative player, but the sample size was too small in this game to really evaluate him. He scored on a fluke play, got hit on the boards, fell to the ice, and when he came back up, he was alone at the far-post for a one-timer.

**David St-Louis:** November 6th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Lethbridge Hurricanes - WHL

There are still some mobility and awareness limitations in Pickering's game. He can't really escape forecheckers on retrievals but he tries anyway. I appreciate the effort and the confidence, but he takes wrong angles to pucks, his skate fakes don't make anyone bite (because he is not a real threat to explode in any direction), and his awareness remains limited. He goes into those situations mostly blind, anticipating options more than knowing them. He is better on regroup, with options in front of him. He changes the angle on passes, reaches teammates, looks through layers. Offensively, he surprises high defenders when they skate at him, with some weight shift fake and step around, but there is no plan there. Pickering goes down ice and then figures it out.

I have some doubt about his hockey sense, but at the same time, I like his activation reads; he doesn't overskate but moves to the right spot at the right spot to become an option and he had one sequence in particular on the powerplay half-wall that suggest high-level manipulation skills. The shot-fake into pass across is typical in this situation, but Pickering committed fully to his misdirection, making the entire other team bite. Defensively, he tries. His range is useful in rush defence, he tries to stop opponents before the blue-line, but his pivot are made with two-feet, and I'm not sure how effective he is at backward strides. He might be a 5-skater, but I don't like his general form. He reacts late to coverage switches and help situation defensively; he is puck focused, takes poor angles to attackers, but can somewhat identify passing lanes.

Overall, he is an incredibly difficult player to project. He requires a ton of work. I wonder how much physical maturity will fix in his game. How does he look as a player when he weighs 210 pounds and not 179. The hockey sense is probably a 5.5-6 at best for me right now. He has above-average passing skills and the size demands a higher physical grade. Lots to think about. His projection is all about playing connect the dots, but you can only expect so much development unless he lands in a top organization.

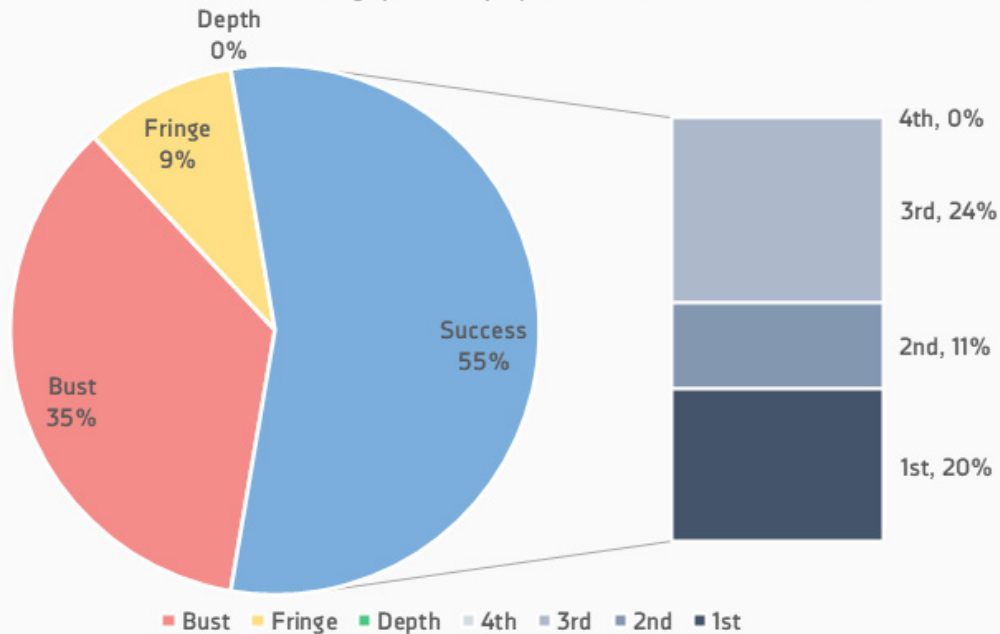
**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Regina Pats - WHL

In a full-game viewing, Pickering doesn't pop quite as much. Most of his teammates do similar things -- step inside, join the rush, lots of experimentation -- he just does it better. He relentlessly attacks the inside for the breakout, and he has the awareness to do it at the next level: get pressure on his back, keep it there, and look away from his passing target. Deceives back pressure with different cuts and turns to prepare space. Accelerates out of passes, lots of cross-ice reads, highly patient and uses handling skills to beat players

## Owen Pickering 2021-22 WHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



when necessary. Terrific touch and feel for the puck, and some handling ability in-tight, even if he's not the most mechanically sound. Tons of potential just as a puck-mover. Offensively, he's just experimenting. Some advanced shooting mechanics after stepping into space; manages space well and deceives on the PP consistently. But he's still figuring out timing, pace, and how to make the best play. Defensively, he was a total mess. Passive gap, got deked through and around several times, and very reactionary. He gets stops through mobility and reach, not through positioning. Skating's very inconsistent but doesn't have a ton of mechanical warts. Achieves proper posture and depth at times, but it's clear he lacks strength. He's a frustrating player but one with immense upside because of his high-end transition habits and skill flashes. I like him as a first-rounder, even if it requires some imagination.

**Daniel Gee:** October 29th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs Regina Pats - WHL

This was a pretty wild experience packed in one viewing for Owen Pickering. He's unpredictable, manipulative, pushes constant advantages, and is frankly prone to go nuclear at any moment for the better or worse. It's defcon-one when Pickering participates in sustained offensive pressure sequences. A very dynamic lateral mover, who blends handling, excessive body manipulations, and activations, Pickering has a lot of fun habits that should translate to higher levels. In the third particularly, he had shift-after-shift of manipulations at the top of the point, looking-off passes, activating back-door with his stick set. I love his dotted-line habits -- constantly

working the puck from the perimeter to the boards, wildly incorporating hesitations, shoulder shimmies, and fake shots to break down defenders -- he frankly spams manipulations. He scans for pass lanes constantly, but couldn't get the options he wanted in this game. It feels like he should have created more out of these habits. In transition Pickering is just as unpredictable but similarly manipulative. He's an active rush-joiner off-puck and will go as far as setting up in the crease if that's what will draw defenders away from the puck carrier. He drove the middle extremely well on a rush in the first.

Pickering incorporates all the body manipulations and hesitations on puck as he head-mans power play breakouts into Swift Current drop-off entry play. This large-ice maneuverability is sure something to behold with his 6-foot-5 frame. On a powerplay shift in the second, he executed a significant pace increase through his linear crossovers, dumping and winning the retrieval race on his own puck before he got leveled in the corner. Transitional passing is a bit of a different story. While Pickering has two-touch ability, scans on his retrievals to mental map teammates whereabouts, he lacks some layering ability. His most egregious sequence was a near-corner retrieval (which he scanned), sending a really bad pass up the middle of the ice that was intercepted and eventually put back in his net as he failed to identify a tertiary threat under duress.

Pickering had some stand-out defensive sequences however. Multiple pokecheck plays leveraging his reach, nullified a couple of Bedard chances in the slot. On one shift in particular, he challenged Bedard in the slot, reading a pass and stick

checking the forward as he went to release. His mobility and penchant to push pressure makes him so hard to deal with because of the size-blend he possesses. Reads rebounds and pounces on pucks quickly. Transitional defending needs a tonne of work -- poor pinch reads had him turned and beat -- one play in the first lead to a 3-on-1. Was very passive with his body and stick; doesn't leverage his reach and physical profile at all while defending rush attackers who remain wide. He made an insanely poor choice pinching in the neutral zone on a puck Bedard was grabbing, ended up conceding his lane immediately.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Calgary Hitmen vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

Owen Pickering went to the Egor Zamula hockey school. He doesn't have a care in the world out there. I respect it a lot. Sometimes, he gets overzealous as a handler or passes to an impossible-to-hit target, but most of his transition plays are positive. And his details -- wait for pressure to arrive, get it on his back, step inside, pass through pressure -- should help him start making the best play as his skill develops. Nearly made a couple of passes in motion, and consistently accelerated out his pass to join the rush. Shot's a plus for sure: Hands in front, top elbow elevated, powers through shot. Dangerous off the pass reception, too. Consistently has the right amount of patience and activity with pressure -- he spins away, spins towards, delays, and dekes at the right times. A couple of notable skill flashes to get inside from the boards in the OZ and create. Distributes effectively on the PP through space management and deception (steps in before making the pass, slip passes). Defensively, he's mixed. He's too passive given his tools and struggles to load his pivots. Loses check behind/around him in DZC and NZD sequences, but his length and mobility gives him legitimate corrective ability. He's more disruptive than a play-killer, but the potential to become the latter's certainly there. Skating has ankle flexion but lacks a bit of hip engagement. Heel kick, but most of his extensions are situationally adequate. More skilled than explosive with punch turn, cuts, crossovers, etc. that are almost adequate for the next level. I think he's definitely a projectable 5-grade skater if not higher. I see top-4 upside, but it definitely requires an active imagination.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 17th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

One doesn't have to be a rocket surgeon to see the appeal

of Owen Pickering: He's 6'5" with skating projectable to NHL average, at least. He lacks a bit of lower body flexion, but he's ahead of most players at this stage. Completes more strides when possible, recovers with a bit of kicking but nothing extreme, and high crossover integration. Closes space fast on players; he will have legitimate corrective ability at the next level. Physical at the wrong times, but it's clear he wants to punish. He's a bit too passive through the NZ, sometimes defends nothing, and concedes the outside too easily. But the exciting part of his game is what he does in transition. He's rarely forced into dump-outs, preferring outwaits or turning away from pressure until he generates a head of steam. Flashes of a manipulative/deceptive mindset but nothing concrete. Consistently uses the inside in transition, and then activates to become a return pass option. Significant difficulty connecting plays, however. Handling-wise, he's fluid with some top-hand freedom and touch, but only handles in rhythm with his feet. Mechanically sound shooter, including an advanced curl-and-drag shot off the pass. Nothing here that screamed legitimate top-four defender, but he's a solid bet to become a No. 5. Lots of potential to develop new skills with tools and mindset.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 16th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Pickering checks of a ton of boxes for a modern defence-man. He activates into the play constantly through in-motion passes, deceives forecheckers, highly patiently with the puck, uses the inside and cross-ice passing options, gets pressure on back on retrievals and deceives, and he clearly wants to be involved in every play. Handles in rhythm with his feet but shows some ability to manipulate defenders through weight shifts and look offs. In one rush sequence, he deked pressure, lost the puck, stole it back, and tried a cross-slot look off slip pass to a teammate through layers -- it nearly connected. Hands in front with distance between feet -- puck explodes his stick. Cuts off back pressure and establishes body positioning. Has some play connecting issues (lots of missed passes), but the ideas are usually sound. Skating lacks refinement but he has skills (double cuts, punch turns, weight shifts, crossovers) that will be bolstered by improved lower body engagement. Too passive through the NZ. Some corrective ability through length and mobility but he's late on his check far too often. Committing footwork down low. Not physical. Lots of potential here. Looks like a late-first-type pick.



17  
Rank

4  
Skating

5  
Shooting

6.5  
Passing

A  
Grade

6.5  
Puckhandling

6  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# CONOR GEEKIE

C | WINNIPEG ICE

HEIGHT 6'4" D.O.B. MAY 5, 2004  
WEIGHT 205 SHOOTS LEFT

"I don't think he'll be that scoring power forward that teams covet so much, but he projects as a really smart two-way guy for me. Feet pretty obviously need improvement. If he can sort those out, he'll be a quality player for a long time."

- Eastern Conference scout in May 2022

SHADES OF: Ryan Johansen

59%

2022 XLS

52%

3Y REGR. bXLS

41%

3Y REGR. iXLS

1.31

SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	63	24	46	70

## Scouting Report

There was a time this season when Conor Geekie looked like a contender to crack the top-five in this year's draft. He may still get there. It only takes one team, after all. But it's far from a foregone conclusion, and even the top-10 may be out of reach at this stage.

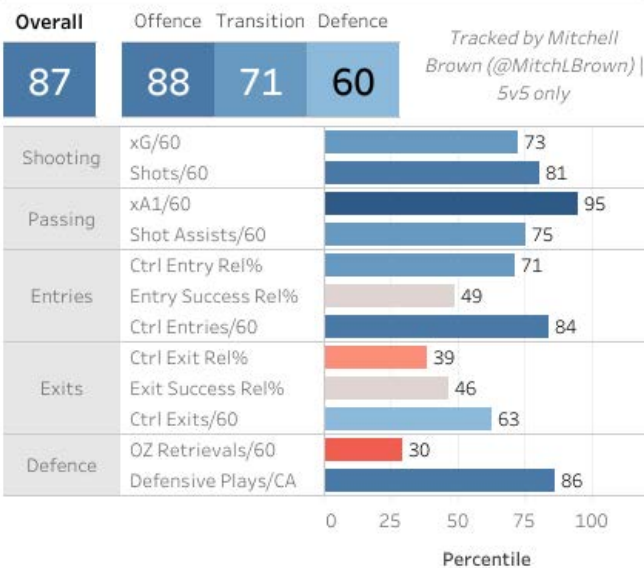
You can probably attribute some of that to the play of those who've passed him. There's been a lot of movement in his range, and I would describe his place on a shifting board more as other players rising rather than Geekie falling. Sure, he cooled off as the season went on, capping it off with a sub-point per game performance in the playoffs, but we'd hardly say that his game fell off. Not by any means.

The reality is that we came to view Geekie's projection as more of a two-way middle-six centre at the NHL level than a top-six power forward. For a group that covets upside, there just wasn't any way to justify placing him any higher on our board because of it.

Now, this isn't to suggest that the 6-foot-4 pivot is inept with the puck. There's some legitimate skill here, and it just may scale up to the NHL, too.

Geekie's hands are easily the best part of his offensive

Games Tracked: 12 | Minutes Tracked: 194.3



toolkit, with technique, precision, speed, agility, and range as a handler. It's just not often that you see a 6-foot-4 skater pull off some of the handling moves that graced his draft year highlight-reel.

The problem is that the Strathclair-born pivot relies far too frequently on that skill, defaulting to a handling ma-

oeuvre in the face of any defensive pressure. There's some small area passing skill there as well, but far too often, the move was to try and swashbuckle his way past problems. Only compounding matters is that so many of these dangles occur in a glide.

The more projectable component of Geekie's offensive profile is his playmaking, small area or otherwise. He has a knack for identifying passing options through layers and has the skill as a passer to connect, almost always with pace. It's not a high-end NHL projection, but it will be sufficient to put up points at a respectable clip in the big leagues all the same.

More than anything, though, we're drawn to the Ice centre's two-way game; his ability to play high-leverage minutes, kill

penalties, and make life miserable for the opposition's best. He's a strong off-puck defender, who tracks well through the neutral zone and makes proactive reads in the defensive third. In close quarters defensive sequences, Geekie takes good lines on the puck, leads with his stick, closes with force, and doesn't give up on plays.

You bank on that defensive projection, and then you work from there with Geekie. In the right hands, with a development staff that adds an extra gear as a skater and more discretion as a handler, perhaps a top-six projection is within reach. For now, we see him as more of a high-end middle-six player at the NHL level.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Brayden Schenn YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 94%	2 Scott Glennie YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 93%	3 Scottie Upshall YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 92%	4 Duncan Milroy YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 91%	5 Jarret Stoll YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 90%
6 Mark McNeill YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 90%	7 Devin Setoguchi YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 89%	8 Brandon Dubinsky YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY: 88%	9 Scott Hartnell YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 88%	10 Peter Mueller YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 88%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 13th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

Geekie had a few moments. He attacked the inside to set up teammates, found space off-puck, and disrupted a ton of plays on the back as normal. I still don't see much board play or puck protection from him. Weirdly, I thought he was better at it last season. In this game, the mechanical limitations appeared in transition. He got locked to the boards, trying to outrace because he can't cut back to the inside. In the NHL, defenders will pressure him earlier and dispossess him immediately. He needs to start cutting back or even just delaying. He's more of a potential middle-six forward, likely 3C projection.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 11th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

A skilled, but somewhat quiet performance from Geekie. Early on, he fired off an in-stride wrister off the pass. Cool play. Connected with an open-ice one-touch pass for an assist. Attacked the middle off the boards, primarily using his hands to deke around pressure. Hand skill helps him access passing lanes under defenders' sticks. Confident attacks groups. Didn't see any projectable physical game in this outing. He doesn't try get and keep defenders on his back anymore. He's mostly an open-ice attacker with skating limitations. Stride looks a bit better than earlier in this season, with better ankle dorsiflexion and subsequently

more hip flexion. Full extensions when necessary. Stance becomes worse as soon as he's not deep in his stride, which limits the speed generated through his crossovers, turns, and control on his edges. The defence continues to be strong. He gets above the puck, anticipates switches of coverage, and if he's poorly positioned, he knocks down tricky passes and pickpockets the puck carrier. Not a needle-moving performance. He'll be a 10-20 player for us, but will likely go higher. That's justifiable.

**David St-Louis:** April 16th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Regina Pats - WHL

A great game from Geekie. I especially appreciated his ability to make plays off the walls, quick passes to his teammates in the middle. The puck protection mechanics aren't there yet, fully there at least, but he can get out of those situations with his soft handling skills instead. Projectable. The defensive game was still relatively on point. The manipulation ability and adaptability one-on-one (one lane closed by a stick; he opens up another one) and one ability that I didn't appreciate as much before: his predictability. Geekie goes to the right areas, all the time. Teammates know what to expect from him and this is something that will serve him at all level. His off-puck game has improved a bit, but his timing is still a bit off; he lags behind certain more complex rotations.

**Cam Robinson:** April 15th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Regina Pats - WHL

A strong showing from Geekie in this one. He starting this off for the ICE by tracking down a loose puck behind the net and with two defenders converging on him, he made a quick move in, then out and slide a slip pass to Benson out front for the goal. Really high-end hands/vision/touch play from the big man. He put the game away later in the frame with a curl and drag wrister on the PP. He was winning draws, getting in on the forecheck, lifting sticks and being more assertive. The skating is still too upright but it may be incrementally better than earlier on in the year. Pace was better for stretches but can still stop moving his feet a lot. One thing is certain, he has excellent hands and can make complex plays while under duress.

**David St-Louis:** February 26th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs Winnipeg ICE - WHL

This was a really quiet game from Geekie apart from his first shift, the tip goal. But there were glimpses of his skills: his ability to steal pucks on the backcheck with his range, his physicality, and passing game. His manipulation is much more on point with Savoie. The timing of his plays is informed by the movements of defenders; they're not scripted. He holds fakes until opponents commits and then moves on to his real play.

I sometimes forget that Geekie is one of the youngest players in the draft and probably has more development runway. I'm a bit more confident that he could turn into a top-9 forward than at the start of the season.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 21st, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Edmonton Oil Kings - WHL

Savoie and Geekie are opposites right now. Savoie's doing very little as he falls back onto untranslatable habits, while Geekie seems to be a making a conscious effort to improve and diversify his game, while maintaining the flashes of high-end skill. On the power play, he dangled off the boards then set up a scoring chance, worked a give-and-go for a chance of his own, and deceived before passing. He's a skilled, aware passer across the offensive zone, limited only by his mechanics (that prevent from him truly manipulating defenders, as much as he tries). His timing on the backhand and touch on the forehand should make him a better playmaker as he gets stronger. There are forced plays, turnovers, and poor off-puck offence sequences, but they continue to decrease in volume. Lately, he's looked like a better prospect than Savoie. More mistake prone, but that's the consequence of actually trying plays. He's

understands manipulation, deception, and altering timing to connect – he doesn't fall into the same play patterns like Savoie. Scoring profile is much better than Savoie's at even-strength, too – 0.86 points per game to Savoie's 0.7 and 0.68 primary points to 0.59.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Winnipeg Ice vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Geekie had a solid game. He made two big defensive plays and sent the puck back up the ice for a goal. For the first one, he stole the puck from a player on a break-away, skated back up the ice, gained the zone, and hooked the pass around a defender for a point-blank shot. The handling skill appeared on his goal, deking around the goaltender before getting a lucky bounce. One sequence, he manipulated the feet of a forechecker twice, before gaining the middle, dropping the puck back, and finishing his off-puck route. More precision passer than a deceptive one, but it's easy to see how he could add that element given his handling skill. Even then, he usually had solid timing on his (smart) passing attempts, showing an ability to both access lanes early and late by delaying.

Off-puck offence is getting slightly better, showing better awareness of when to sprint ahead and when to act as the trailer, but his slot-game is limited. The skating's coming along. When he has to sprint, he pushes his knees past his toes now, but hips stay too high. Making more plays off his outside edges or in crossovers, but they remain sloppy and inconsistent. His board play has moments, but it's still mostly a weakness because he lacks the pace pre-touch (he waits for possession before trying to win the positioning battle and getting defenders on his back). Some awful decisions, including an awful backhand pass that had no chance, but those will improve with time. No real change in the Geekie projection, probably a middle-six forward, but the top-10 argument is getting more convincing.

**David St-Louis:** January 28th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

Awareness of space, scanning for next play and for room to make that play before getting the puck -- Geekie really has to add this to his game. He has the soft touch to grab bad passes and turn them into dangle, but he places himself in poor positions to receive it quite often, missing seams he could attack. He is a better playmaker than Savoie, however, when given a chance to show it. He manipulates defenders better, understands how to move their stick out of lanes, and can use his backhand; his passes are deceptive as they come out directly out of his stickhandling motion.

## Conor Geekie 2021-22 WHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 21 || Base XLS: 59% || Impact XLS: 47% || XPR: 50.8 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



I don't much lateral mobility and movement from Geekie. His game is all straight lines, handling in front, using range to pull the puck through defensive triangles, and hitting teammates... He cares about defence. Not sure how effective he really is. I'm not catching that aspect of his game and will have to look for some of Mitch's advanced stat on that. For me, he projects as a bottom-six forward at this point with the occasional flash of skill that will surprise opponents. He has a lot of work to get there, too.

**David St-Louis** - January 1st, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

Geekie's off-puck game is still not a strength. He is static in support or late. He shows some playmaking ability, manipulations to open up plays and the right timing of certain passes (attracting the defender first, making sure they commit and are out of range of his teammate), and he has handling skills, an ability to improvise on the fly and play keep away. However, he overestimates his own ability at times or he is forced to dangle because he misses plays and his skating doesn't allow him to create others. He can't work his hands and feet together off the rush. His puck management could improve, but I like the 2nd effort to recover after he turns the puck over. His skating

also limits him defensively. He can't quickly adjust to play, but at least he's in the right position more often than not. Geekie's speed is fine off the rush, when he is allowed to pick up some steam, but that will rarely happen in the NHL. There isn't a ton to like right now in Geekie's game. He has tools that could develop into a top-6 role, but the chances of him putting it all together seems relatively low compared to other prospects touted of his caliber.

**Cam Robinson:** December 29th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs Regina Pats - WHL

The good news? Geekie is playing with a more noticeable pace than in previous viewings. His hands and ability to manipulate and make defenders miss in transition remains very high. He grabbed two primary helpers -- one while on a 2-on-0 where he received and got the shot off -- collected the rebound behind the net and dished back out front for a tap in. The second was a real play. Benson dished to him as he cut into the middle on a 3-on-2 entering the zone. As soon as he received it he loaded up with a fake shot with his eyes on the net but pulled a slick slip pass to continue across then zone for a one-time finish. Pretty play.

The bad news? I still despise his skating posture. It just leaves so much to be desired. That said, he manages to



get around the ice fairly well and his intelligence allows him to get a jump into dangerous spaces and predict where the puck will be.

Another negative in this one was hit shot. It was not pretty. Soft, poor decision shots for the most part. He fails to generate much downward flexion on his shaft and produce a powerful release. It was telegraphed much of the time and he had at least 5 blocked shots that never threatened in any way.

All around he was one of the more dangerous players on the ice. His smart defensive positioning was showcased as well. It was another showing suitable for a player in the teens with a pretty safe bottom six floor, flashes of potential upside, and moments of frustration that it could be put together into so much more.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 27th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Geekie's ability read pressure and protect the puck is improving. In this game, he delayed to wait for defenders to arrive before skating up the boards and turned to bait them, before turning to get them on his back. Consistently looked to bring the puck to the inside from there. Used a give-and-go to set-up a scoring chance, finding the trailer before working down the boards and reading the next play before getting the puck back. Forced an opposition player to go for a line change and drove the net twice. Aside from those, the usual concerns were here. He forces passes that aren't there and shows a shockingly lack of accuracy on the passes that are open. Failed to identify certain options, like a hook pass to the trailer when he got locked into this failed net drive. Throws possession away on exits without much pressure, and he defaults to problem-solving with his hands instead of passing. Shooting mechanics have moments, especially through his upper-body. Curl-and-drag wrister is coming along, hampered mostly by his poor set ups (he starts on the outside of the defender and tries to shoot through them). The mechanical limitations are significant, but he has some really high-level, top-six-calibre flashes. The more I watch him, the more I'm willing to bet on him high.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 20th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

Geekie's fading a bit in my viewings. There's still a lot to like: handling, confidence with the puck, shooting form, and passing skill. He adjusts his puck positioning before making plays, and doesn't let pressure deter him from making the best play. The skating really limits him -- it's

all inside edges. It decreases his range of motion and manipulation potential. The game gets really complex for him along the boards. He understands that he has to invert pressure or even just keep on his back. But his feel for how to do it isn't great. He cuts back at the wrong times, which is only compounded by his skating (when he turns, he comes to a complete stop from his lack of lower body engagement). Off-puck, he's disruptive and mostly positioned well on the defensive end. Offensive end, there's a lot of idling, overskating, or missed pockets. Imagining Geekie's game with better skating certainly makes the projection more exciting, but will he improve it? And will that really impact his handling-centric game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Saskatoon Blades vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

This was a bad game that really highlighted the limitations in Geekie's game. Let's start with the good. In open ice, he's relatively creative and smart. He draws pressure towards him, then kicks the puck out. In one sequence with his back to the defender, delayed before cutting to the inside. Disruptive defender, but perhaps not the most energetic one. Identifies passing options and usually picks a high-value one, but the execution wasn't consistently good. Timing was off, causing a couple of passes to miss. Along the boards, he's not aware. He cuts back into pressure, tries to problem-solve with his hands, and doesn't time his escapes well. However, he had one solid fake-out on a retrieval (three fakes in one sequence!). He clearly has the skills, but he doesn't know how to put them altogether. I'm not sure what to make of him. Perhaps a first-rounder, but he didn't look like in this game.

**David St-Louis:** November 7th, 2021

Winnipeg ICE vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

The lack of hard skills is really problematic in Geekie's game. He has to either dangle his way through traffic or pass before he enters it, which makes for blind or rushed plays. This game, however, I liked his awareness in tight a little better; he connected with teammates from the boards a couple of times. His hands are still the best part of his game, but he can't work them at all with his feet and so their effectiveness is limited off the rush. Defensively, he was puck watching at times, but I generally liked his positioning. The off-puck reads remain limited; Geekie overskates passing lanes. He can adapt to passes arriving in his skates, but wouldn't have to if he knew how to adapt his speed to the play to become open more often.

**David St-Louis:** November 4th, 2021

Winnipeg ICE vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Geekie can process the game fast and solve it with his hands. He sees tiny holes in which to slide the puck and has mastered the art of the slip pass; that's his main tool to escape defensive pressure. How he processes the game is problematic, however. Every play is an excuse to dangle and he is so focused on it that he stops scanning for outlets; he doesn't always identify them before launching himself in his dangle patterns, and thus, misses passes. I keep repeating myself about this aspect of his game, but it is really flagrant. In its current form, Geekie's game won't translate to the NHL. He needs to learn to play a different style if he is to be successful. There are many ways in which he can take his game; He can either go the full skill route and develop more agility to open up more plays for himself (right now, although he is deceptive, he has trouble cutting around defenders to either beat them or release them) or he can go the hard route, add speed, and become more of a checking presence with supplementary problem-solving passing and dangling skills. Either of these scenarios should earn him an NHL career in the middle-six. To become a top-line or even a top-six contributor, Geekie will need to do both -- to some extent. The chances of that happening seem slim, especially because the forward seems so entrenched in his ways. And so, while I respect the skill, and even the defensive engagement, at times -- Geekie has his stick in right lanes and doesn't cheat -- the forward seems too large of a project to be a high first-rounder on our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Edmonton Oil Kings - WHL

I'll concede that what Geekie is right now (October) isn't wholly relevant given the limitations in his game, but I'm still confused as to what exactly what he's supposed to become. The hands are a major selling point, but they're not exactly projectable in the sense of dangling players. He tries non-stop and even prepares the move with a bit of deception, but he always enters a glide and digs those inside edges in. No matter what happens, he can't get around pressure unless the defender literally takes himself out of the play. The hands are best on pass receptions, like knocking a knee-high pass directly into his shooting pocket. He's both a skilled shooter and passer, but he lacks a strong off-puck game (he moves but lacks timing) and ability to pass under pressure. He makes the odd in-tight pass to escape, but he misses options in the NZ, forces passes that aren't there, or gets stripped before he can even

get an opportunity. He works defensively, I'll give him that. Moments are an almost projectable stride were here early in shifts, but no movement in his skating projection from previous reports. I don't see a top-10 pick here.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 26th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Live and in person, Geekie's skating looks more problematic. His crossovers are the best part of his skating, moving laterally and occasionally integrating the one into a rush. Struggles to go knee-over-knee, but gets one foot over the other. The depth falls apart really early into his shift. Hips are too elevated and not engaged at all; heels kick upward. Even when he has the advantage on the defender, he loses races regularly. Can't separate at all from a stop. And it's a problem along the boards, where he primarily handles to escape, but it rarely works as his length and lack of lower body engagement limit him from handling pucks in-tight. Doesn't sprint into acceleration, either: wide, weak, and lacking activity. Turnover from getting stuck on his inside edges and not being able to shift his weight. He doesn't push off his inside leg while crossing over and he doesn't drive his recovering leg forward -- limited power. The main question is: How much will his skating improve? It's clear he lacks strength and ankle mobility (he was working on ankle mobility in the pre-game). Very early in shifts, his stride looks better, but it's still a 4.5 (lacking ankle flexion) at absolute best with mechanical issues. It falls apart extremely fast. Not entirely quite sure how to project it; we'll see what he looks like towards the end of the season.

As for everything else, meh. Geekie's disruptive defensively, both in pursuit and when above the play. Lost the puck several times in this game, but set up a PPG with a shot-pass through the defender's legs for a secondary assist. Doesn't connect plays under pressure, or even see them many times. Right now, he's an open-ice creator without open-ice or in-tight skating. Very strong 3C vibes.

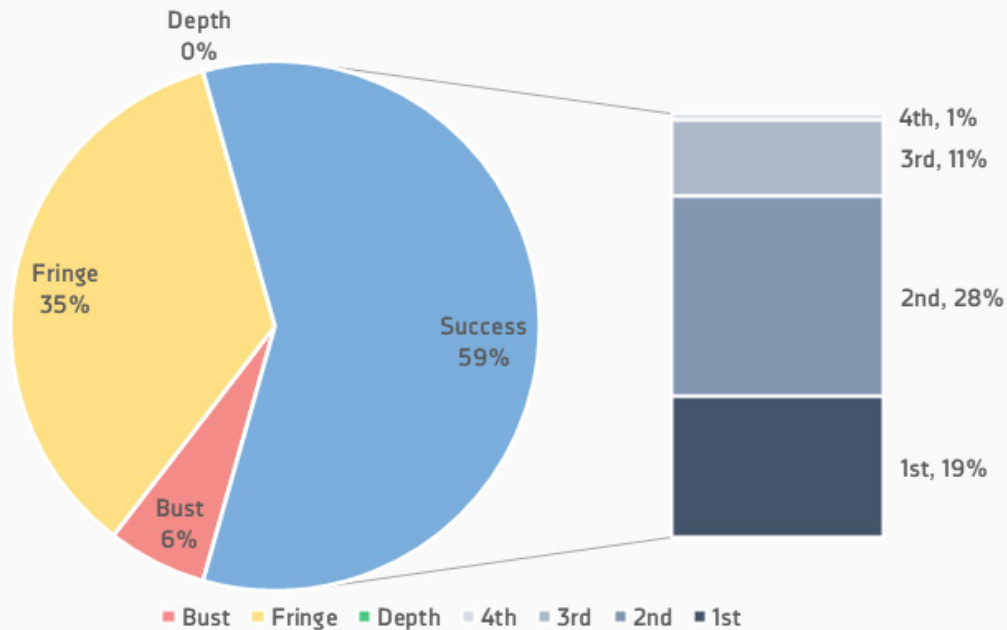
**Cam Robinson:** October 26th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Overall a quiet game from Geekie. His pace of play remains very problematic and that is driven primarily by his inefficient stride and lack of explosiveness. He allows his linemates to do the heavy lifting while he attempts to pick up the puck in the NZ and lumber into the zone before trying a move and cutting inside. I like that he's driven towards the dotted line, but it's far less effective with his lack of speed. The hands help but they won't as much at the next level. In this one, his defensive game remained

## Conor Geekie 2021-22 WHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



smart. He blends a good stick and positioning to disrupt plays more than wiping them out entirely.

With each passing viewing, I become more convinced that this is not a top-10 talent despite my expectation that some team will jump on him in that range.

**David St-Louis:** October 23rd, 2021

Winnipeg ICE vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

Geekie doesn't seem to have developed any hard skills in his career as of now. He looks more hindered by his size than anything. It is an asset in only one way: his range. Geekie clearly enjoys his ability to keep the puck away from opponents, or present it extended from his body, before dragging it back inside his feet. His area of action is impressive, but one could easily make the argument that Geekie would be a much more effective player at 5'11" than he currently is at 6'5", and by one I mean Mitch Brown. This sounds like the kind of thing he would have told me. At 5'11", Geekie would probably be much more agile and quick, two things that would increase his elusiveness.

Geekie's awareness and off-puck game have to improve. He removes himself as a pass option by walking inside coverage and he doesn't register defenders around him or passing lanes all that well when in control of the puck. He knows where his teammates are, approximately, but doesn't scan the ice to confirm. As a result, his passes missed. His creativity is interesting but sometimes he goes overboard, trying moves just to try them. His handling skills are one of the best in the draft, but what are above-average NHL hands if one can't complement them with the necessary

skating moves. He towers over most opponents, but hasn't learned to use that asset in any productive ways. He is young for this draft and still has time to develop his game, but he will need hands-on teaching from the NHL team that drafts him. Geekie's best attribute won't be sufficient to earn him a top role in the league. He has to add a ton of new skills. His numbers have also been quite low for a top-of-the-board pick.

**David St-Louis:** October 20th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

Geekie's skating is a real problem. The forward can't start, stop or turn all that easily. Once he gets going, his speed seems fine at this level and even his mechanics look decent -- you see an appropriate knee-bend and even some ankle flexion -- but the NHL game isn't played in open ice; it's played in tight spaces with a bunch of acceleration and deceleration and cutbacks. Geekie seems locked into place; his upper-body and lower-body can't separate or twist away from each other all that easily. Everything he does is through his handling. His head doesn't even turn all that much, either because he wants to remain deceptive or because to control the puck at the level that he does -- it's by far his best attribute -- he can't afford to add any extra noise, extra movement in his upper-body. I see what everyone else likes in Geekie: size and dangling skills, plus some passing creativity. He is a fast processor, a problem-solver, but wow is there a lot of development work to do. It is a daunting challenge for any NHL team.

**Daniel Gee:** October 17th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs Swift Current Broncos

Came away a bit skeptical about Geekie's translatability after this game. While the big centre had his chances throughout this game, his play under pressure, inability to separate with his skating ability, and predictability haunted many of his efforts.

Geekie had numerous straight-line transitional attacks in this game. Often born out of picking up loose pucks in the neutral zone, working off drop-offs, or chip and chase sequences that exploit opponent pivoting ability, Geekie implemented some weight-shifting maneuvers, but often relied on his frame to do a lot of protection work. The blend between execution and habits just didn't work in this game; in the first he attacked right into pressure trying to exploit the defenders triangle, losing the puck in process -- weird due to the net-driving options he had presented to him. On a powerplay in the second after taking a drop off pass, he drove onto net, unable to cut and handle inside under pressure. Control just degrades.

Geekies limited separation off-puck also hurt him on other sequences, unable to activate in-and-behind defenders through the neutral zone. On-puck, layered passing attempts were often deflected, only really executing well if he facilitated passes off his wings in the neutral zone -- he would proceed to not drive the middle lane, but plant his stick for a tip on near the circles (weird) . He's interesting though. On one shift, he jumped on a puck in the neutral zone, attacking the middle, extending his reach, pulling the puck inward, and shooting a hard wrister through his opponent's body.

In sustained pressure, Geekie had multiple uncontrolled backhand pivot passes from below the goalline -- they seemingly always worked, creating chaos and net-front jam plays. On the perimeter he defaults into a pivot when he faces pressure, leaning on his frame for puck protection, but often has trouble stringing other actions. The best example of the above habits was a shift in the first; after supporting a battle down low. He used his frame to protect a puck and shield against a defender mirroring his movements. Out of a perimeter activation, he flipped a puck into the hash marks that was deflected away. Geekie then activated behind the net, backhanding a rebound into the crease creating a jam play. Shooting decisions are sometimes pretty deflating but he had some grade-a chances. He was lost in coverage in the second, floated into the slot alone, took a pass from the near corner and fired a one timer five-hole that was miraculously saved. On other shooting opportunities his mechanics were just off. While he produces an

immense amount of flex through unlocked arms, he is a very off balance shooter, who often has inconsistent lower body mechanics. Affects accuracy. There's definitive ability to shoot around and through opponents as mentioned but his shot is nothing special mechanically.

Striked me as a player who could have scored more, was helped out by overwhelming physical tools, and doesn't have projectible skating (Short strides and recoveries, limited knee bend, poor ankle flex). He basically just manhandled small puck carriers in the defensive zone in this game.

**Cam Robinson:** October 16th, 2021

Regina Pats vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

This was the most underwhelming I've been watching Geekie, and that's saying something as I've been critical of his habits in the past. He plays with this 'hunting pace' that looks lazy a lot of the time. Skating is a major concern. Rounded shoulders, lack of ankle and hip flexion, not enough depth in his knees. Really not a good skater. Has difficulty accessing his outside edges. Engages with possession and can find a better posture with the puck than without. He has great hands and anticipation but doesn't use his size and doesn't play at a high pace. Major red flags. Defensively, he owns a smart stick and can put himself in the right spots. Soft soft hands and can make plays in tight spaces. Lost more faceoffs than he won. A quiet night overall. Couldn't find much open ice or create separation for himself. Got swallowed up under pressure - not a good look for a 6'4 supposed top-10 pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 16th, 2021

Regina Pats vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Quiet game for Geekie through 40. He did most of the usual stuff: defensive stickwork, tantalizing puck control, and some overhandling and poor reads. Played too fast, trying to deke defenders at full speed and then running out of room -- he needs to use space. In the third period, he diversified his attacks, changed pace before beating defenders, and set up several chances.

He needs space to let his playmaking shine, but he's clearly an advanced thinker as a passer. Set up a goal with a very clear pump fake pass followed by a delay before passing. A hook pass, too. The core issues remain unchanged. Skating, as usual. And when he still struggles to take pucks from the perimeter and bring them to the inside. Even if he gets the puck on the inside lane, he almost always gets pushed to the perimeter. His handling and open-ice passing are exciting but are they actually exciting, or just exciting for a player his height? Not sure.

The defence is legitimate; he's certainly an NHLer. But I'm not sure just how good he could become.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 15th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Geekie's stickwork and defence are the most projectable elements of his game right now. He's not just a hard-worker, he's clever and an instinctual problem-solver. Times his stick checks/lifts with the pass, then comes around the other side secure the puck. Disrupts a ton of entries, and not just through length -- he takes the extra stride and angles out the attack. The rest of his game? Exciting but requiring overhauling. His hands are his best skill, highlighted in his pass receptions, fakes to beat defenders before they close in, and using his reach effectively. He understands how to invert pressure. When a defender leans on his shoulder, he spins to get them on his back. If he can't outrace them, he hits the brakes to get a bit of space. It seems like these decisions are more reactionary than manoeuvring towards a pre-determined play.

The passing deception didn't feature in this game, and he struggled to connect with plays as a result (also because some were way too optimistic). He tries to diversify his rush patterns, but usually ends up on his inside edges with the puck in front all the same, save a few instances where he was heading to the outside lane. The skating's going to be a problem. He struggles to crossover and fully weight shift with the puck, so his dekes and handling ideas often fall short of manipulating defenders. The stride has moments where it's a lower-end NHL projection, but it's mostly poor. He pushes behind him, rather than laterally, causing his strides to generate little output. Some ankle flexion, sometimes getting knees over toes, but his hips never follow. He understands his speed is a weakness and alters his route accordingly.

There's an outcome where the skating's actually fine, and from there he manipulates NHL defenders to set-up teammates for chance after chance. There's also an outcome where he's a middle-six forward with a great defensive stick and some ability to create out of retrievals, but lacks mechanics and foresight to consistently create high-level offence. Not sure which one I'm betting on.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 6th, 2021

Regina Pats vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Geekie set-up a pair of goals on a pair of 2-on-0 rushes. Hardly noteworthy in most circumstances but he deceived the goaltender in both. In one sequence, he held onto the puck long enough to make the goaltender commit and in

the other, he made the early pass and started a passing play. Nice diversity, I guess. He broke some dudes ankles on the PP, but nearly broke his own in the process. He's still a straight-line attacker, but perhaps abides by the underhandle principle a bit better. Feel for the puck/touch remains a strength, allowing him to offset his lack of puck protection mechanics (depth, for one) with handling skill. It'll start with skating posture, which seemed unchanged from last year in this viewing, still lacking ankle flexion and hip engagement. Has some difficulty accessing his outside edges. He's patient and tries to manipulate when given a bit of space, but the skating prevents him from really selling false information to defenders. Isolating his game from his height significantly reduces the excitement value here, but I still think he's a top prospect in this class

**J.D. Burke:** October 2nd, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Just an en fuego performance from Geekie. Found creative ways to work around his lumbering skating stride and create offence throughout this contest, deploying passes off of the boards and into space to beat defenders 1-on-1, using his linemates as picks and screens to cut east-west on the rush, and then flashing a little bit of eye-level deception to open up a lane with which to drive the net for a chance on one play. That skating stride, though. It's a problem. He's upright, clumsy, and it's hard not to wonder to what degree it will limit his ability to create offence at the next level and as the talent pool compresses. Battled hard at the net-front on the power play, bouncing between that part of the formation and the triggerman's spot along the half wall. Showed some quality as a passer on one instance, creating a chance at the goal mouth through numbers with a perfectly placed slip pass through the defender's triangle. His goal was pretty unremarkable. He was left alone in front, collected a pass from the point, and had all the time in the world to beat the goaltender with a snap shot. But hey, play well, get rewarded, right? Thought he could've done better work off-the-puck in the defensive zone. Needs to scan for threats more often and make more proactive reads.

**Daniel Gee:** April 26th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs Prince Albert Raiders - WHL

Near NHL level of pace, size, and constant impactful decision making highlighted Conor Geekie's game against Prince Albert.

Man, this was an eventful game for Geekie in only about 14 minutes of playing time. Transitionally, the big-cen-

treman used footwork-manipulation, changes in pace, and separation through his crossovers to chew-up Prince Albert's defenders. Constant controlled exits lead directly into controlled entries, in which he altered his angles of attacks upon reaching Prince Albert's zone. Lateral cuts into the dotted-lines, pass offs blending into magnetized net-front crashes, and attacks into soft ice were all habits Geekie exhibited. Subtle use of weight-shifts froze defenders allowing Geekie to easily beat F1s, and defenders who took to the bait. On a powerplay in the first, Geekie carried a puck along the neutral-zone nearboards, cutting hard laterally as he entered the offensive zone; during the lateral cut, he bisected two defenders, stringing a heavily layered pass into open space on the left-hand circle.

Another impressive example of his ability was in the third; recognizing a defensive zone change in possession, Geekie proactively jumped ahead of the play one handing a puck through the legs of a defenders, driving past and exploiting poor body positioning of another, finishing the play off with a backhand over the glove of the goalie. Just wonderful examples of decision making, hard-skill blending, and execution strings. Can become a bit careless with his puck drop offs but I am assuming the system is calling for it

Geekie was just as dangerous in sustained scenarios. The most apparent thing is the use of the body to dominate on the perimeter and occupy high danger scoring areas. His off-puck positioning and awareness is supremely impressive. Always occupying the slot with his stick set, he can effectively box out defenders away from their own net, just to beat them on an end-board retrieval. He jumps into open space so often -- I am talking 2-3 times a shift, giving his teammates plenty of time and chances to facilitate passing (timing is near perfect). Geekie was an absolute menace on the powerplay. Late in the third, Geekie popped his stick into the back of the knee of a defender, stealing a puck on a retrieval, making a layered pass from the bottom of the left-hand circle to the slot -- it was an easy goal and open net for his teammate.

His defensive accume was also fairly impressive in this game. Constant support down-low helped Geekie gain possessions and start transitional attacks. He works well with his defenders on backchecking sequences to help guide and angle attackers to the boards. Had a wonderful third period shift where he locked down a secondary net -driving threat, rotating off to support a battle on the far-boards and win a puck back into Winnipeg's possession. Need to watch more to really talk about individual tool qualities -- skating does need some major work (lacks extensions at times, short push offs due to slightly wide recovery,

stiff upper body, knees not quite 90-degrees, hunch and heel kicks present) -- can push advantages against garbage defending but it won't translate well in its current form.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2021

Saskatoon Blades vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

In a system that demands off-puck movement, Geekie's activity level stands out in a good way. Timing this moves into the slot, however, remains a work in progress. He's late to pockets more often than not, but he supports the play exceptionally well outside of the slot. While he's a skilled handler within his mechanics, his moves always start with the puck in front of body, centred between his feet on his inside edges. He can't make use of his reach as a result and it forces him into deking. Has some difficulty handling pucks tight to his body, but problem-solves effectively, like poor pass reception that he turned into a backhand pass for a chance. Deceptive passer who recognizes options in advance then sets them up with look-offs and fake shots. Slip and hook pass use. Shot is very erratic, not uncommon for players with skating limitations. Path to improvement's really clear: improve skating, everything else should come with it. But it's going to be a lot more than ankle flexion and hip engagement -- he'll need improve his outside edges, develop more skills, and overhaul his acceleration pattern. Top prospect for the next draft.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

If Geekie's comfortable while receiving the puck, but then forced into a read-and-react situation, he's awesome. Really slick reactionary handler who can squeak through or around checks. With a bit more space, he overhandles the puck -- sometimes, he just needs to push it forward while striding instead of pushing it back and forth as he walks up the ice on his inside edges. Without space, he also overhandles the puck, which coupled with his mobility issues causes him to bobble pucks while turning. But there's no doubt that his mind's advanced on the offensive end.

Circled the OZ once, scanned, saw a teammate wide-open, pretended he didn't, then connected with a look-off cross-slot pass. Degree of difficulty was low, but the deceptiveness translated to a later one-touch sequence for another assist. Looked for through passes, pushed defenders to his back, drew in the extra one before passing, etc. The timing on many of these plays is off, but I think he gets there. Once passing, he relocates to get open for a return pass. Active defensively, especially on pursuit. All-in-all, a strong off-puck player who knows how to get the puck back, even

if he lacks that goal-scorer's instinct. A top prospect for next draft, probably.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Prince Albert Raiders - WHL

Geekie needs to clean up his reads down low and close outs, but he wants to be difference-maker defensively. That's most of the battle. He's strong on pursuit, scans for threats, and understands how to play system defence. In this game, he was best offensively without the puck. Finishes his off-puck routes, showing diversity in the lanes and routes he takes to maximize his odds of getting the puck or drawing defensive attention. Flashes a give-and-go game, but has some difficulty receiving passes in motion. He's clearly a skilled handler, and certainly a confident one, even under pressure, but doesn't finish his moves by establishing body positioning.

Shot lacks refinement, especially on the drag shot -- he doesn't shift his weight over his outside leg at all and pins his top arm to his side. When given a bit of space, he shows a projectable NHL shot, even trying to shoot in-stride. Skating-wise, he's still rough but way ahead of when we first saw in the WHL. Ankle flexion is getting closer, but his hips don't follow. His heels kick upwards and he lacks explosiveness through turns. Acceleration is slow and low-energy -- he never sprints before sinking into his stride, just falls into it immediately. Lacks strength and pace as a skater, but I think a lot of his improvement will come naturally. Looks like a top prospect, sure.

**Cam Robinson:** March 26, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs Swift Current Broncos - WHL

For a big kid, Geekie clearly has advanced puck skills and the patience and creativity to use them. He was unafraid to hold onto the puck in traffic, and tried several different skillful techniques with his hands (toe-drag, inside cuts, backhands cuts, fakes, pull-ins). He wasn't always successful, but it was a confident showing in that regard. The goal was

a nice example as he picked up the puck at the offensive blueline and patiently waited for coverage before moving it down the wall. Cycle returns it to him as he walks down the left wall. He splits the two defenders, loads, head up, pulls the puck inwards and fires with weight on his heel and scores a low glove.

He showed a myriad of intelligent decisions and an understanding of the game with and without the puck. He played the first period on the left wing on the top line and was a support piece. He would stay high on entries if need be, but fell into the downlow support once possession was ensured. As the netfront on the PP, he was simple but followed the role well. Defensively, he fell back into coverage well and used his stick to disrupt lanes. In the final 40 minutes, he moved to the middle and played the sweeping outlet option very well, attacking the middle and seeing his passing options

Geeking is a poor skater, the hunched back and lack of knee bend greatly reduce his efficiency. He can produce good power, but he is far from quick. His most impressive asset while in-flight is his awareness and body control. He can set himself up to receive and maintain possession with body leans and the long stick. His inability to flex at the hips, snap his toe on extension, and crossover with much efficiency greatly hinder his overall ability to move.

All-in-all, this wasn't a poor performance as far as effort goes, but the vast majority of his 20-odd shifts were spent cruising the ice, waiting, watching. He was paceless for much of the time. Mid-3rd, the Ice turned the puck over at offensive blueline, Geekie looks uninspired, takes a wide circle and 'backchecks' to nowhere. Broncos go for a 2on1. Stopped. They maintain pressure, and Geekie gets caught watching while his man comes and cleans up a rebound to extend the lead to 5-3. Clearly his worst shift of the night and came on the heels of a 90 second shift where he floated the entire time. His most engaged shifts came at the very beginning of the game, and in the final five minutes of the third.



18  
Rank

A  
Grade

5.5  
Skating

6.5  
Puckhandling

7  
Shooting

5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Passing

4  
Physical

# JONATHAN LEKKERIMÄKI

RW | DJURGÅRDENS IF

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JUL. 24, 2004  
WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS RIGHT

"I really like Lekkerimäki. He has a bit of a nose for the net and he can also make plays. I know he's not big and he's a bit of a project, but I like his game a lot... He's got the poise to find open ice and the skill to shoot and pass. I think you're going to see him score a lot in the NHL." - Eastern Conference Executive in May 2022

SHADES OF: Mike Hoffman

63%	21%	13%	1.62
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	26	20	15	35
SHL	26	7	2	9
WJC-18	6	5	10	15

## Scouting Report

The defining characteristic of Jonathan Lekkerimäki's game is his shot. It's one of the best in the class, second only to Jagger Firkus in this year's Elite Prospects scout's poll.

Our Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin was even so bold as to liken Lekkerimäki's release to Alexander Holtz's from the 2020 NHL Draft. That's not praise that we would apportion lightly and without due consideration either, especially for a player that we're slightly lower on than most in the public and private spheres. So you can take us at our word on this one.

The catch-and-release, one-timer, wrist shot, snapshot, slap shot -- Lekkerimäki has the tool for any occasion, and they're all already high-end-to-elite even by the NHL's standards. It's such an advanced tool that it doesn't even merit a mechanical breakdown. It's not like words could even do it justice. You watch him shoot the puck, and it's self-evidently perfect.

Where Lekkerimäki often left our staff wanting, though, was in the way that he set up his shot. At least early in the season. There wasn't any display of off-puck instincts or timing, and he'd often staple himself to the perimeter during offensive zone play. It was more of a wasted gift than anything.

As the season progressed, though, Lekkerimäki started

to show advanced instincts as a scorer. He started to hide in defenders' blindspots and drive the net off-puck for soft ice or rebound opportunities. Suddenly, there was a little cunning to match the brute force of his release. He looked like a projectable scorer.

That shot may be the best of Lekkerimäki's offensive tools, but it's not the only one. He's also a reasonably deft handler, with the skill to blend pass receptions into dangles, deceptive manoeuvring, and a sound mechanical base with the puck almost always handled in his hip pocket.

"He handles with the very end of the heel of his blade, with the front part of it slightly raised, which reduces the radius of his forearm, backhand motions and helps rapidly shuffle the puck," Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis wrote in a mid-season Scout's Notebook. "This technique coupled with his above-average reaction time allows him to dangle through the stick and skates of defenders and to release the puck in an instant."

It's a tool that Lekkerimäki would often rely on as his only means of gaining the inside of the offensive zone, but we've noticed a bit more discretion on this file from the Djurgårdens



product as the season has progressed.

Still, our admiration for the 5-foot-11 winger is tempered by a whole host of concerns about his ability to process the game at an NHL level.

Even Lekkerimäki's improvements off-puck haven't elevated this part of his game to an average projection; he still misses plays or mistimes his arrival to shooting opportunities. We haven't seen him display a consistent ability to handle physicality either, and his battle level hasn't exactly drawn rave reviews. He still relies far too much on his hands between the blue lines, using them as his only tool to gain

the zone. There's a lot of work that has to be done here.

Sometimes you bet on immense physical gifts and hope that the rest of a player's game rounds into form in the hands of an NHL development staff. That's the gambit with Lekkerimäki, and it makes him one of the higher upside plays in the entire draft. There's also a lot of risk there, and we had to hedge a bit with our ranking.

If everything breaks right, Lekkerimäki has 30-plus-goal upside at the NHL level. Perhaps even better than that. So it won't surprise us when a team takes him a fair bit higher than where we've ranked Lekkerimäki.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 **Mika Zibanejad**

YEAR: 2011

SIMILARITY: 62%

2 **Magnus Paajarvi**

YEAR: 2009

SIMILARITY: 52%

3 **Jacob Josefson**

YEAR: 2009

SIMILARITY: 45%

4 **Mattias Tedenby**

YEAR: 2008

SIMILARITY: 44%

5 **Anton Lander**

YEAR: 2009

SIMILARITY: 34%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 30th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - U18s

Lekkerimäki is scoring a ton in this tournament, but I'm not convinced. He misses the best play time and time again, so focused on dangling and shooting. I like his shot, but the mechanics of it are a bit strange sometimes. His draw is really short and low to the ice in one-timers and wrist-shots. I'm not going to judge as he's the goal-scoring master, however. Just curious.

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - U18s

The doubts about Lekkerimäki's hockey sense are back. He rarely makes the best play unless it is evident and that's problematic. Thinking on the fly, IDing on the fly, and recognizing where his advantages are...These elements are not strengths of his game. He's effective, to an extent, away from the puck, at finding pockets of space, but it's not a great talent either; Öhgren is better than him at that. He also lacks a physical game; he actively avoids confrontations, sometimes. His projection is really centred around his shot and hands...Which brings down it's certainty.

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Sweden vs Switzerland - U18s

Lekkerimäki has a lot of chemistry with Ostlund. It showed in this game. He started and continued a ton of give and go plays and there were purposeful, made for a reason: to improve the location of his shot and create space for himself. That's the end goal of every Lekkerimäki plays: shooting. He was a better playmaker in this one, however, showing more deception and pace to his passing. His wall-game still isn't

there, but he can dig pucks and move them fast enough with his skating and handling.

**J.D. Burke:** March 8th, 2022

Djurgårdens IF vs. Timrå IK - SHL

The individual skill is obvious with Lekkerimäki. Beyond reproach, even. He's a strong skater with a cannon of a shot and sublime puck skills. You watch a game like this one, though, and the questions about his overall sense and ability to read the game cast a shadow over the rest of his game that his tools can't escape. He missed at least two or three obvious breakout reads as a passer in this contest that resulted in his team defending far longer than they should've had to in either instance. Poor spacing on a counter play turned what should've been a tap-in goal into a low-percentage shot with no room to operate. To his credit, I thought Lekkerimäki's defensive habits shone bright in this contest. That's not nothing. But I'm still not sure I see a high first-round pick there.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** March 6th, 2022

Timrå IK vs. Djurgårdens IF - SHL

Lekkerimäki was visible on most shifts in the 14 minutes he played in the game. He got power play time and had five shot attempts. He played less how further the game went.

Lekkerimäki is slick with the puck and really likes to use his shot. He seeks a way to shoot and shoots from various places in the offensive end. This was not a dynamic offensive performance and he did not scan the ice well for options. His head looked set on the goal. In the beginning of the game I would say that he was his team's most dangerous player and saw some good opportunities to score.

Defensively he had some inconsistent efforts, especially

on a goal against. He thinks offense in most situations and with his physical disadvantage he is not a strong player for him defensively and this is why the coach did not trust him late in the game.

All in all, he makes a difference for his team with his slick puck handling and dangerous shot. He still needs to develop a more dynamic offensive game to become a star at the NHL level in the future. He lacks strength and elite hockey sense but his puck skills and shot will translate well.

**David St-Louis:** February 9th, 2022

Djugårdens IF vs Brynas IF - SHL

I'm starting to see it. I previously underestimated Lekkerimäki's off-puck instincts. He knows how to attack the slot, at what speed, and where to position himself to get the best scoring chance. He anticipates a play in advance, too, at times. And his shot is still deadly in catch-and-release form or one-timer when he does get it in good position. Are those two skills, off-puck movements and shot, enough to make him a top-6 NHLer? No. But they're a stronger base than I previously thought he had. I also like his defensive effort, his defensive scanning, his ability to stay with his check, and even to help others at this level. He still gets surprised by the pace a little bit, but has great reactive skills to move the puck around defenders. He's definitely a "skate until you meet pressure and figure it out" kind of player, however, and I doubt he ever really develops his small-area game. His game, from the way he handles to his decisions, to his identity just don't translate all that well to wall-play. Maybe he's a top-25 player in this draft. Not fully convinced yet.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 30th, 2022

Färjestads BK vs. Djurgårdens IF - SHL

This was probably the best game I have seen from Lekkerimäki. He plays on a line with highly touted NHL prospect William Eklund and veteran Dick Axelsson. Lekkerimäki was the most active offensive player of the three in the game and he had a dirty goal and a fantastic game winning assist late in the game. This performance showed something I have not really seen from Lekkerimäki before and that was his competitiveness and puck coverage.

Still, he can shy away from battles he destined to lose but when he had the chance to win the puck he engaged and competed hard for it. That reminded me of how a teenage Elias Pettersson used to handle his physical disadvantage at this level. I really liked to see how he could take the inside on opponents and skate with his legs wide and cover the puck. The lower-body balance looked strong even if he is physically underdeveloped at this level.

Lekkerimäki's skating is at a good pace for this level but it also demands a lot from him energy wise. His elite puck touch is not as elite when he plays with a high muscle tone. He then loses the smoothness in his hands so as to take the next step and to utilise his full roster of skills he needs to improve the foundations of his skating. When the timing is right he can separate from opponents and did so on a breakaway. He was a step ahead and widened that distance before missing a shot (with not as smooth hands that we are used to see him have)

Lekkerimäki's play at SHL is solidifying him as a first round pick in my opinion. When you add compete and motor to create as shown in this game the chances of him becoming a top 6 forward is looking better. There are still warning signs but the upside is still intriguing.

**David St-Louis:** January 30th, 2022

Färjestads BK vs. Djurgårdens IF - SHL

Lekkerimäki played with a lot more pace in this game, a lot more speed, in his skating and decisions, too. They weren't necessarily productive decisions most of the time, but they didn't hurt his team; he mostly reloaded the puck high and looked for trailers. He didn't trust himself as much as he should for a lot of the game, even if he has the skill to make better plays. I'm not sure he really knows how to use that skill to its full potential. The contrast with William Eklund was striking in this game. It continued to shine a light on Lekkerimäki's deficiencies -- his technical ability, not mechanical flaws in his skating, handling, and shooting -- and mostly his decisions, knowing where to skate to move the defence and create. His best chance came after breaking away early from the defensive zone (it was a good time to do it, not offensive cheating); he sneaked behind the line of defence, caught the puck, and got a breakaway. He got a 2-on-1 also. But he just shot, didn't really use his partner either as a fake (decoy for a shot) or as an actual option to move the puck and improve the location of the shot. Average sense with above-average tools, but not significantly above-average tools is how you can describe Lekkerimäki. Not a player I really like in this draft.

**David St-Louis:** January 13th, 2022

Djurgårdens U20 vs Rögle U20 - J20 Nationell

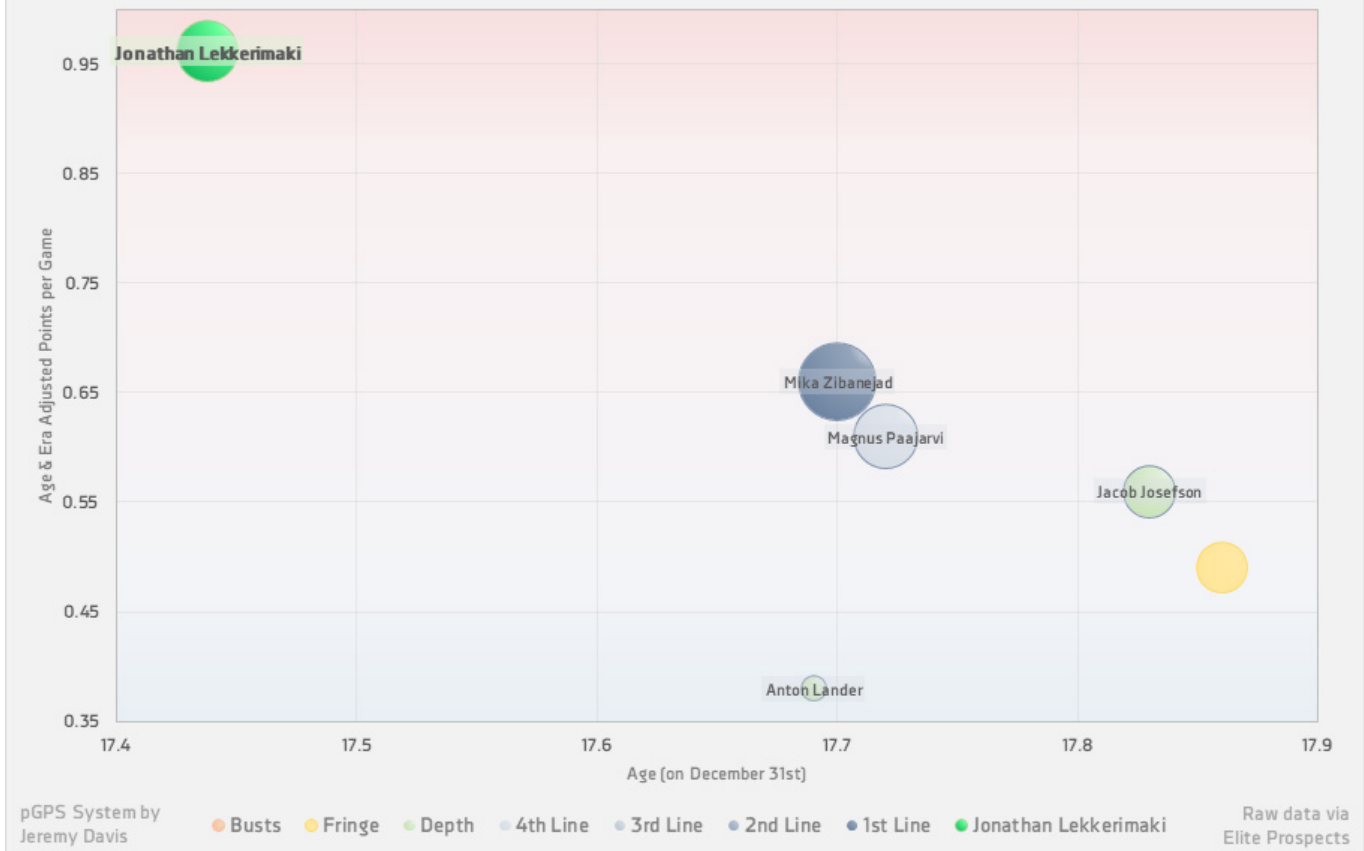
Lekkerimäki has technical ability. He is a bit of a weird handler -- always shuffling the puck at high speed with the toe of his blade off the ice. He loves to attack the triangle of defenders and play keep away. He puts them on his back, skates to open space, and drops the puck to teammates. I think he tunnel visions a bit, but he has enough individual

## Jonathan Lekkerimäki 2021-22 SHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 5 || Base XLS: 63% || Impact XLS: 37% || XPR: 43.6 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



skill to be a second-round pick. He clearly knows how to turn the feet of defenders, even if he only does it when they're on his back. He showed more of a physical game in this contest, laying a reverse hit on an opponent. He's capable of it and we see glimpses of his motor at times, too. He's a project. I would not pick him in the first round, but maybe second.

**David St-Louis:** January 9th, 2022

Djurgårdens U20 vs Orebro U20 - J20 Nationell

I only see one play from Lekkerimäki -- skate in the wide-lane while handling the puck at or behind his heels, slow down in a glide, wait for a teammate to slip behind him and drop him the puck. I didn't see his release in this game, not really. His handling skills are the best part of his game. He handles quickly and precisely, with the heels of his blade, around defenders and through them. His reaction time saves him from turnovers. The skating might be average, but I rarely saw him go full-out. I don't see a physical game. He seems like a pure, teammate-dependant, open-ice scorer -- not very good for a projection.

**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022

Djurgårdens U20 vs Vasteras U20 - J20 Nationell

I don't see it with Lekkerimäki. He can score at this level

pretty easily, especially surrounded with players like Östlund and Öhgren, but he is not an efficient or dynamic offensive player and he is not that involved defensively either. His pace and work rate aren't strong points. He can link some plays together and finish the obvious ones, but for me, he is a level below his teammates. At the moment, my read is relatively average skills with below-average sense.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** December 30th, 2021

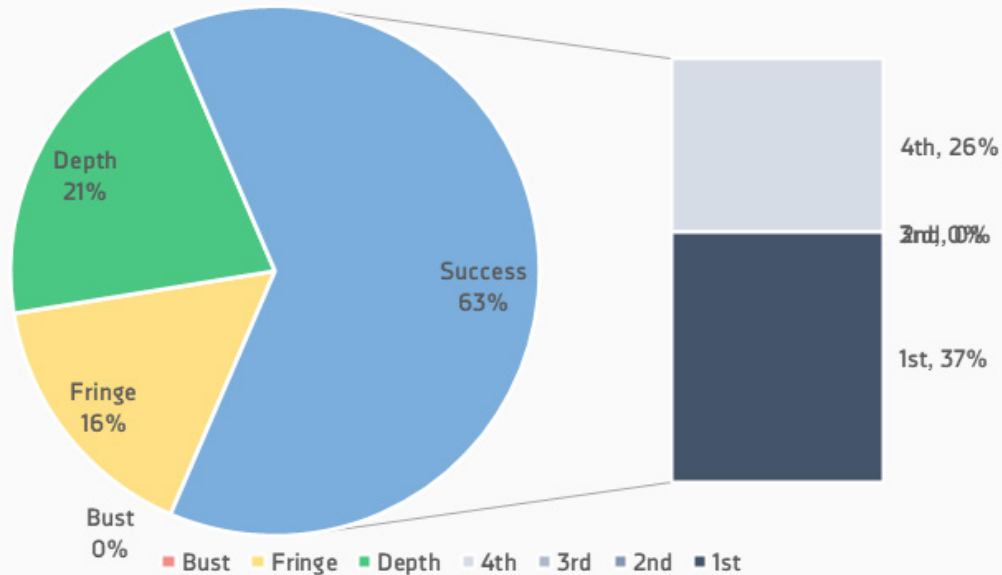
Linköping HC vs. Djurgårdens IF - SHL

Lekkerimäki was more dialled-in defensively in this game than I have seen from him at the junior level. He was moving well and closing space for the opponents. He showed awareness in all three zones. His speed was better and he was able to keep up well at this level. When he is continuously moving he can even separate when his timing is right and making him tough to catch. He also had a sequence where he travelled with the puck over all three zones checking opportunities along the way but showed shiftiness and transported the puck all the way through. He also had a good behind-the-back-pass on a rush play.

His weapon is his puck skills and mostly skills only. He has a strong puck touch and manoeuvrability and a fantastic shot. With the puck, he shows awareness of options but

## Jonathan Lekkerimäki 2021-22 SHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



could process faster and play the puck faster. He has yet to show that he can create time and space with the puck. He scored a great goal from distance on the power play and his shot is elite.

**J.D. Burke:** December 30th, 2021

Linköping HC vs. Djurgårdens IF - SHL

The tools are obvious. Lekkerimäki's hands are among the best in the class. He's a gifted puckhandler with deft touch, and the ability to manoeuvre with the puck at speed. His shot doesn't trail far behind either, and he scored a wicked one-timer goal from the half-wall on the power play, too. Mostly, though, Lekkerimäki faded into the background in this contest. He couldn't seem to make anything happen at even strength, at the very least. Doesn't move the puck quickly enough and doesn't manage space well enough to maintain possession at this level. The processing speed leaves a lot to be desired.

**David St-Louis:** November 24th, 2021

Skelleftea U20 vs Djurgardens U20 - J20 Nationell

Lekkerimäki uses his body to separate opponents from the puck. He is physical and a better skater than Ostlund. I'm not sure how high his hockey sense is, as he is not as aware of pressure or options. He misses some plays and still does that thing where he speeds wide on defenders. His passing decisions are slow, but I like his tools, his shot and his physicality. He can thread passes across the ice with consistency.

**David St-Louis:** November 19th, 2021

Skelleftea U20 vs Djurgardens U20 - J20 Nationell

Lekkerimäki has this annoying habit of circling the offensive zone aimlessly. I like that he doesn't force passes inside, but he needs to pull the trigger on a play quicker. His shot looked like a strong point in this game; he managed to fully weight it from an awkward position, with his feet pointing toward the boards, and he also used a delay in his in-stride wrist to try and fool the goalie. It didn't work, but the changeups and the adaptability in his shooting is really interesting.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 14th, 2021

Sweden vs. Russia - U20 Four Nations

Pretty bland showing from Lekkerimäki who was skating on the second line and received ice time on the power play, playing on the left flank. His offensive contributions mostly consisted of perimeter shots. There was one nice sequence where he gained the zone and it looked like he almost lost the puck, but scrambled it back and found a player open in the slot with a quick pass. Lekkerimäki's off-puck instincts are a bit of a question mark. He's dangerous when he's in his comfort zone, getting a lot of puck touches and having enough space to handle and attempt dekes. Neither of those conditions were present here.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 23rd, 2021

Timrå IK vs. Djurgårdens IF - J20 Nationell

Lekkerimäki plays another great game with the J20. He is a lot of fun with his offensive skills. He had three goals and

a helper. As of today he stands with 16 goals in 15 games. The goals today were all highlight reel material. His shooting is impressively precise, almost like seeing Cole Caufield at this age. He manipulates defenders and goaltenders with his agility, puck touch and offensive hockey sense. He creates time and space for himself with the puck. He reads the game at a high level and skates where the puck is heading. His shot and goal scoring is at a high elite level. He has the skills to become a top line forward in the NHL.

As mentioned yesterday, his competitiveness and physical strength is weak. He backchecks more and wins a few battles but sometimes he just skates beside the defenseman and other times he just waits around to break up a pass or for a loose puck to find him, which often seem to do as he reads the game at such a high level. Those question marks will make it tough to take a chance on him with a top 10 pick as it is hard to rely so much on pure skill in the NHL but he sure looks like a good middle first round pick to me.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 22nd, 2021

Timrå IK vs. Djurgårdens IF - J20 Nationell

Lekkerimäki has above average top speed and is very agile. He is always on the move and glides with control. He can skate fast with the puck, shifting pace and with impressive control. He mostly plays at a similar pace but shifts tempo with just a little extra movement. He gains a lot of power in his overlapping skating technique. He also has good balance. The skating technique is kind of iffy with a short stride but with good balance. He skates at a good pace without using much energy.

Lekkerimäki has elite puck skills. He has impressive puck control both close to his body and with range. He can deke his way through and he shoots with a quick release. He can shoot the puck from almost any position. His puck touch is very impressive. His shot is dynamic and dangerous. He is a dangerous shooter from both inside as well as outside the circles. He shoots hard one-timers and is an excellent goal scorer. He is also a good passer with great sense and precision. Just everything with handling and controlling the puck is impressive with Lekkerimäki.

As for the smarts, Lekkerimäki has an offensive mindset when he is on the ice. In offensive situations he is a step ahead and sees the opportunities before his opponents. He has great timing and even if his speed is not elite he can look like a fast player due to his timing and reading the situations. He also shows a strong mind for detecting open spaces and creating scoring chances. With the puck on his stick, he can give himself time and space with the puck and control the pace. In the game away from the puck, Lekkerimäki also

thinks about offense and can cheat defensively to give himself a chance to break out. He is mostly a one-way forward but does his work on the backchecks as well.

Lekkerimäki is not a physical or hard competitor. He rarely engages in physical situations or competes for the puck. When it comes to puck battles he plays with his brain more than his body. His game is more to find open spaces or to intercept a bad pass rather than winning the puck or to make stuff happen.

All in all, Lekkerimäki is one of the most interesting Swedes for the upcoming draft. His skills are pure elite and he is very dangerous when given time and space. He is a good goal scorer with a great shot as well as good playmaking and agility with the puck. The one area of concern might be his physical and competitive play. At NHL level you cannot just rely on your skill. He will need to be stronger in puck battles to be a driver at higher levels, he can't just wait for the puck to come to him with good positioning, he will need to win it for himself too. His skills are good enough to be considered a first round candidate. Maybe even top 15 if he can show more competitiveness and more active play driving without the puck.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 21st, 2021

Djurgårdens IF vs. Oskarshamn - SHL

Just six shifts on ice time for Lekkerimäki in his SHL debut. One of them was a rather long one in the defensive zone, and he only got one more after that in the third period. Lekkerimäki was more active off the puck compared to my J20 viewing, actually once cutting in front of his man and going to retrieve the puck near the boards, which is something he didn't do previously. He's physically raw, which is very evident whenever he engages. Not a whole lot of puck touches, one very panicky uncontrolled exit where he just gave the puck away. Could benefit from more scanning defensively. In the last shift of the game, he could have covered for his teammate in the slot if he were more aware, which ended up costing a HD scoring chance against. Not necessarily his fault, but preventable still.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 17th, 2021

Timrå IK vs. Djurgårdens IF - J20 Nationell

Lekkerimäki is not a defensive stalwart or monster in puck battles (I don't think I saw him engage in a single battle along the boards), but the skill level is pretty easy to notice. His handling looked really good and rather deceptive, and his quickness seemed also impressive. He was able to beat defenders wide and drive towards the net after. In the offensive zone, he was consistently dangerous, especially with

the puck. He was setting up his linemates well on rushes and utilizing them well in short give-and-gos. He played a lot on the power play, alternating his position quite a bit in a rather free-flowing style. I also liked his off-puck movement in OZ quite a bit, often looking to activate behind defenders. He just looked the part of a highly-skilled winger.

**Daniel Gee:** October 15th, 2021

Djurgårdens IF vs MoDo Hockey - J20 Nationell

Impressive effort for Lekkerimäki who was kind of a mixed-bag of translatable and non-translatable habits in this game against MoDo.

While Lekkerimäki in general was inconsistent pace wise, his two-step explosiveness and power generated through hard, extended side-to-side push offs created a tonne of separation advantages against MoDo's defenders. Through that separation, Lekkerimäki executed numerous small-area handles, exploiting momentum, aggressiveness, hip-pocket protection and deliberate baiting to work past defenders.

What's probably most apparent is how willing he is to adjust perimeter on-puck carry attempts, changing the angle of his attacks through the middle of the ice, stringing layered passes or low-leveraged shots. In the first, Lekkerimäki took a straight-line route, puck baited in front of his body, executing a very harsh deke to his backhand to beat his man -- eventually losing control.

Later in the second, Lekkerimäki read and supported an outlet, filing through the slot, pivoting and popping the puck to his right, taking a low leveraged shot on goal. Shortly after this sequence, he identified and picked up a loose neutral zone puck, exploding through coverage, pivoting into a spin pass as he faced slot pressure. He often builds speed through his defensive zone to take pucks in-stride through the neutral zone -- in the third after doing so, Lekkerimäki pulled the puck inward to jump by a defender, activating into a one-leg weight-transfer shot at the top of the right hand circle -- he scored glove side, the goaltender covering his face with his glove... Tonnes of passing sequences in transition, the best a tip pass that sent teammates in on a 2-on-0. Gifted passer -- layering, precision, power.

In sustained pressure, Lekkerimäki's support game is hit and miss. He didn't really activate into dangerous areas, more floating around off-puck until he picked out a situation to engage in. He's very engaged on-puck, loving to activate out of the perimeter into the dotted-lines. On one shift he took a slip pass on the near boards, cut through the middle, deked through a stick in the high slot and took a poor shot on net. In general his release (wrist roll) is pretty violent when he has time, but a tucked left-arm and a lean to the right kill



some power and accuracy. Facilitated a couple of behind the net passes into the slot for high-danger chances.

The worry here overall is, can Lekkerimäki leverage this game at higher levels? Uninspired pace, rounded back/lazy skating form (half engaged mechanics) that permeates across much of his shifts, and limited support are all a bit concerning. Tough evaluation -- SHL viewings will be important.

**J.D. Burke:** August 4th, 2021

Sweden U18 vs. Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Too much of the game goes through Lekkerimäki's hands. Needs to diversify a bit. It's too easy to take him out of hockey games when the dangles aren't working. This game was proof positive. Virtual no-show performance. Spent the entire game on the perimeter, barely touched the puck, and didn't create shooting opportunities for himself with off-the-puck movement. Nothingburger.

**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

Sweden U18 vs. USA U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

If there's one takeaway from this contest, it's that Lekkerimäki's puck skills are near the top of this class. He's a real artist with the puck. Every touch has the potential to produce a highlight reel play. Scored a goal by danling past and outwaiting the goaltender for the goal. Took the puck to the inside without hesitation in this contest. Pace could've been better in this contest. I'm not sure I saw enough to land decisively one way or the other on where his skating is at. Those puck skills, though...



19 Rank

5 Skating

5 Shooting

6.5 Passing

A Grade

6.5 Puckhandling

6 Hockey Sense

5 Physical

# KEVIN KORCHINSKI

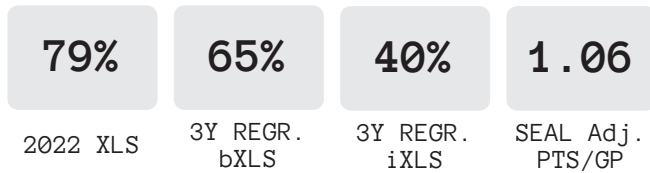
D | SEATTLE THUNDERBIRDS

HEIGHT 6' 2" D.O.B. JUN. 21, 2004  
 WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS LEFT

“High-risk, high-reward. I think he needs to get a lot better without the puck to survive in the NHL, but if he does his offensive ceiling is huge. I think he's the only D in the region to have true top power play quarterback upside.”

- Eastern Conference scout in May 2022

SHADES OF: Jake Gardiner, John Klingberg



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	67	4	61	65

## Scouting Report

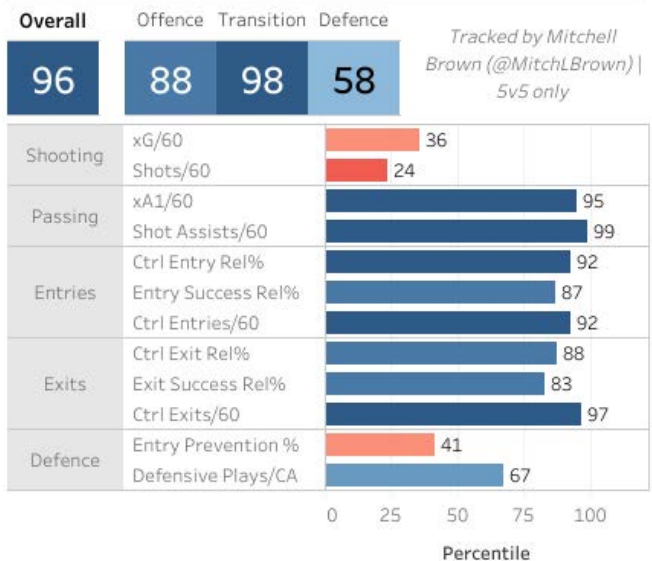
There is perhaps no greater gamble in the first round of this year's draft than defenceman Kevin Korchinski. The Seattle Thunderbirds defenceman is about as high-risk, high-reward an option as you'll find.

Let's start with the reward part of the equation. That would be Korchinski's almost unparalleled ability in transition and the offensive zone. There's a reason the Seattle Thunderbirds blueliner led all first-time draft-eligible CHL defenders in points with 65 through 67 regular season contests.

“Korchinski's breakouts follow the framework of the best breakout artists in the NHL: Use the middle, draw pressure, and pass up the ice to the open teammate,” Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a Film Room deep dive on Korchinski. “But he doesn't just abide by the simple formula; he builds off it, reshaping breakouts to perfectly match his skill set.

“Most prospects use the middle lane sparingly. Korchinski attacks it every touch with unwavering confidence. Once he gets the first forechecker chasing, he skates directly at the next one. Sometimes, he fakes them out with handling skill and dekes around them.

Games Tracked: 12 | Minutes Tracked: 238.5



“Others, he passes under their stick for a long-range breakout pass. If neither is an option, he encourages the forechecker to reach, then he cuts back away from them before moving play to the inside. Either way, the result is the same: he's beat two players, meaning there's an open teammate up the ice.”

The results bear out Korchinski's quality on the breakout, with the Thunderbirds blueliner rating in the 98th percentile as a transition player according to the data set that Brown manually tracked throughout the season.

Many of the same elements that made him so effective on the breakout also reveal themselves in the way that Korchinski drives play in the offensive zone. Rare was the prolonged offensive zone sequence that didn't feature at least one blue line activation from the 6-foot-2 defenceman. And as was the case in transition, Korchinski always worked from the outside in, collecting pucks along the boards and funnelling play towards the slot.

"Korchinski's game is built on individual skill," Brown wrote in a Scout's Notebook article on EP Rinkside. "In the offensive zone, he's constantly working laterally; dragging defenders to the outside, cutting back, and heading back to the middle. He's both a shooter and a playmaker, playing off the threat of one to use the other."

The catch with Korchinski is that you're not getting an especially refined defender. Even that may be a charitable assessment. Frankly, he's one of the worst off-puck defenders

to land on the final Elite Prospects draft ranking, so incredibly puck-focused and out of most plays that the Thunderbirds may as well have been down a man with Korchinski on the ice during even strength defensive sequences.

Some of that will improve with even a slight uptick in his engagement level, but it's nonetheless concerning to see a draft-eligible defenceman so completely out of his depth as an in-zone defender. Without significant development to this part of his game, it's hard to imagine an NHL coaching staff having much appetite for playing Korchinski in anything but a bottom-of-the-lineup role - if that.

Make no mistake: You're throwing caution to the wind a bit with a Korchinski selection in the top half of the first round. There's a very real chance that his inability to defend coupled with a below-average skating stride conspire to spoil an otherwise promising career.

Even so, you can't let a player with this upside last much longer than that in this year's draft. Korchinski is one of only a handful of players with power play quarterback, 40-plus points upside from the blue line, and that makes him well worth the risk. Safe is death, right?

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Nathan Paetsch  
YEAR: 2001  
SIMILARITY: 86%

2 Cam Barker  
YEAR: 2004  
SIMILARITY: 85%

3 Jay Bouwmeester  
YEAR: 2001  
SIMILARITY: 85%

4 Filip Novak  
YEAR: 2000  
SIMILARITY: 85%

5 Derrick Pouliot  
YEAR: 2012  
SIMILARITY: 83%

6 Ryan Pulock  
YEAR: 2012  
SIMILARITY: 83%

7 Matt Dumba  
YEAR: 2012  
SIMILARITY: 82%

8 Ian White  
YEAR: 2002  
SIMILARITY: 82%

9 Eric Roy  
YEAR: 2012  
SIMILARITY: 82%

10 Stefan Elliott  
YEAR: 2009  
SIMILARITY: 82%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

A better defensive performance from Korchinski than usual, although Kelowna didn't present much of a threat in this game. He mirrored footwork, angles a couple of plays by pivoting early, and eliminated off-puck threats in transition. There were a couple of high risk, needless step-up plays that will cost him at the next level. Wasn't tested in the defensive zone. All the usual stuff from Korchinski with the puck: positive and negative. Hit a couple of cross-slot passes from the point. Beat defenders with his hands, but by deking into space instead of attacking their triangle. He's hardly deceptive with his eyes from the point, but he beats defenders with pass and backhand skill. A couple of goals, too. Uses space before shooting and passing. At 5-on-5, consistently works laterally, draws defenders, then passes back into the space he cleared. Activation reads are mostly basic - he needs to link his breakout to offence a bit better by joining the play

and picking better routes. After he completes a breakout pass or beats a player from the point, his decisions are often significantly worse. That would explain the turnover issues on the breakout, the inconsistent ability to create the play best play from the point, and inconsistent activation. He's a top-15 player in this draft class, but he's not for the faint of the heart.

**David St-Louis:** April 23th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Korchinski's game is quite loose and with his skating, I'm not sure he will be able to tighten it up all that much. But the skill is there, the hands and agility, and the confidence to make plays. He's creative and sees plays develop, to an extent, as he also misses some options under pressure on breakouts, probably a factor of not having the speed and the solid posture to really adapt fluidly to that forechecking pressure. His skating also prevents him from reaching certain



plays. I doubt it improves all that much; maybe it reaches an average NHL grade at some point, but having a posture this poor probably points to something structural, body proportions or others. His backward skating is also quite a bit of a problem. But the most important weakness of his defensive game is his tendency to overly focus on the puck.

**David St-Louis:** April 15th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Very loose defensive game from Korchinski. He looked mentally checked out at times and didn't seem to be able to recognize his check at key times, moving off of him while he stayed alone inside space net-front. His retrievals are also a question mark as he lacks the fine ability to cut back from pressure, absorb forecheckers on his back and manipulate them that way. The skating is the big limiter of his defensive game most of the time, but he also lacks the defensive awareness, anticipation, and engagement that would make me confident that he will improve significantly in his path to the NHL. It's hard to project him as anything more than a passable defender. I liked his activations in this game: great timing, moves ahead of the play, and even leads it sometimes, getting teammates out of trouble by giving them instant options. I also like his ability to use his backhand on breakouts to make plays through opponents -- few defencemen in this draft shows this kind of ability consistently. Some of his decisions in puck-moving sequences were quite poor this game, however -- the risk management continues to be an issue. Not as much of an offensive showing overall from Korchinski. He's still hyper confident, mister spin-away-from-defenders, every time he gets the puck at the point. I think he belongs in the teens in this draft.

**David St-Louis:** April 13th, 2022

Vancouver Giants vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Korchinski was again very involved offensively, deep in the o-zone forechecking and exchanging with forwards, taking pucks from the blue down the half-wall for better look at the net...He's agile and his skating habits are advanced; he has learned to take every puck in movement because if he doesn't do so...He will be stuck. There is no upper/lower separation in his skating, which limits his ability to shift his weight and he lacks flexion. The skating is still pretty poor but fixable in some ways, maybe it can get to a 4.5-5 grade in a couple of years with intensive work. Is he the kind of player who will put in the hours? Not sure. I really like his transition and offensive game: the fakes, the patience to let plays develop and the sense to know they will develop. He controls the ice with the puck on his stick -- when he's not

risking plays for nothing. He has to learn to manage risk and make the simpler D-to-D pass sometimes. His rush defence is aggressive, partly a consequence of his deep offensive involvement, but if he gets beat, he has no recovery ability. Poor pivots, although the backward skating isn't as challenging as one might expect for him.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 20th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

The more I watch Korchinski, the more concerning his defence and activation become. Both are mindless. For activating, he just wanders. He doesn't anticipate his defensive partner joining the play, despite everyone on Seattle activating semi-regularly. Makes the basic reads, like anticipating the hand-off or joining the rush as the trailer. Beyond that, he's mostly just getting in the way or misreading space. He often fills the wrong lane. When he gets the puck, he forces shots instead of cutting inside or makes a needlessly complex pass. Defensively, he's constantly taking himself out of the play. He gets too far to the outside off-puck (wanders), which led to a goal against and another chance. And his stride's too limited to correct his mistakes. And then he just randomly lays on the ice and lets players around. No defensive problem-solving ability. Lets the attacker dictate his actions, and he's always late to react -- a bad combination. He's still a breakout wizard with tons of projectable habits, even if turnover prone. He's a middle-pairing guy at the next level. But whether he becomes an actually good top-four guy or just an overplayed one who gets cratered will come down to hockey sense development.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

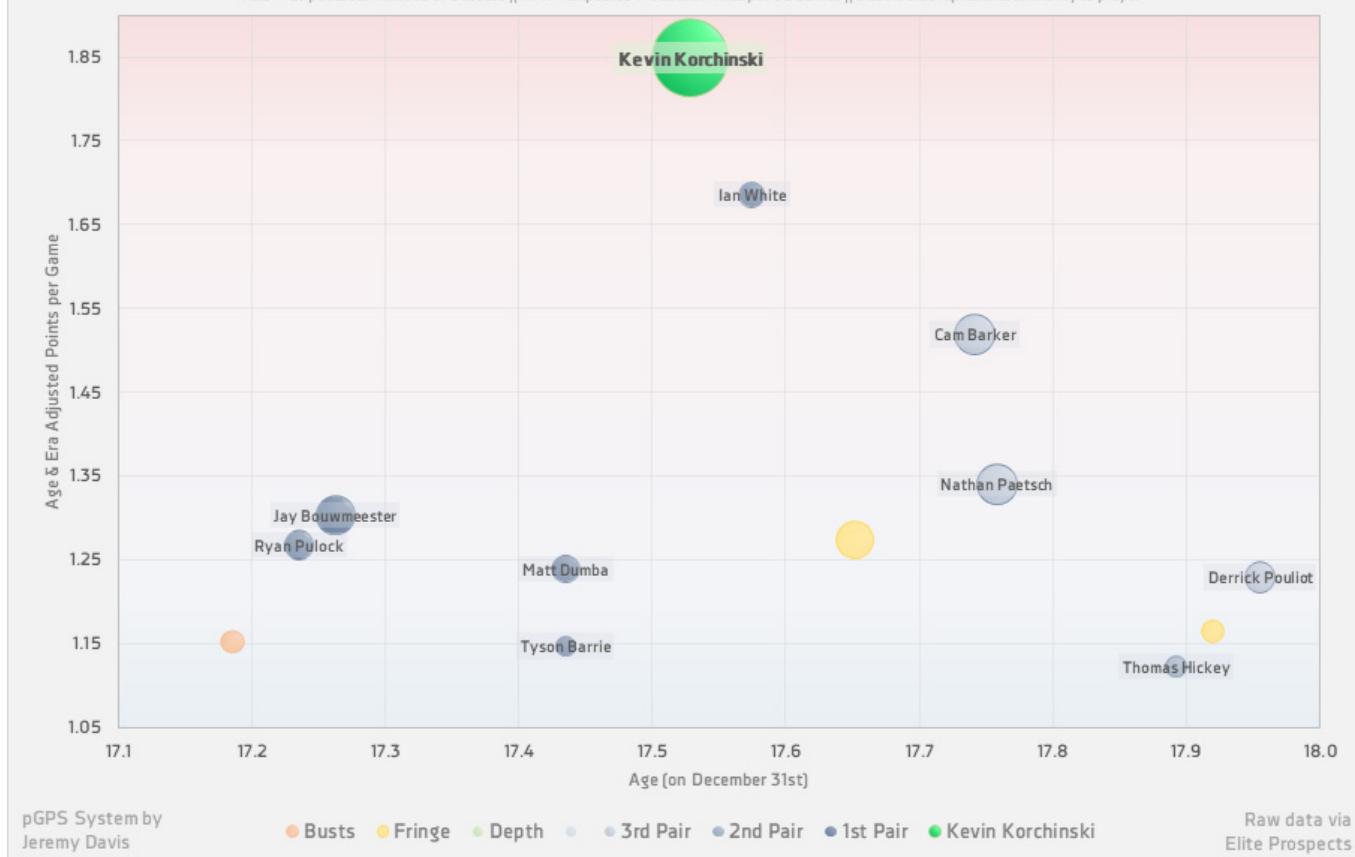
The usual breakout stuff from Korchinski: step inside, draw pressure, pass through it, and create advantages. Perfectly timed cutbacks and clear play-planning should allow him to play like this in the NHL, not to mention the handling skill. From the point, he mostly works laterally for opening lanes and occasionally pinches to extend offensive zone time. He largely does the same things every shift, but how he varies the end results shows creative: he'll cutback to escape, which leads to shooting opportunities, passes, cycle-creation, or simply making a D-to-D pass and getting open again. Much like Mateychuk, he's more of a prodder for seams than a true high-level creator like Mintyukov, but he'll do damage in the NHL. But Korchinski struggles with linking these things together. Infrequent activation, and when he's activated, he's making poor reads. He doesn't space the offensive zone. He doesn't adapt his route or speed to the options and threats

## Kevin Korchinski 2021-22 WHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 12 || Base XLS: 79% || Impact XLS: 41% || XPR: 33.3 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



in front of him. When he should go wide, he stays close. At best, he's doing nothing when activating off-puck. At worst, he's removing himself and another teammate from the puck carrier's pool of options. The defence, skating mechanics, and carrying decisions on the breakout will need work, too. Upside is high, but the chance that he's one of those middle-pairing by minutes, fringe NHLer by impact players is quite high.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Spokane Chiefs vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

A pretty bad defensive performance from Korchinski. He had an all-time bad play by laying down while defending a half-ice 1v1 - it was the worst play he could've made there. Pivots and backwards crossovers remain an issue. He tends to drop his chest without loading his push-off leg, leading to him getting beat wide. Didn't bother making up ground after turnovers - he just plants his feet and waits instead of closing the gap and angling out the attack. Still, he's aggressive, confident, and clearly wants to be a difference-maker. And this was the cleanest transition and offensive game I've seen from him. He's adding layers to his breakouts: deceptiveness, reading incoming feet, and timing plays. The pace remains, but he's showing better patience and control - even going for high-value plays at the end of shifts. Few players consistently

create advantages for their recipient up the ice like him. Constant activation. Extends OZP regularly. Set up a scoring chance by faking out a defender on the pass reception, circling the net, and passing under a stick across the slot. Several concerns remain: (1) from the point, he doesn't so much manipulate as much as he just reacts, (2) as a result, many of dekes to gain the middle are barely successful, and it's clearly not scalable to the next level, and (3) creation off the rush inside the OZ is limited, as he takes too long to connect with teammates. He's likely top-15 in this class. No. 2 or 3 upside given the aggressiveness, skill, and transition passing. Development will be about calibration and adding consistency to his puck touches.

**David St-Louis:** February 12th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

That was a really impressive performance from Korchinski. I didn't get the chance to evaluate his defence all that much, but the rest of his game shone. I like his skating habits and his first-touches; he plays with a lot of pace, with many receptions leading into the next play, which was, more often than not, a manipulation of a high defender. His skating looked much better in this game. Same flawed mechanics, but he is always in movement and retains speed by using his weight

and outside edges. Based on this performance, I would be inclined to give him a 5 (average grade). His handling skills look above-average. His combination of confidence, of skating habits, and those handling skills allowed him to beat the forecheck and create breakouts through the middle of the ice. The turnovers are still there, but to me, it's really a criterion problem. Korchinski is trigger happy; he tries to hit every low-percentage play he sees. I think he will adjust that criterion and become more conservative and, in turn, a better possession driver in the next few years.

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

This was entertaining. Korchinski has some of the best offensive ideas in the draft class. He shows high-level processing speed, adaptability, manipulation (one-on-one), and the ability to create switches in the opposition's coverage. He fakes with movement, and by using the hip pocket as he attacks down from the blue-line. He's a shooter, but also looks to make plays inside, and I like his attempts to attack behind the backs of defenders as his forwards climb up the wall. In transition, he joins his teammates, but could create better plays if he picked a lane -- if he slowed down to create more space for himself or committed to being F1 and skated past the defensive lane. His defence...decent in this game, but he did get beat wide. His combination of aggressiveness and below-average skating is dangerous. He could be a top-20 pick on sense, confidence, and offensive ideas alone.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 29th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Korchinski's game continues to improve. Retrievals are the clearest area of growth. He's scanning more regularly, establishing body positioning, and taking his time with the puck without losing the pace and inside lane attacks that made him so impressive early. More willing to make the simple and then get open for a return pass. Deception looks better: he waits for the reaction of the forecheck before making the pass. OZ positioning continues to become more aggressive, getting as deep as possible while leaving all five opponents in front of him. He's still constantly looking for dekes, cutbacks, and cross-ice passes, but his timing and selection are better. Gap control continues to improve -- it's still not tight because he over-backpedals but still manages to close space and get the odd stop without lunging or crossing over. He very clearly wants to be a creator, showing both playmaking and shooting skill. I don't see much foresight in his game, but he puts himself in positions to become a planner. The stride, play selection, and activation limitations

remain. In one sequence, he could've created a high-danger chance if he delayed earlier, but instead he forced a pass to trailer through the closed lane. So many of his off-puck activations were bad. He stepped into his teammates' space, stole their route, and didn't even try to stop in front of the net. There's a lot that Korchinski has to learn, but he has dynamic skills, plays a dynamic style, and doesn't let mistakes compound. Clear upward development curve. Looks like a possible top-15 player.

**Daniel Gee:** January 25th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Spokane Chiefs - WHL

Very fun viewing. While Korchinski's stride is pretty underdeveloped mechanically, his edges, spin-offs, and in-motion play were highlighted against Spokane. The cut-backs to release pressure were a constant feature against forecheckers and allowed Korchinski the runway to activate through the neutral zone and push higher percentage passing plays. He was beating forecheckers, F1's, and constantly breaking out in-motion. He was doing stuff like dragging the puck behind his legs using his independent upper body control, in full stride, to push back defenders all while distributing through an open lane to his wing. There were still some classic nuclear moments in transition -- just dreadful passing decisions, but they weren't as prevalent as earlier viewings. He was a part of multiple give-and-go one touch sequences as well. In the third, he cut-back on a retrieval, breaking the ankles of a forechecker. Korchinski then made a wonderful in-flight pass that led to a primary assist. Just a really dynamic and skillful play.

When Seattle had sustained pressure set up, Korchinski did a great job living in the slot, abusing his movement to open lanes, maneuver past aggression on the line, and blending handling to create advantages. In one sequence in the first, Korchinski took a puck from the boards, to the top of the point and released an outside leg tip/pass to a teammate positioned backdoor. While he was somewhat inefficient getting pucks through from the point, with calibration and the skill present there is something here. In the third, he baited a puck, beating an aggressive defender badly. From there Korchinski dragged the puck into the slot, activated through space and got a backhand shot off (because of how he exited the corner). In general he's just a super entertaining creative at this level, with the skill to pull it off. Will it translate and cause headaches -- maybe and most likely.

On the defensive end of the puck Korchinski lives in a realm of zero structure. In transition he misses scanning opportunities and doesn't read opponents off his peripherals well. In the first he made an incredibly bad decision to launch into

a far-board swing, missing the defender that slipped behind him, and essentially allowing 2-on-1. His coverage is lax at best, and he coasts after his neutral zone activations fail. When they succeed, it's usually on the basis of an opponent not being able to deal with that level of aggressiveness. In sustained coverage he frankly runs around too much. Reactive movement hurts his ability as a playstopper, almost always focusing on pucks rather than the developing play. Needs major structural work to be effective at higher levels.

Overall, he looks like a first rounder; the worry about his transitional mistakes earlier in the season is less so and the skill is ever so apparent. He is a project, but a worthwhile one. Probably a top-20 pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

Korchinski's more of a skilled skater than a technically sound one. There's some quickness to his game, and he almost achieves proper posture with strides after the initial acceleration phase. Loves the cutback in all situations, but the lack of depth kills his explosiveness with the manoeuvre. That's the primary source of many of his turnovers in transition. He loses focus and throws away pucks randomly, but then problem-solves advanced solutions. Deceptive with his feet, but not with his eyes or puck positioning. Connected with an against the grain breakaway feed in the NZ where most go for the dump-in, and has a few other creative transition passes sprinkled in the bevy of turnovers. Not a planner, but many dynamic qualities to his game. The playmaking's a clear strength, as he sets up teammates after joining the rush, from the point after working laterally, and off the boards. A bit lost defensively, even if he's willing to engage. He doesn't use his feet to win battles, routinely loses track of threats, and disengages too early. The lack of knee bend impacts his defensive skating. He's a tough projection, but I'm increasingly confident in his upside. A significant project, but his improving rapidly, plays a dynamic game, and demonstrates NHL-calibre playmaking. Many of his transition issues will come with skating refinement. Rare to prospects this willing to attack the inside lane in all three zones. He'd be a fine pick around 20-35.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 15th, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Some nice moments, but mostly a poor performance. Even then, Korchinski was very involved every shift - he doesn't let mistakes compound. Lots of cutbacks on the breakouts, one time leading to a breakaway pass. Activated from the point and created a scoring chance by passing through a

defender's legs. Consistently uses the inside lane, sometimes a bit too aggressively. His cutbacks lack explosiveness from his upright skating posture, which leads to trouble against smart forecheckers. But, he times them appropriately, showing an awareness of back pressure. Doesn't scan enough, leading to turnovers off retrievals. Also doesn't move the puck early enough - would benefit greatly from a give-and-go game and more short-range plays. He's skilled, but activation isn't his game. Gap was tighter than normal, enabling several NZ steals and forced dump-ins. Committing and reactionary, but he's never unengaged and his defensive keeps improving. The tools and mindset were enough to keep in the mid-first discussion.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 14th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Korchinski did most of the high-level transition stuff in this game: draw in the F1, use the middle, change the point of attack with cross-ice passes, and beat the next layer. He's able to turn relatively nondescript pucks into scoring chances or qualities looks up the ice because he's so aggressive. He also doesn't consistently pre-scan, which leads to major turnover issues. More specifically, he's not a high-end planner. He's all read-and-react. But eliminate his first play, and he just offloads the puck without even trying to find something else. With the puck, he's clearly a skilled skater and handler, but lacks mechanical refinement (skating: lacks ankle flexion and hip engagement; handling: top hand stays tight to his hip and keeps the puck centred between his feet in open ice). He'll cut away from pressure at the right times, work laterally with the puck, and throw out a bit of deception. The passing looked much better than in previous games, instantly finding teammates in the slot after activating into the rush on multiple sequences.

I think Korchinski's usually a player that we don't value - a read-and-react player with mechanical and problem-solving limitations. However, he puts himself in the middle of most plays. He clearly wants to be a difference-maker, and the dynamic style's here, just in a different way than normal. Put it together, and he could be a No. 3 or even 2. If not, he's probably more of a frustrating bottom-pairing or depth option.

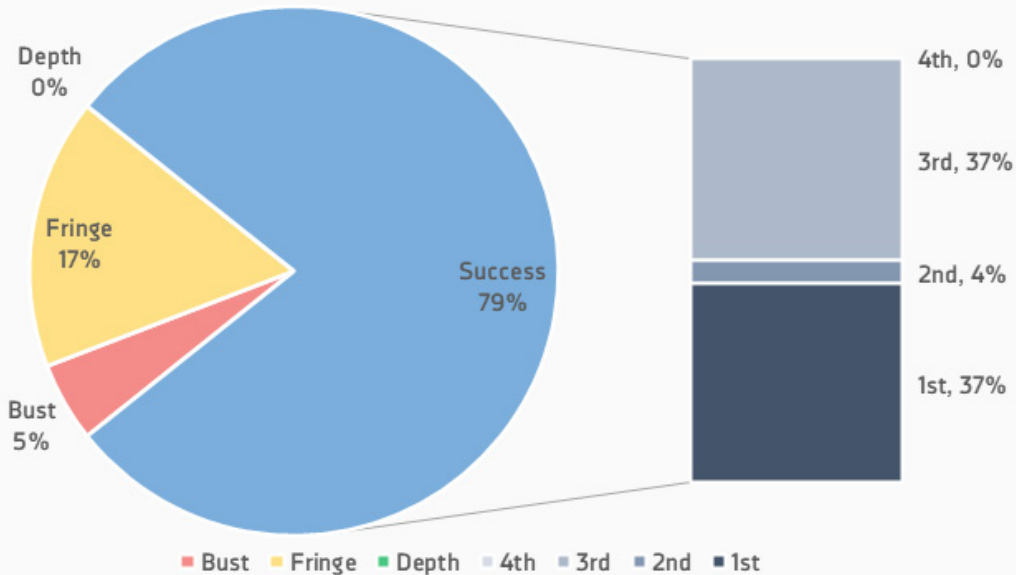
**Cam Robinson:** December 14th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Korchinski was all over the place in this game - retrieving pucks, drawing coverage and making a move to shake and step out, or drawing in and distributing it up. He pinched down the wall with reckless abandonment, he joined the

## Kevin Korchinski 2021-22 WHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



rush and staying the high slot hunting for lanes. He's clearly very comfortable handling the puck in tight quarters but it can look at little awkward at times. He's got good quickness and edges - even while in possession but I wouldn't call him a technically gifted skater. Could clean up some elements and end up at a 5.5 or 6 though.

Coughed the puck up a couple of times as well which seems like a per-game lock. But he shies away from no play and the creativity sparks when he's out there. Interesting player.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 3rd, 2021

Victoria Royals vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Flip a coin every time Korchinski skates back for a retrieval. He doesn't consistently check over both shoulders, doesn't consistently deceive, and doesn't show much awareness of space. Half of the time, he steps inside, dekes around a player, and works a give-and-go. The other half, he throws the puck straight to the other team. Some of these players are really concerning - like, there wasn't even a teammate on the side of the ice that he's passing to. It's a constant theme in his game. Likewise, he continually veers too far to the perimeter when defending the rush off-puck, and then turns the wrong way and stops on his inside edges. Both of these are so frequent that there's no way they're the result of faulty structure. I appreciate Korchinski's activation, unwavering confidence, desire to create, and physicality/body positioning on the defensive end. Some of his passing ideas are advanced, but he overhandles the puck and starts his manipulation sequences too early (he needs to delay to ensure he gets his desired space). He's simultaneously a

first-round pick and a late-round pick, often on the same shifts. Perhaps a second-rounder, not too unlike last year's Shai Buium minus the high-level deception.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Well, that was grim. Korchinski failed nine zone exits in this game, the highest I've tracked from any player in any game this season. Same stuff as normal, just extra problematic. His turns lack power because of his lack of depth, leaving him stationary and forcing him to stickhandle his way out. He fixates on options up the boards, keeps his head up, and still passes when forecheckers arrive. He turns into pressure and always tries to cut around it along the perimeter -- even when he's already along the boards. When he gets the puck on the inside lane, he again, looks, presumably sees an option, and then passes straight to the other team. Rare player who both plays too fast and too slow. And then, he sends a teammate in alone with a three-line breakaway pass on his first touch of the puck. He's shifty and active from the point, but rarely achieves anything. Physical on the defensive end, sure, but not at the right times. He loses his man, gets beat in transition (pivoting and backpedalling issues), and generally doesn't scan enough. I have no answers. The flashes are first-round, but the execution's seventh-round.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Korchinski looks like a first-rounder, if not a top-15 pick. He's extremely high-event, joining every rush, starting ev-

ery breakout, and demanding the puck non-stop. A skilled handler who tries to attacker forecheckers and bring pucks to the inside, and then he makes the pass in motion to join the play. Deceives on retrievals and shows an understanding how of manage and manipulate back pressure with fast edge-to-edge movements and skating-focused escapes. Breaks up plays, often in recovery situations, and manages to kill plays in the NZ.

He's at least an NHL average projectable shooter and shows some playmaking skill, too. But everything comes with a cost. His skating posture lacks depth, which leads to manoeuvres occurring in slo-mo, and he's extremely turnover prone on retrievals. Doesn't scan before making plays or even when defending off-puck. Spends a ton of time defending nothing, or committing so far to the perimeter that low-skill attackers easily cut inside. His handling's most inside edge-based and he struggles to adapt. Limited understanding of space with the puck -- he charges straight at the next defender and usually turns it over. Pinches a ton, often by charging straight at the puck carrier -- great idea to extend OZP, but easily beaten. One second, he's a genius. The next, he's barely a WHL-calibre thinker. Usually look for stackability with players with this much volatility, but he quite fit that mark given the skating limitations. No idea what to think at this stage.

**J.D. Burke:** October 15th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

Really interesting outing from Korchinski. The way that he carefully plans most of his routes with the puck to set up his next move – manipulating opposing defenders to create space or passing lanes – stuck out in a big way in this performance. He wasn't afraid to use the middle of the ice in transition. Showed some small area skill and problem-solving ability in close quarters. Skating stuck out to me as a bit of a problem in this one. He's far too upright, lacking depth in his stride, and the skating habits aren't quite there to make up for it. Everything seemed to happen from a glide or a standstill for Korchinski in this contest. Couple that with a lack of pre-scanning or deception on retrievals, and I'm left with some concerns about his capacity to handle the increased forechecking pace of the professional level. Ultimately, the creativity with the puck and overall intelligence are enough to warrant a first-round grade, but this is a tricky projection.

**Daniel Gee:** October 10th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs Portland Winterhawks - WHL

It almost feels as if you could write a whole book full of notes when you watch Korchinski play. His game against Portland was volatile, high event, and while there are obvious

warts, his skill set constantly shines through

Korchinski's ability in sustained pressure highlighted his game against Portland. He is a constant dotted-line facilitator who patterns as a very shot heavy, constantly pushing lateral mobility to find clean shot seams and high traffic shot scenarios. Mechanically, his shot is above-average -- he creates an incredible amount of down force through highly leveraged weight-transfer and unlocked arms. C-cuts, edge-based maneuvers, open hips, and weight-shifts dominate Korchinski's blueline activations. In the second, he adjusted to open a pass lane and received the puck, made a lateral shift full of body-misdirection, froze an aggressive defender, and fired a puck in on traffic. He also had a wonderful high-danger chance near the conclusion of the game, born out of an activation; while reading a turnover in the near corner, he shifted out laterally and activated to the near circle where he was able to shoot all alone. He has tunnel vision at times, but he loves to hook the puck after manipulating with his eye-line, baiting defenders in closer, and allowing more room for his pass targets. Korchinski is always in motion, always rotating defenders.

There's obvious translatability in the way Korchinski transports the puck, but in this viewing, scanning and motion-based passing were inconsistent. He started the game with an awful static outlet that was immediately picked off and resulted in an instant counter-attack. I worry about some of his scanning habits in this game, particularly coming out of retrievals -- there were far too many uncontrolled exits that halted Seattle's transition. The good news is that Korchinski showed a lot of translatable transition skills. He completed a couple of 2-line long bomb outlets, can saucer the puck out of traffic, and he's really good at activating off-puck to join rushes. He had one shift where he upped his pace to join a rush, executed a hook pass on the entry, but turned it over (volatile).

Korchinski is prone to cause high-blood pressure at times in his defensive zone. He can, at times, swing violently into positions to protect the inside lane and create turnovers through leveraged speed and stick work. Korchinski is active in executing pins below his goal line but suffers from some lapses in processing. He had a disgusting veer-off graph in the second, floating away from a check, allowing a mini 2-on-1 after a transitional teammate turnover. He was also on for a goal against after he activated too high in his own zone, leaving his man on the net front alone to tip the puck in. Skating is an issue on retrievals -- heel kick off his left foot, long lunges due to an extended stride, very inconsistent and bobbing posture and upper body. Can mirror foot work but struggled to string the action of keeping in line with his

**"He's one of the best players I've ever played with. Unreal player, an unreal guy. He's such a hard worker off the ice... He's great on the power play. Really deceptive. Great skater and a super good guy too."**

*Teammate Jordan Gustafson on Kevin Korchinski*

opponent and then executing a stick in release stop. Lots of refinement needed but a lot of potential is here.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 8th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Spokane Chiefs - WHL

Korchinski's still chaos personified. Some of it can be traced to his skating: Lacks ankle flexion, hip engagement, completed extensions, and volume to offset it. He tries to separate in-tight, and even deceives before hitting the punch turn, but the lack of depth means his starts and finishes means it's more a speed-killing turn than a separating one. There's also a lot of questionable decisions, from skating directly into pressure without manipulating first, over-estimating his handling skill, and throwing pucks away with no-chance passes. Inconsistent body positioning on retrievals interacts with the skating limitations to hurt his success. On the other hand, he consistently uses the middle, deceives when given a bit of space, looks for cross-ice options, and connects with passes immediately. He seems to often know the next play before getting the puck. He's still not an instinctual defender but shows better activity, more physicality, and better off-puck reads. He's scanning more frequently. Establishing his gap earlier in the NZ but he respects speed too much, presumably because he can't pivot. Too committing laterally, too -- better attackers will run through him and get inside. No idea what to think.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 25th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL


If Korchinski fixes the skating, I see no reason why he can't be a first-rounder next season. He lacks some depth through the hips, over-rotates his upper-body, and commits to everything. There's some skating skill here, using double cuts and punch turns but he can't really separate through his feet alone. The skating limits his defence, where he's laterally committing and very all-or-nothing face-to-face

because he doesn't understand how to angle while keeping his momentum backwards. Some physicality and scanning defensively, even the reads are more reactive and attempts to fix problems, rather than prevent them.

Chases too much, but he wants to be a difference-maker on the defensive end. Offensively, he checks off most boxes: takes pucks in motion, makes the next play in motion, handling skill to beat pressure, looks for the cross-slot/HD pass from the point, high-level deception. Looks to invert pressure on the forecheck and tries to manipulate. Always uses the inside lane, but doesn't move pucks quick enough. Activation instincts and reads plays within the flow of the game -- forced or play-killing decisions are infrequent. Top hand freed from the hip for range of control and he handles in movement, often deceiving along the way. The skating's a big question mark. Otherwise, he looks like a first-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 24th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

Korchinski's mostly chaos with some serious skill flashes. On the skill side, he already sucks in the F1, inverts pressure, looks off his passing target, and connects without breaking stride before joining the rush. Consistently uses the inside lane. Immediately turns retrievals to the middle, too. Frequent pace and direction changes, while throwing out feints to confuse forecheckers. High-level breakout potential. Constantly looks to activate from the point, using his hands (projectable form -- top hand free) to beat defenders, often blended into the pass reception. Hands-in-front, engaged lower-body on wrist with elbow up -- plenty of room to add new shooting skills. The bad, is well, his frequent turnovers from simply refusing to deviate from his plan as variables change (play fixation). Over-rotates upper-body and doesn't properly load stride from lack of hip engagement. Inconsistent gap and defensive reads. He looks like a potential first-rounder given the skill, but he requires a ton of refinement to get there. 



20  
Rank

A  
Grade

5  
Skating

7  
Shooting

6  
Passing

6.5  
Puckhandling

7  
Hockey Sense

4  
Physical

# JAGGER FIRKUS

RW | MOOSE JAW WARRIORS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. APR. 24, 2004  
WEIGHT 154 SHOOTS RIGHT

"His skill level is phenomenal. I don't think it's a stretch to call his hands among the best in the draft. He might take a while to make the NHL though since he's so far from physically ready." - Eastern Conference Scout in May 2022

SHADES OF: Elias Pettersson

55%	38%	19%	1.31
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	66	36	44	80

## Scouting Report

Jagger Firkus is more than one of the draft's best names. He's also one of the best finishers in the class, and a pretty damn good playmaker, too.

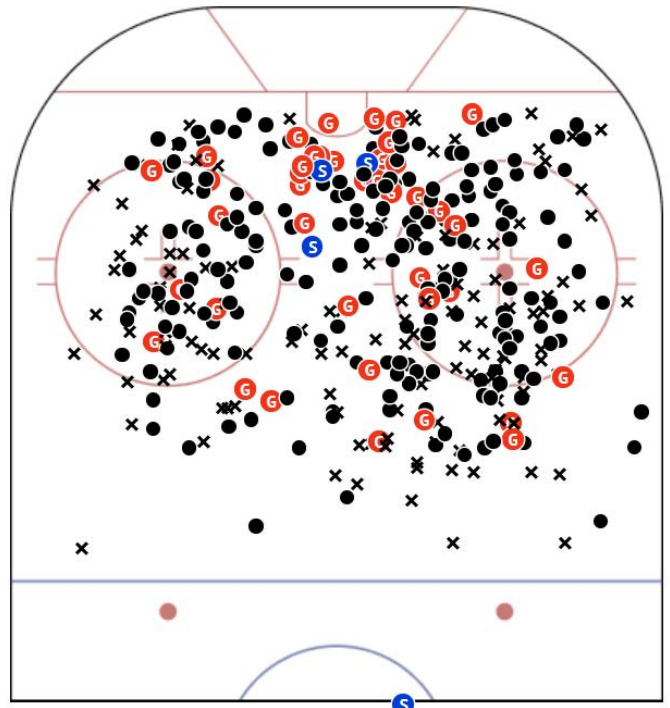
A credible threat from range, Firkus beat WHL goaltenders from just about everywhere in the offensive zone last season. Perhaps most impressive was his ability to launch the puck from just about any physical arrangement; off of the inside or outside leg, against the grain, and often while contorting his body in every which direction.

"A central theme to Firkus' scoring game is attacking at angles and getting the defence and netminder to react to his movement," Elite Prospects Dir. of Film Scouting Cam Robinson wrote in a mid-season Scout's Notebook article on EP Rinkside. "His ability to release it in-flight without first coasting to give away the game is highly translatable.

"Firkus also uses splendid technical abilities to generate a great deal of downward force on the shaft of his stick by connecting kinetic chains of energy from his lower body through his core, arms and finally the hands and wrists. His ability to pre-load, load, and culminate the mechanics are what drives his power despite the very slight frame."

A cursory glance at Firkus' shot chart from our partners

SPOTS ON ICE



at InStat Hockey bears out his ability to find twine from any position in the offensive zone – there's red goal markers just about everywhere on that plot.



Still, it took some time for the Warriors forward to find the back of the net with any consistency. Firkus only scored twice in his first 10 games, and he looked more like a Day 2 pick than someone worthy of first-round consideration for a large chunk of the season. He relied far too much on shooting skill, often settling for low percentage shots and failing to do much damage as a result.

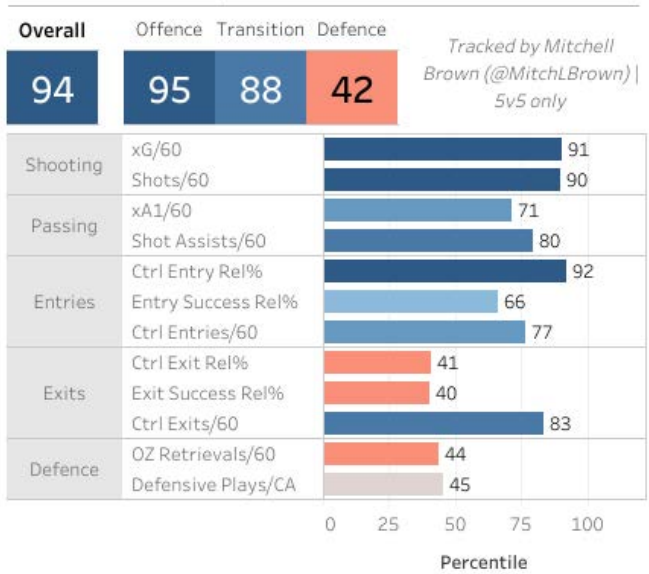
As the season progressed, though, Firkus added new elements to his game, and the points followed. His off-puck reads improved, as did his sense of timing. By about the midway point in the year, he was regularly driving the inside for scoring opportunities, too. He became a well-rounded scoring threat before our very eyes.

His playmaking followed a similar trajectory. The introduction of a delay game, in particular, did wonders for the Irma, Alberta-born winger.

"Firkus' delay game was working in this one," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a May 11th game report. "Where most players outrace, he cuts back and finds the trailer. He deceives inside the setup for those passes. If he can't delay, he'll find a different passing option or deke through pressure. Even if defenders take away his space on the pass reception, he'll find a way to get around them."

His skating stride is the only tool in Firkus' offensive projection that really leaves anything to be desired. The lack of strength limits his ability to achieve any depth or the proper skating posture, and his heels kick wildly on every extension. He's shifty and relatively quick, but there's plenty of room to grow there.

Games Tracked: 10 | Minutes Tracked: 175.6



Just adding some strength is going to do wonders for Firkus' skating, and it's also going to have the added benefit of making him much more durable during wall-play and physical engagements at every end of the ice. At a slight 5-foot-10 and 154 pounds, that's not the case at present.

There's a lot of upside here, though, and some team is going to take a hearty swing with their first-round pick to make sure he's in their organization because of it. He's a dual-threat scorer with high-end sense and an elite shot. There's legitimate 30-goal potential here. Then again, he would hardly be the first frail, average skating 5-foot-10 winger to fail to realize that potential.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Hunter Shinkaruk

YEAR: 2012  
SIMILARITY: 92%

2 Colton Yellow Horn

YEAR: 2005  
SIMILARITY: 91%

3 Nigel Dawes

YEAR: 2003  
SIMILARITY: 91%

4 Gilbert Brule

YEAR: 2005  
SIMILARITY: 91%

5 Duncan Milroy

YEAR: 2001  
SIMILARITY: 91%

6 Zach Boychuk

YEAR: 2007  
SIMILARITY: 90%

7 Jordan Weal

YEAR: 2010  
SIMILARITY: 90%

8 Scott Glennie

YEAR: 2009  
SIMILARITY: 89%

9 Kenndal McArdle

YEAR: 2005  
SIMILARITY: 89%

10 Peter Mueller

YEAR: 2006  
SIMILARITY: 89%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 13th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

Another impressive game from Firkus. The arsenal of shots is crazy. He shoots off either leg with his body contorted. He almost seems more confident shooting from those positions. The puck explodes off his stick in just about position. Sometimes settles for low-percentage shots, but he's also inside-driven. Fakes the outside dash, then cuts back inside. Drives wide on defenders, using a change of pace to create a speed differential. One of the best wingers on breakouts

in the draft class because he always looks to the inside or cross-ice for a passing option. Delay game continues to be a strength; he stops to allow the trailer to catch up, or just slows down to wait for back pressure before making a play through it.

**Cam Robinson:** May 11th 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

An absolute gem of a game from Firkus in this one. Here's hoping a few lottery teams were in attendance because he

looked like an elite option tonight. He had 11 attempts on net, including a beautiful cradle and snap wrist shot goal in the high slot, and another tally where he went skate to stick to back of the net while crossing the high seam. He produces tremendous force on his release - often from off balance or while cutting through seams. He was effective in pursuit, taking clean routes and reducing space quickly. He jumps into holes, finds soft areas of the ice, and was constantly assessing. He desperately needs 25lbs on his frame to handle the rigours of the pro game, but when he finally gets it, theres a serious player here.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 11th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

Perhaps the best game I've seen from a draft-eligible forward this season. Firkus' delay game was working in this one. Where most players outrace, he cuts back and finds the trailer. He deceives inside the set up for those passes. If he can't delay, he'll find a different passing option or deke through pressure. Even if defenders take away his space on the pass reception, he'll find a way to get around them. Consistently works pucks off the boards and to the middle in transition. In the offensive zone, he shows both finishing and playmaking ability, often linking them together.

Consistently finds space in the slot, sometimes in creative, advanced ways. The shot remains a rocket. Scored with catch-and-release wrister: chest up, head up, hands in front with the top arm elbow parallel to his shoulder. Deceives inside the release. Handling skill turns tricky passes into two-touch shots, and he adapts his release to pressure and situation. In this game alone, he fired a two-touch wrister, catch-and-release wrister, a one-timer, and wristers off either leg.

Has everything required to score goals in the NHL. Skating remains a bit iffy, but that's expected for a player this slight. He has moments of proper depth and he's a skilled skater (punch turn, jab, heel-to-heel) who chooses the right skill for the situation. Looked like a top-20 pick in this game.

**Cam Robinson:** April 29th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Despite grabbed 2+1 in this game, it wasn't the best outing for Firkus. He was opportunistic for both his goals - the first, he jumped into the slot with speed, got down on one knee and buried the one-timer. The second, he collected a rebound out to the side and converted from a tough angle. He also set up Mateychuk with an easy A1 on the PP. There were other chances and he showed his ability to get his wicked shot off in unbalanced positions. But there was a lot of coasting and space hunting instead of puck hunting. His acceleration

and top gear without the puck shows clear structural flaws - side to side arm swing, overbent at the waist, and a short extension. It's not a stretch to assume adding 20 or more pounds to his frame - mostly in the core and legs, will help the postural issues a lot, but they're still present now.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

What to make of Firkus. He can rip it from just about any position. One of the draft's most dexterous shooters. Takes one-timers with his toes facing the end-boards and getting power through shoulder rotation, rather than hip rotation. And the shot's a rocket. Tons of pace, but also recognizes when to cut back and wait for options. Rips possession away from defenders on the forecheck. Manages contact better than one might think given his size, but part of his success is making plays early. Lacks a bit of patience on breakouts, but he generally looks to the inside. Skilled skater but stride remains weak. Expect that he'll achieve a deeper posture over time. Significant heel kick, too. It's probably a 5. I can see a first-round argument given the combination of shooting, delay game, and inside play

**Mitchell Brown:** February 27th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Firkus' production and play are misaligned in my viewings. This was no different. He grabbed two points, but didn't have any greater impact on the game beyond several shots immediately after OZFOs. Scored with a big slap shot from the point. He had multiple notable forechecking sequences, and was rewarded once with a scoring chance. Didn't pass much outside the DZ. A non-factor in gaining the OZ, even bringing little off-puck movement and skating to create space for his linemates. The shot's clearly an NHL skill, and seems likely to improve as he gets stronger and develops more consistency in his skating. But I didn't see much else that suggests top-50 prospect.

**Cam Robinson:** February 15th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs Lethbridge Hurricanes - WHL

Very quiet outing for Firkus in this one. Just a couple of chances on goal and neither were all that threatening. He was kept to the outside far too often and was ineffective on the forecheck. The stride is below average and when he's not slicing and dicing into open ice to get his shot off, he's not doing much at all. He made a couple of nice outlet passes in flight and hitting the NZ. Showed his hands on the PP while carrying and entering. But otherwise, not a lot going on here.

## Jagger Firkus 2021-22 WHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 20 || Base XLS: 55% || Impact XLS: 26% || XPR: 48.9 || Drafted Pct: 95%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**Daniel Gee:** February 5th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

First time seeing Firkus this season and for all the hype around his production, he was a bit underwhelming. Regardless, there were some eye-catching moments in this game, and despite his very slight frame, he held his own in heavy contested areas of the ice.

Probably the most interesting part of Firkus' game is how patient he is on-puck. He waits to find open lanes and isn't afraid of, has the handling ability (unlocked top arm) to beat defenders in small-ice scenarios, and in general, he can break down opponents by waiting for suboptimal actions. Combine that with proactive scans to find teammates in dangerous areas of the ice, an above-average shot and clear passing skill in the form of slips and hooks, he has a strong offensive profile. In transition he abused cut-backs to release pressure while on-puck, often delaying to find better passing lanes. In the second he worked a crazy inside handle to escape his zone, joined a 2-on-1 off-puck to add himself as an option. In the same period he had an absolutely wild pass reception, grabbing a puck from behind his back while in full stride, spinning into a pass that was turned over. He even connected on a 2-on-1, give-and-go, but missed the shot wide. Firkus can be predictable as soon as he turns to release pressure

-- not sure how much I like that.

In sustained pressure he was surprisingly strong on recoveries, absorbing physicality and escaping to attack the dotted-lines. He had multiple scoring chances by virtue of Firkus taking a pass, and instantly attacking through the slot to leverage his shot. His release is wicked, mechanically clean, as well. Took good shots in this game, but didn't face a tonne of contention. Distributed well. His best sequence of this game was at the end of the third. Firkus worked a puck to the right-hand circle, looked off and made a perfect cross-crease pass to Yager, who hit the post. Later in the shift he found open space on the other circle, but flubbed his shot when a puck bounced onto his stick. Love his jump, and can understand his penchant to try high-danger plays considering his skill set -- could get frustrating though. In his defence he did facilitate a bunch of low-to-high passes out of his retrieval work. I think his skating is a five, but he could clean his extensions up. Not sure how well he projects when all his opponents out weigh him -- he won't be as able to take the physical pressure as he does in the WHL. Looked absolutely lost on a long sustained defending play in this one -- almost no impact as the high defender.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

Still scoring, and still scoring more than the on-ice play would suggest. That's not to say he's a bad prospect; he's probably a second-rounder because he brings plenty of top-nine skills. His delay game is already strong, probably top-10 in the draft class. Best sequences are when linking the delay game with pace, such as attacking fast, cutting back, and moving the puck to the inside just before backpressure arrives. Shockingly sturdy when in a proper knees-over-toes posture, but he lacks the strength to maintain it consistently. Advanced shooter, but inconsistent set ups (tries to shoot through defenders) limit his effectiveness, and his off-puck instincts are hindered by failing to establish body positioning before receiving the pass. Lacks creativity in transition at times, and he's certainly too willing to defer to Yager. Projecting Firkus definitely requires an active imagination – after all, you're banking on him learning to combine and link several skills that he doesn't use consistently. How much of that comes from his lack of strength and inconsistent posture likely dictates his ranking. For now, he's fine as a 40s-60s player.

**Cam Robinson:** January 22nd, 2022

Red Deer Rebels vs Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

It's easy to see the appeal of Firkus when he's in-flight and handling with a loose top hand, his eyes up and his shifty skating is on. It was on at times tonight and was able to make defenders miss in the NZ. He used the defender 'window' several times and buried one of them. Activated well off of the right point on the PP. Set up Mateychuk with a low-high dish on the PP.

He was also knocked off stride too easily, lost some board battles, and was kept to the outside on some rush attempts. clearly , strength is a major issue at this point. Even when his skills were used correctly and worked, he still had a difficult time creating enough separation to really open a lane or exploit a gap. I do like the release with the change in point off of the rush, but it was fairly easy to read for the most part and that won't fly as he moves up.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 31st, 2021

Red Deer Rebels vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

Although scoring a ton lately, I'm still waiting for Firkus' big execution breakout. He's a multi-layered deception threat, combining weight shifts, puck positioning, and eye positioning to make defenders move out of his desired space. But he struggles to find separation, he's easily pushed off pucks, and struggles to gain the inside lane. Now, his understanding

of body positioning and engagement is above average for the level. It's a strength thing. His go-to stationary cross-ice transition passes didn't click in this game. The shot's mostly mechanically sound, but I didn't see any ability to get into the space required to use it. I like him as a second-round pick because of the manipulation, shooting form, and passing skill.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 2nd, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Firkus has the details but not the decision-making. He delays the right times, scans regularly, sees options on the inside, and still gets forced into poor transition decisions. Off-puck, he's always moving with a purpose. He arrives in space at the right time. He knows how to engage and disengage to create some space. Timed. He's very weak. Stride lacks depth, power, and control. It's visible in the shakiness through his edges. He loses balance and has difficulty maintaining body positioning, even after being first on the puck. I didn't see any notable puck sequences from him in this game. Later rounds based on this game, but I've seen better.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Prince Albert Raiders - WHL

Still slick. Firkus is a crafty handler with a keen awareness of space and speed to delay, speed up, or cut inside. Just when it seemed like PA had figured his delay game out, he'd throw out another move as the backpressure overshot. It's probably not going to work at the next level quite like that, but his feet for pressure will translate. He usually looks for the trailer or the cross-ice option, owning a number of ways to get there (backhand, saucer, slip). In general, he creates space for his intended recipient. He's a sound mechanically-sound shooter, too. The skating lacks power and mechanical refinement, but high crossover integration and a strong change-of-pace game. Has some dynamic skating qualities. A bit of a long-term player, but I think he's a second rounder.

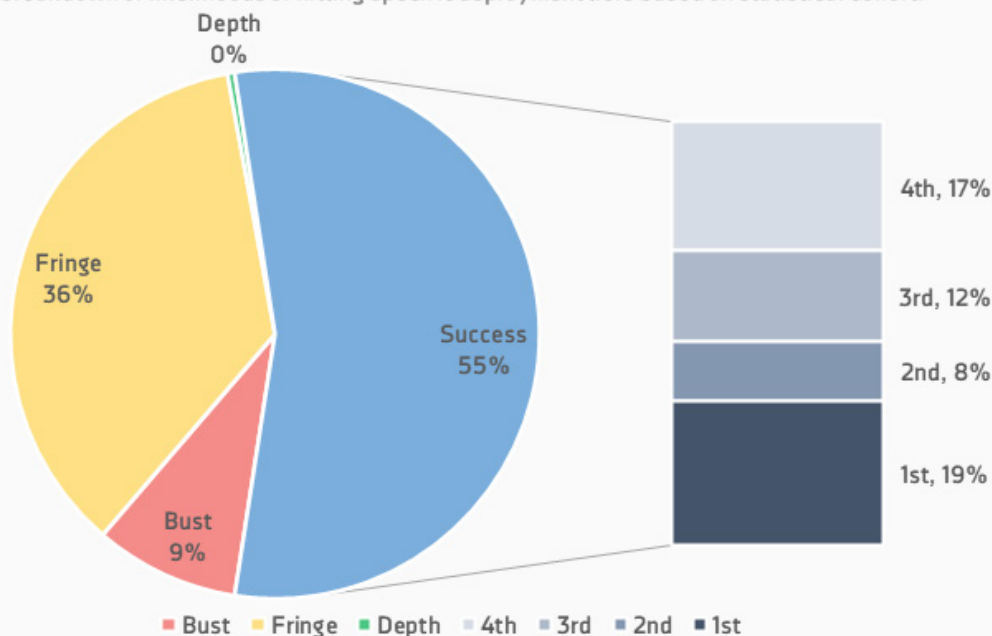
**Mitchell Brown:** November 6th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

Firkus is a long-term prospect. He's mistake-prone in transition, overly optimistic under pressure, and physically weak. But there's so much to work with here. He manipulates defenders with his eyes, then passes to a teammate in the slot just as they move their stick. All of his actions are timed well, even off-puck. He arrives in space at the right times, engages physically at the right times, and jumps into passing lanes at the right times. His playmaking skill drives his offensive game, even though it often results in failed breakouts and entries because he looks for the high-value play consistently.

## Jagger Firkus 2021-22 WHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



He pre-scans and plays with considerable pace, so I expect that to improve. He's able to play so many different offence roles: set-up artist along the perimeter, inside-lane attacker, off-puck scorer, puck carrying threat, etc. Looks like a quality second-round pick.

**J.D. Burke:** October 20th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

It's never a good sign when you're the third-most threatening player on your line at even strength, even if those linemates are two quality WHLers in Eric Alarie and Brayden Yager. Worse still when your standout moments mostly occurred on the defensive side of the game and you were outscored (by my rough count) 2-0 at evens. So, it wasn't Firkus' night is what I'm trying to say. The first thing that sticks out is Firkus' skating. The form isn't where it needs to be but that hasn't stopped him from covering tonnes of ground thus far in his career. Still, you'd like to see him rein in the wildly swinging arms, the tilt at the hips, and the tendency to out-toe. Another part of Firkus' game that I'd like to see tightened up is his propensity to overshoot his check skating back into the defensive zone. It cost him on the first goal, one that occurred 15 or so seconds into the hockey game (his man was wide open), and it just about cost him on a few occasions later in the game. You love the work ethic, but a little discretion would go a long way there. His most interesting offensive moment came on an intercepted breakout pass high in the offensive zone, one that he nearly

turned into a quality scoring chance with a dart outside and a hook pass to his teammate in the slot. Firkus also had a one-touch shot that went post-and-out in the third period, but that was hardly noteworthy. Honestly, I just think it wasn't his night. Same goes for his whole team, really. The Ice pummelled the Warriors to the tune of a 10-2 final. Hardly a great evaluative environment.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 15th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Prince Albert Raiders - WHL

Firkus had another solid game. He's a bit inefficient in transition (misses options, throws the puck away, inaccurate passes), but he consistently uses the inside, passes from the perimeter to the middle, and tries to manipulate defenders. Give-and-go game while maintaining strong individual skill. Threw out some misdirection on one rush to completely embarrass a defender without having to expose the puck. Handling escape into a quick pass under pressure to set up a chance from the boards. Arrived into pockets of space in perfect timing to shoot off the pass, although he whiffed on his best chance of the game. A near-perfect curl-and-drag wrister on the powerplay -- chest up and square, elbow up, and hands in front -- but didn't get the inside-to-outside edge weight transfer on the outside leg to maximize it. Later on, he used the shot to try to set up a cross-ice pass; it didn't work, but the idea was sound. The number of ways that he can take a puck from the outside to the middle under pressure really stands out. He looks like an easy draft pick.



21  
Rank

6  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

A  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

6  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# OWEN BECK

C | MISSISSAUGA STEELHEADS

HEIGHT 6'0"  
WEIGHT 190

D.O.B. FEB. 3, 2004  
SHOOTS RIGHT

SHADES OF: Bo Horvat, Anthony Cirelli

28%

2022 XLS

18%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

6%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

1.21

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	21	30	51

## Scouting Report

Don't let Owen Beck's modest statistical profile fool you – he's the real deal. In a league where many first-time draft-eligible skaters failed to find their game or maintain a high level of play for more than a few games at a time, Beck was the model of consistency. Points be damned.

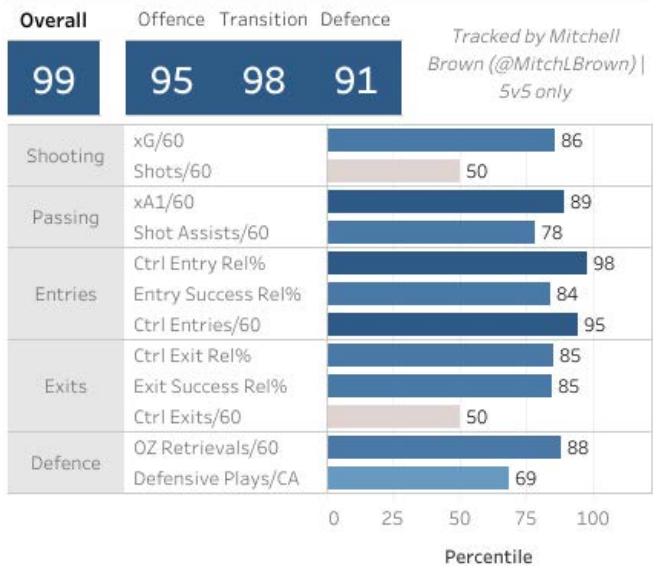
It was the keen eye of our OHL regional scout Lauren Kelly who cut through the noise of his good-not-great boxcar stats and found the signal of his true talent level. And the more scouts we assigned crossover work on this file, the better the esteem in which we held him as a group.

The first thing that stands out with Beck is just how well-rounded his tools are. Every one of them is an average-to-above-average NHL projection, if not better. They're never going to drive gaudy, jaw-dropping offensive totals, but they should prove adequate even as the talent pool compresses around Beck at higher levels of competition.

His most impressive tool of the bunch is probably his skating stride. It was good enough to earn a 6 grade on our 1-to-9 linear scale and provided the basis for exceptionally strong transition results in the OHL last season. In the sample of data that Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown tracked from the 2021-22 CHL and USHL seasons, Beck rated in the 98th percentile for transition results.

"Beck's speed overwhelms defenders," Kelly wrote in a Film Room breakdown of Beck's game. "He's a powerful skater

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 118.4



with a good mix of crossovers and gets to his top speed quickly. He uses that speed to back defenders up and even rush right past them on some sequences.

Beck uses that speed to provide constant support at every corner of the ice. He's the ultimate play connector, always offering his teammates a passing option and showing a great knack for linking defence to offence.

Beck isn't a high-end playmaker, though, lacking some of the pro-level concepts that would make him a real force in this regard -- specifically, manipulation. Still, his ability to funnel pucks inside from the boards or find teammates

through traffic was a consistent theme in our viewings this season. It's probably an average projection.

Mostly, the Steelheads forward uses the threat of the pass and the give-and-go to create shooting opportunities; as a means to get inside and let his shot take care of the rest. And with a wide array of releases for any situation, he's well-equipped to take advantage of every chance his inside movements create for himself.

Perhaps the best part of Beck's projection, though, is his defensive work. He's an urgent, engaged defender who understands defensive rotations and never cheats to create offence. His off-puck reads are remarkably strong for a player at this stage in their development, and they allow him to force turnovers with stunning regularity. If nothing else, there's definitely a future as a defensive specialist in the cards for this player.

The question for many at this point in his scouting report is probably why he wasn't more productive or held in better esteem by our peers in the public sphere. We can't speak to the latter item, but we have a theory about the former. Basically, it's a combination of poor finishing luck -- on-ice and personal -- and not exactly being put in a position to succeed offensively in Mississauga. Now, the data may not bear out the former theory to the degree we'd like, but anecdotally, our viewings bear this out -- just read his game reports if you're still skeptical on this file.

We suspect that the production will come and that Beck will bring more than enough skill to hang in a top-nine role at the NHL level. There isn't likely an Art Ross Trophy in his future, but coaches are going to love having this player in their lineup. That counts for a lot.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Michael Latta YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 97%	2 Daniel Sisca YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 97%	3 Miguel Delisle YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 97%	4 Chris Thorburn YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 96%	5 Artur Gavrus YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 96%
6 Taylor Beck YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 96%	7 Vincent Trocheck YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 96%	8 Scott Laughton YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 96%	9 A.J. Jenks YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 96%	10 Steven Shipley YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 96%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Wow. That last goal, I didn't expect it from a player like Owen Beck who tends to be more effective than flashy. He went through two defenders and then shot around a third one to win the game for his team in overtime. Talk about command. That's what Beck brings in every facet of the game through his precise defensive positioning and preemptive rotations, his supporting ability, the way he controls his speed and routes on breakouts to give good pass options to teammates, and in the offensive zone where he is an adaptable passer who feeds the right teammate at the right time. He can hold on to the puck to let a play develop or move it very quickly. He moves to the right areas to support scoring plays in the offensive zone, too, but I don't see a high-end off-puck offensive game like Wright, one of his comparable. There is not high-end scoring tool in his game either although his shot does need to be respected. I like the physical game. It's close to NHL-caliber already both in terms of mechanics (cutting opponents at the hands, using skate fakes to protect the puck, absorbing pressure...) and engagement. Beck was hitting all game long. A complete player who could very well add more skill over the next few

years. A safe pick with upside and a centreman that coaches will love. He's in my top-20.

**David St-Louis:** April 9th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Another good Beck performance, showcasing what he's about: supporting plays, playing effective defence, and linking offensive plays. He's also adaptable in his passing, switching if a lane closes to hit another one. He's not really a creator, however, if a play isn't there for him to take, he won't break defences open. He falls to them. His physical skills, I underrated. He can absorb and spin off contact. He's an NHL player, almost a sure-fire one, but probably a third-liner.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Beck didn't accomplish much offensive in this game. Although, it's hard to blame him. He made the right plays, but his teammates weren't prepared. Could he have made even better plays? Sure. But there's still a lot to like. He cut inside across defenders, then looks back inside for options. If he's not changing lanes with the puck on his stick in transition, he passes to teammates on the flanks then sprinting his

route. The tools are so obviously first-round calibre in this class. He beats defenders with crossovers to the inside while fluidly handling the puck. Blends cuts with his handling skill. He's a mechanically sound shooter. Puck protection skills. Impressive support player. Just a ton to like here.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 3rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Finally, Beck was rewarded for his consistent efforts with two goals in this one, because he's been way overdue for some production. His shift-to-shift consistency is just so impressive. Finishes all routes and checks, great awareness of where his teammates are on the ice (he had a nice no-look backwards pass off the boards to a teammate in the slot). Great speed on the rush and there are a lot less dekes now compared to the give-and-gos. He spun to change the angle and rifled a shot in the slot on his first goal, and followed up the play before burying the loose puck on his second. He could've finished off the hat trick after dangling through the defence for a shorthanded breakaway before being hauled down and drawing a penalty. When he's on the ice, the play runs through him. Just as responsible and effective defensively, covering for his defensemen, scanning and shoulder-checking, excellent effort on the backcheck and his skating looks above average. Even when he's not producing, he's still an effective player, but it was honestly kind of a relief to finally see him pot a couple after being stonewalled for the last few weeks. Beck has such a well-rounded game, I think he'll make an NHL team very happy in the back half of the first round.

**David St-Louis:** April 3rd, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

I'm impressed by Beck every single shift. Such a mature player. Always above the puck, repositioning with slight footwork to be in the best interception corridor of opposing plays. He plays with patience, the patience of a player who knows he's in control. He processes the game fast, recognizes advantages, and leverages one option to open up another -- or at least he reads the game at a high enough level to see when a play is closed and not force it. He engages opponents physically, supports defencemen on the breakout (low and slow), shows puck protection mechanics, some nice and simple plays... He completes his routes to help teammates off the rush (drives the net to create space and then stops there). He got two goals this game, but he should be producing way more. The production holds my projection back a bit; if he were a point-per-game player, I'd have him top-15.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Beck does everything. He waits for pressure to arrive, then uses crossovers to separate. He uses that loop to gain the zone, set up teammates, and drive the net. He's no longer fixated on outracing defenders -- he's stacking the deck in his favour, and he's always looking to cut inside across teammates. Consistent give-and-go use, but his teammates lack the awareness to connect. Steal on the forecheck led to a crafty backhand pass under a defender's stick for a goal. He forces the odd pass to the inside. Additional deception would bolster his playmaking a lot, especially in offensive zone play. Off-puck game remains impressive. Always in supporting position in the defensive zone. Eliminates threats. Builds speed under the puck (both laterally and north-south). He's a high-probability NHLer, potentially a top-nine forward if the offence keeps developing.

**David St-Louis:** March 25th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

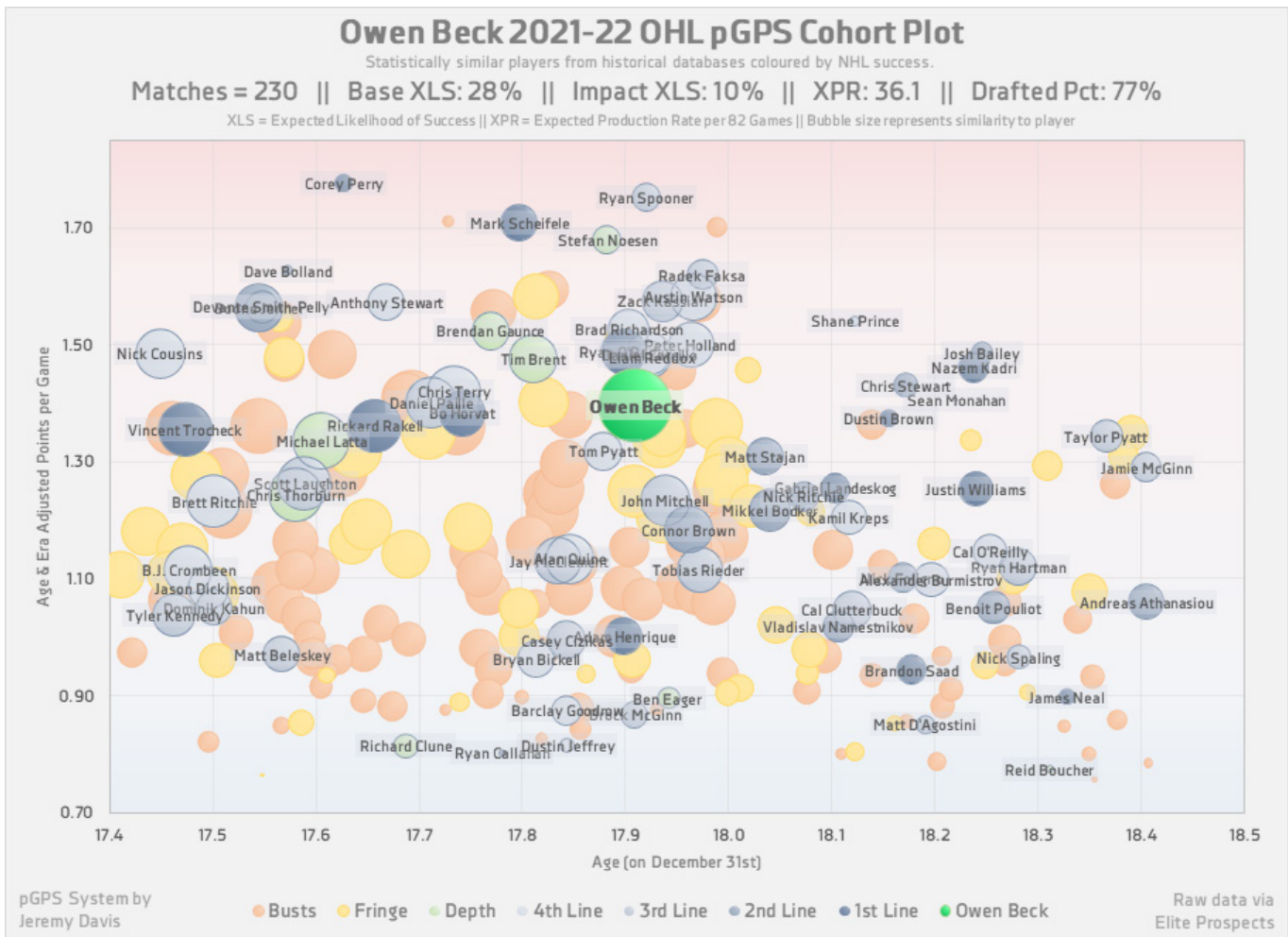
Impressive game from Beck, showing about everything you want from a hockey player. In the hockey sense department, he's capable of anticipating the play, of leveraging good opportunities into better, of differentiating closed and open passing lanes. He's a quick processor, not as quick as some of the top prospects in the draft, but his hockey sense would remain an advantage even at the NHL level. The skills are average. Nothing special, but as he makes good decisions, recognizes opportunities, and vulnerable defenders, he's still creating. Teammates miss him in prime scoring areas and they don't finish his plays, which partly explain the low numbers. I'm very comfortable with him as a top-25 pick. I'd bet a lot that he plays in the NHL in the bottom-six. Not my house, but a hefty sum. His defensive game gives him a higher upside than that, too. He could become an amazing complement to more skilled wingers. Really like this player.

**J.D. Burke:** March 6th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Really fascinating game from Beck. Some advanced offensive concepts on display throughout, the odd flash of pro-level defensive details, and then just pure skill all taking turns revealing themselves on a shift to shift basis. Skating seems to be coming along nicely. Certainly, seems to be achieving more depth than he was at the start of the season. His skating posture, in general, seemed like a distinct positive. His shot is off the charts good, with a diverse array of releases that he can get off in seemingly any situation and from seemingly any angle. Has a tendency to overhandle -- it seems like a





default when confronted by numbers – but the way that he set up some of his manoeuvres was impressive. Doesn't seem to lack skill as a distributor either. Had one really dexterous hook pass low-high from just below the faceoff dot to set up a teammate in the slot for a chance. Poor Beck got robbed on about three occasions in this contest, including twice on the doorstep for what looked like absolute lay-up goals. Loved his motor and the lines that he took on the forecheck in this contest. I have some questions about his ability to link the loose collection of skills and concepts in his game together into a coherent, top-of-the-lineup package at the NHL level but a middle-six role seems well within reach.

**David St-Louis:** February 25th, 2022  
 Niagara IceDogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads- OHL

A pretty interesting performance from Beck. I don't see anything all that advanced in his game (no real manipulation of the opposition), but everything else is there: above-average tools, puck protection habits, adaptable in his decisions (but also some rushed ones), a desire to play the system, to create space as F1 by rushing ahead of teammates, knows when to delay off the rush, recognizes space and vulnerable defenders... He even tries on defence even if many of his routes were a bit short (IDed his man, but didn't really remove

him from the play). I'm not fully sure about the skating, but I think it's an above-average projection (overly bends his knees, doesn't look all that speedy, but general form is good and he uses crossovers).

**Lauren Kelly:** February 24th, 2022  
 Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Beck did not start this game well (granted, neither did the Steelheads). He was late to coverage on the first goal against, fell into the boards and was shaken up after his stick was tied on a shot, took a hooking penalty down low on the forecheck, and then took a second penalty after he lost body positioning on a player and was careless with his stick. After that penalty though, it was like he flipped a switch, and he was back to doing all the things that are going to make him successful at future levels. He was playing a lot more physically in this one, laying out a skater with the puck after leaving the penalty box, as well as running into a defenseman in front of the Barrie goal trying to get inside positioning. Didn't cross the line at any point, which was good to see. Got inside positioning on defenders to generate scoring chances of his own, and fed teammates with a couple of great passes. His highlight of the game came on the game-winner; he read the breakout and picked off a

pass before feeding it to the slot to Hardie for the goal. I'm inclined to cut him some slack for how he started because he's been so consistent all season that it feels like that was probably a one-off - especially with how he turned things around for himself.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 21st, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

At this point, what more is there to say about Beck? He scans on retrievals, is somehow always the one picking up loose pucks on the ice and starting the rush, shoulder-checks in the DZ and NZ, forces turnovers and picks off passes in the offensive zone to create scoring chances. Had a drag shot in the slot that was blocked, but the rebound was buried to give him a primary assist. This might be the first game I've seen him unload one-timers on the power play, too, because up until now I didn't think that was a shot he had in his arsenal. He bails out his defenders in front of the net when they've wandered off and is sometimes the one defending incoming rushes. The one thing I will say is that he needs to stop trying to deke defenders out one-on-one when entering the zone. He was hauled down on one occasion and on another, he lost control of the puck trying to get around. There were shifts where it worked and led to dangerous scoring chances, but if he's coming up the ice with numbers he's probably better off passing instead of trying to squeeze between the defender and the boards. That was about my only complaint of him in this game. He was stellar.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 12th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

I still think even when Beck has a quiet night, he's had a successful night. Some of his passes and plays with the puck weren't as crisp or clean as they usually are, but maybe it's about reigning in my expectations of him, because it's unfair to expect him to be near-perfect in every game. But that's what makes watching him so impressive. His awareness continues to impress, whether it's his passing abilities or picking off passes himself with smart reads and anticipation. He was still winning puck battles and faceoffs, picking up loose pucks in his own end, and bailing his defenders out with good defensive posturing. There were a couple of passes that did misfire, including one where he whiffed on a rolling puck and the pass was picked off, which led to a fairly good Kingston scoring chance that went wide. That was probably his only poor play of the game. The highlight? His goal, which he managed to score while falling and almost sideways on the ice, and I'm not sure if he was even looking at the net when he got the shot off because he was so off-balance. His

long-term projection might be the only thing holding him back from being a first-rounder at this point, but I believe that he's worth taking there anyways.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 8th, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

A quiet game, at least by the lofty standards Beck has established. Still, he did the Owen Beck things: win battles, drive pucks to the inside, attack the net, kill plays in the DZ, and attack with speed. The defence is an easy selling point: he's always impacting the puck carrier somehow, whether that's intense pressure or the elimination of options. He created a couple of chances for his teammates, but his playmaking still seems closer to a weakness than a strength. In one shift, he rushed his pass and sent a puck off his teammate's skates and then missed the HD pass by taking too long. To his credit, he managed to set up another chance and he clearly has above-average passing skill, willingness to pass, and even flashes some deceptive elements. Consistently changes the point of attack as he's relying less on the outside lane speed. He's a high pick, perhaps a first-rounder. Decent bet to become a third-liner, but has the tools to play even higher.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 30th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Truthfully, I'm shocked Beck managed to finish the entire game. He was on the receiving end of a violent hit that (thankfully) looked a lot worse than it likely was, as he was thrown backwards and looked like his head collided with the goalpost. But that incident aside, he was stellar, as usual. Great off-puck reads to force turnovers or pick off passes, coming back to cover for his defensemen, driving play up the ice, winning key faceoffs, firing high-danger shots in the slot... there isn't anything more I can say at this point that hasn't been said already. He delivers every night.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

It felt like every time I looked away from the screen briefly and then back it felt like Beck was covering for one of his defenseman by defending an oncoming rush. His defensive play was strong once again, scanning on retrievals and adjusting positioning in his own end. He scored the 1-0 goal by starting the rush up the ice, passing the puck off at the blueline and then splitting the defence to finish off the give-and-go rush. He was winning 1-on-1 battles in the offensive zone, picking off outlet passes, finding teammates with cross-ice passes, and used his body to separate players from the puck too. A weaker night in the faceoff circle, but

it was another strong performance from a prospect I believe deserves to be a first round pick at this point.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 20th, 2022

Oshawa Generals vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Beck had an uncharacteristically poor night in the faceoff circle (he was well below his season's average at 30% in this game), and it was interesting to see how that affected the Steelheads' ability to get the puck out of their own end or maintain pressure in the offensive zone. Because Beck wasn't guaranteed to win the draw outright like he normally is, they did have to lean on Luca DelBelBelluz on key draws as well, and he didn't fare any better. Their combined issues with winning draws kept the Steelheads on their heels for most of the first period and prevented them from establishing any pressure in overtime. I don't anticipate those faceoff struggles to persist (in fact, this game might've been the first of Beck's that I've seen where he was even under 50% on draws).

Faceoffs aside, Beck had a very strong defensive game yet again. Whether it was completing routes in the defensive zone, scanning on backchecks or adjusting his coverage in the DZ to protect the front of the net (which always seems to be open because Steelheads defensemen like to wander), Beck was able to anticipate passes to disrupt them and start play back up the ice. Offensively, he had a wraparound attempt that was stopped after he carried the puck in (he took it wide instead of driving the middle, which is his typical habit as far as zone entries go). He threw the puck in off the goalie from below the goal line to score the 2-2 goal, and he picked up an assist on the tying 3-3 goal by reading the play well to drift behind the net to receive a pass before feeding the puck to a teammate in the slot. I didn't see anything from Beck in this viewing that was too concerning, he was still making impactful plays at both ends of the ice and I still see a first-round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Still awesome, but still an interesting projection. Beck dekes too much, overhandles the puck, and occasionally sets up his moves poorly. Often reduces speed before deking for control (not to deceive), leaning his heels and planting his inside edges – it won't work going forward. He problem-solves by deking every single time – maybe pass? He still defaults to the outside, but not nearly as much. Once he gains the middle, he misses passing options by rushing full speed ahead towards the defenders. But there were moments where he showed high-level thinking.

In one sequence, he turned a loose puck into a deke around

a defender, then passed back through their legs for a scoring chance. He set up a cross-slot chance with a perfectly timed pass under a stick. Used a give-and-go set up with a handling fake to beat a defender, gain the zone, and get a chance. Consistent off-puck presence through his constant support, off-puck movement (he finishes every route), and non-stop motor. Even if he's not winning possession, he's forcing errors up ice. Strong defensive impact. In a 10-second sequence, he pressured a point shot, supported the net front, anticipated a switch off, and grabbed the steal at the top of the circle. A projectable shooter off the outside leg: hands in front, depth, chest up, and driving off his back leg. In top form, he links together offence, transition, and defence well, using the inside, lane changes, and shoot-pass-handle threat to tie everything together. The solutions for his biggest issues already exist in his game, and feature regularly. He's a potential 3C. Likely a first-rounder in this class with tons of runway for improvement.

**Lauren Kelly:** December 17th, 2021

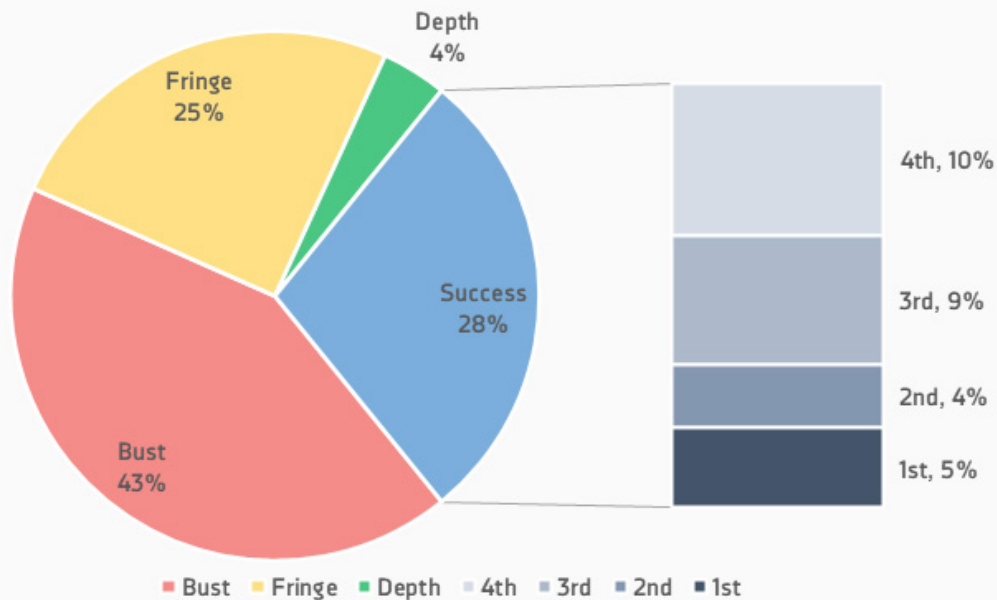
North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Offensive production aside, it is so impressive that Beck is able to maintain the same level of consistency every single game. Whether it's helping out defensively, boxing players out in front of the net because Steelheads defenders have wandered off, winning board battles, he is probably the strongest and most reliable Steelheads forward in his own end. His defensive posturing while defending the rush is actually pretty impressive, he doesn't let opposing forwards get inside positioning and he laid a big hit in the DZ to separate a player from the puck and turn play up the ice. Offensively, he was very strong in this game. Showed off some nice hand-eye coordination to knock the puck down in the NZ and start the rush, leading to a scoring chance.

He also had a nice give-and-go with Ty Collins that was stopped. Tried to dangle around Ty Nelson and probably would've succeeded if he hadn't been tripped up, and though he whiffed on a pass to a teammate a few seconds later, it was still enough for him to pick up an assist on the game-winning goal. He also had a good NZ steal at 4-on-4 late in the game. Beck was on the ice for the only goal against, he and Ethan Del Mastro went to cover the same player in front of the net and left the goal scorer wide open. That was probably the only notable mistake he made in this game. Beck went about 71% in the faceoff circle this game, including winning about 4 or 5 draws in the final minute and a half because a teammate kept icing the puck.

## Owen Beck 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**Mitchell Brown:** December 5th, 2021

Oshawa Generals vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Beck's the model of consistency that just about every OHL prospect aspires to be. He's always involved offensively, defensively, and in transition. Terrific timing and awareness in pursuit and on the PK. Turned a steal into a cross-slot scoring chance, after outracing a defender and establishing body positioning by leading with his legs. Powerful skater with ample room to improve through added depth, already owning a high crossover integration and advanced off-puck routes. Perhaps a bit too dependent on outside lane attacks, but he clearly has the skill and the reads to get off the boards. Give-and-gos feature prominently in his game, which actually set up his game-winning goal: read the return pass, walked into the middle, took a tricky pass inside a heel-to-heel, and fired short-side after showing far side. The shot looks much better than I previous thought: elbow up, narrow body profile, and really drives through it - that's a great base to add new shooting skills. Set-up a goal with a look-off pass into the slot along the boards, perfectly timed. There were some other looks that he could've created had he deceived the defender in the lane. Beck has a solution for basically every issue in his game, whether that's skills used inconsistently or the tools to easily add new ones. It's very easy to see him as a 3C, but there's more potential here.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 28th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

The Beck line was the most dominant for the Steelheads all game long. They were in the offensive zone constantly

for extended stints, and that sustained pressure kept the Frontenacs on their heels for most of the second and third periods. Beck had three offensive zone steals on his first shift and another on his second - his off-puck reads, positioning and stickwork continue to impress. He was hounding puck carriers in the offensive zone, scanning on penalty kills, and covering for his defensemen (on nearly every shift, because the Steelheads defensemen are always wandering out of position). Stole the puck and sent a quick pass to the slot for a scoring chance. Whether it's picking off passes, stickchecking or poking the puck away, Beck always seems to come away with the puck. He stole the puck from Paul Ludwinski in his own end before turning the puck up the ice himself and leading the rush, powering past both defenders and nearly scoring on a breakaway.

He then followed that shift up with a one-timer whipped from the slot to score the Steelheads' second goal. Beck definitely wasn't afraid to attack the middle of the ice in this game (something that was different, usually he likes to take the puck up the ice but along the boards) - he had a nice drive up the middle with the puck before passing off to Hardie for a scoring chance. He finished this game with seven shots on goal (only Hardie had more). Beck was on the ice for the game-winner; a bit of an overzealous swipe at the puck led to him shoving it right over to Ludwinski for the eventual goal. He was 10/20 on faceoffs overall but he won nearly every faceoff in the final four minutes as the Steelheads fought to try and tie the game. This was one of the strongest viewings I've had of Beck all season. He's a no-brainer first rounder to me.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 19th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Beck wasn't as successful in generating offence in this game (though he still had three shots on goal), but he still picked up an assist. He showed off nice patience below the goal line in the corner before passing off to the slot through traffic to a teammate. He also had a nice little play where he used his skate to deflect a pass behind him up to his stick while on the rush. His defensive play continues to stand out, whether it's scanning in his own end, covering his defensemen who are nowhere near where they should be (the Steelheads defence is painfully mobile), or reading and disrupting passes across. He also got good body positioning on puck carriers and was able to impede the rush and force play to the boards, where he was effective in battles. He's a really strong player at both ends of the ice when he doesn't have the puck, but I'd like to see him start generating more offence consistently with puck possession (which he's getting better at, considering he extended his point streak to six games in this one).

**Lauren Kelly:** November 13th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Beck was the Steelheads' best skater (I'll give the best player nod to the goalie), though he also had an up-and-down game. He was dominant in the faceoff circle, was stealing pucks and supporting his defensemen all game long. Beck had a nice offensive zone steal on two Kingston players before firing a shot on goal. He also followed a rush up the ice by Lavoie and when Lavoie left the puck behind, Beck picked it up to create another scoring chance. Beck led all Steelheads with five shots on goal in this game. When one of his defensemen would jump up into the play, Beck would recognize the open coverage and slide back to cover instead of joining the forecheck or puck battle. There was one scuffle in the second period where he got into it with Thomas Budnick, but maintained his composure even though Budnick was punching him and drew a roughing penalty for it. He was great in board battles and came off the bench to stickcheck a wide open player in the slot.

There were a couple of defensive zone breakdowns by the Steelheads as a whole in the third period that led to Kingston goals that Beck was apart of. On the 1-2 goal, Beck recognized the open skater (Ludwinski) a bit too late and couldn't get over to cover him in time. He was also caught puck-watching on the 2-3 goal and couldn't clear the loose puck in the crease before it was buried. He did have a good defensive zone steal to regain possession and help start the Steelheads rush, and then make a second good steal in the

neutral zone on the same sequence to get a scoring chance off. Beck showed great patience on the 4-3 goal, picking up the puck and outwaiting the goalie before rifling it top shelf, and also delivered a heavy clean hit late in the game. He doesn't have the best offensive manipulation and doesn't drive the middle of the ice with the puck, preferring to go wide before cutting to the middle and trying to get past defenders that way. But he's got great body positioning and reads plays at both ends well, and he's consistently driving play up the ice, though not at the expense of defense. I'm fairly confident at this point that his skills should translate well at future levels.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

In this nightmare-ish game, Beck was among the game's best players. It was his offence in the third period that gave the Steelheads the win, after all. On the PP, he took a cross-ice pass, delayed to wait for the PK to adjust, saw his teammate open in the slot, and hit him with a perfectly timed pass for a goal. A strong off-puck attacker, finishing his routes, arriving in space at the right times, and understanding how to use contact to create a bit of separation. The first of which led to a goal, where he pump faked on the pass reception and caught the goaltender out of positioning. With the puck, he's a bit too singularly focused on rushing the net (lacks a delay game, over reliant on outside speed), which led to some transition issues in this game. But his speed overwhelms defenders, he pre-scans on retrievals, and shows advanced physicality through body positioning and aggression. When he can't get positioning on battles, he traps their feet and then goes for the stick lift. Vision down-low continues to stand out, spotting teammates through layers and executing quickly. There's a lot to like about his game. He could become a 5.5-to-6 grade skater with mechanical tweaks that maximize his natural explosiveness. He's at least a 5.5-grade passer, handler, and physical player, too. The first-round argument is compelling.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 3rd, 2021

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Beck's a classic translatable skills, untranslatable style prospect. He's over reliant on taking the defender wide, turning the corner, and cutting back to the inside. It works here, but he already has some trouble completing the play. He handles the puck in range of defenders and doesn't have the quick-twitch movements to do it. Skating lacks power through the crossovers (which is how he sets up his moves). But that creation loop also shows plenty of skills that can be

translated elsewhere: confidence to attack the inside, establishing body positioning on defenders, and the manipulative mindset while setting up the moves.

If he adds some delays or triple-threat setups, he'll have a lot more success. Off-puck, he's very strong, looking like one of the best in my early viewings of the OHL prospects. He arrives into space at the right times, plays between checks, and uses the width of the ice to stay off the radar. A couple of scoring chances were the direct result of his off-puck reads. He's a solid, engaged defender, too. Lacks some scanning both with and without the puck, which limits his effectiveness in retrievals and breakouts. Still, I think there's top-64 potential here, with a chance of becoming a first-rounder if he diversifies his attack patterns.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 29th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

I cannot say enough good things about Beck in this one. The details in his game are so impressive. Whether it was forcing turnovers at both ends of the ice, hustling back to steal pucks on opposing rushes, drawing penalties with his speed on the rush, he was doing all the right things and making an impact every shift. Beck also broke up a 2-on-1 as the lone man back (as a forward), threw a big neutral zone hit, was winning key faceoffs, and was a menace on the penalty kill. He puts himself in the right areas of the ice when he doesn't have the puck. Beck's defensive game is so far above many of his teammates and if he can start producing more, he's definitely got first round potential.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 24th, 2021

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Beck was a surprise standout in this game, showing off his speed on multiple instances, whether it was starting the rush or beating opponents to the net. He scored the Steelheads' first goal of the game by parking himself on the doorstep and banging in a great pass from Zander Veccia. He was solid on faceoffs and was one of the main catalysts for the team's offence in this game. There was one particular rush where he powered past bigger players on his way to the net and almost scored. He was relentless in puck battles at both ends of the ice and trying to make things happen all game long.

**P**





22  
Rank

A  
Grade

5.5  
Skating

6  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

5.5  
Puckhandling

6  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# GLEB TRIKOZOV

C/RW | OMSKIE YASTREBY

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. AUG. 12, 2004  
WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS RIGHT

SHADES OF: Jakub Voracek

63%

2022 XLS

53%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

44%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.96

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
VHL	11	1	1	2
MHL	35	23	22	45

## Scouting Report

There was no more contentious a 2022 NHL Draft prospect for the Elite Prospects scouting team than Gleb Trikozov. The esteem in which we held him -- it was a land of contrasts.

On the one side, you had a rousing endorsement from our Russian regional scout Dylan Griffing in the form of a top-10 rating. On the other, you had crossover work by Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis placing him in the second round. The rest of the staff fell somewhere between those two extremes, and his final ranking reflects that. Compromise, it's a good thing.

Those who find themselves in his corner assembled early in the year, marvelling at the displays of advanced planning and playmaking at the Hlinka-Gretzky Cup. Sure, he wasn't connecting on many of his passes -- they hit his linemates' shin pads and pants more often than their stick --, but the thought process that informed many of these plays was miles ahead of the competition in most contests.

Everything you look for in a projectable playmaker was there. Trikozov would attack the defensive front on an arc, pull defenders into his orbit, manipulate with shoulder feints and eye-level deception, and then dispatch of the puck to the best-positioned linemate. The result was a point per game showing at the tournament despite playing a depth role.

It wasn't until about the midway point in the season that the Russian winger started to better modulate the weight and timing on his passes, at which point, it was game over

for his opponents. He was an elite, productive playmaking winger in the MHL, and the only thing that held him back was his ice time and linemates who failed to capitalize on his playmaking quality.

He's hardly a one-trick pony, though. Trikozov can beat a goalie in any number of different ways. He has genuine touch as a handler and force as a finisher, even if the mechanical form leaves a fair bit to be desired. The 6-foot-1 winger handles the puck far out in front of him, exposing it to unnecessary risk from opposing defenders, and his high grip means that he's only engaging his upper body on his release.

Even with those mechanical quirks as a shooter and handler, Trikozov managed to tally 45 points in 35 MHL contests last season; his 1.29 points per game second to only Danila Yurov in per-game output. The one caveat to that production is that the MHL's Eastern Conference that Omskie Yastreby played in is far weaker than the West, but his 18 points in 13 playoff games did a lot to allay any concerns we might have had about empty-calorie scoring. That seven of these points came in five games against Krasnaya Armiya Moskva makes it that much better.

The more critical take on Trikozov isn't without merit, though. We've already broached his lack of touch as a distributor (even if that's less of a problem now than at the beginning of the season), but the list of shortcomings doesn't stop there. He's not an especially explosive skater.

His confidence as a handler greatly exceeds his skill. And there's an obvious lack of strength there, too.

There's a lot of risk with this player, and that's before one even accounts for the "Russian factor" part of the equation. Trikozov's playmaking and sense look like relatively strong

NHL projections, but his handling and shooting have a long way to go before they're credible tools at that level. There's top-six upside here, but it's going to take a rigorous development regimen to bring out the best in him.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Nikita Kucherov YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 74%	2 Nikita Gusev YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 54%	3 Sergei Shmelyov YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 50%	4 Mikhail Plotnikov YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 47%	5 Sergei Barbashev YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 46%
6 Pavel Buchnevich YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 45%	7 Alexander Remorov YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 45%			

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 8th, 2022

Omskie Yastreby vs. Krasnaya Armiya- MHL

Trikozov's handling will prevent him from making some plays at higher levels. It's a 5 for me right now; he looks like he's shoveling the puck up-ice more than handling it and there is a lot of awkwardness to his moves in general. I like the vision and rotations. The skating might reach an above-average grade...I see more of a C prospect than a top-20 now.

**David St-Louis:** April 7th, 2022

Omskie Yastreby vs. Krasnaya Armiya- MHL

By far the best game of Trikozov I have seen. The small-area game improved quite a bit over the season; he can hold defenders on his back, spin off of them, use his arm to protect and look for plays inside. His puck protection is all inside edges now and away from the wall -- not projectable, but it's the inception of something. I like how he tries to control his space before getting the puck, removing stick out of way, and how he identifies plays quickly: knows where to look (anticipation) and not delay in passing. He tried harder defensively in this game, on the backcheck and in the d-zone rotations. I'm not sure about his off-puck game, but he scored on the powerplay by moving one-pass away (before the teammate passing to him even got the puck himself). There is a lot of awkwardness in his close quarter play, but the hockey sense is better than I anticipated and the skating could be above-average.

**Dylan Griffing:** February 26th, 2022

Omskie Yastreby vs. Ladya Togliatti - MHL

Given some better linemate finishing, this four point game could've easily been extended to seven or eight. He just dominates this level, so some mistakes came from trying to do more than he needs to, but I don't take any issue with that. He scanned super quickly and rifled passes into high danger areas with ease. He had one specific one-touch pass from

behind the net that really stuck out and created a huge scoring chance that his teammate floundered. Just cuts through defenses like butter, whether it's through his skill on the puck or his passing, there's just no way to stop the Gleb train unless he stops himself.

**David St-Louis:** February 11th, 2022

Omskie Yastreby vs. Sputnik - MHL

I like Trikozov's skating posture, but there are some quirks that I couldn't identify in this game. He's clearly more skilled than everyone at this level and he knows it. He constantly tried to dangle through the defence in this game, beating one, beating two...and then losing the puck. His shooting mechanics need a lot of work. No flexion, all arms. Off the rush, he uses some translatable mechanics: cutting the recovery route of opponents, baiting pokechecks, fakes on the fly. I'm not sure how aware he is. A bit of nonchalance in his game, some imprecision. The skill is interesting. Is there more?

**Dylan Griffing:** February 6th, 2022

Loko-76 Yaroslavl vs. Omskie Yastreby - MHL

Trikozov picked up an assist in his first shift in this one, then slowed down for the next few shifts, and then went right back to doing what he does. He had a spell of strange decisions, rushing passes due to a lack of scanning and a pair of weak shot attempts, but he quickly turned that around and was flinging passes all over the ice. His shot really stood out in this one, just an insane release generating a ton of power in the blink of an eye. Picked up a goal off the rush by cutting into the inside and torching one past the goalie. Made some nice plays off the puck by reading passing lanes and closing them off, then turning play the other way quickly. Overall, just a dominant outing and one that we have come to expect from Trikozov.



**David St-Louis:** February 2nd, 2022

Chaika vs. Omskie Yastreby - MHL

I'm not sure if it's a processing issue, an awareness issue, or a criterion issue (thinks he has the skill to hit those plays, but he doesn't), but Trikozov's decision-making issues continue. He rushes plays, doesn't register defenders or doesn't care about their presence. He throws pucks to areas and hopes for the best. Maybe he lacks passing skills, but the plays he hits are usually not good decisions. High, high grip on stick and quirky skating mechanics at times (although I think his quickness and speed are good enough) also adds doubt to his projection. I don't think his game is all that translatable. I usually don't weigh decision-making all that much in my projection (as I think it can easily improve), but one has to draw the line somewhere. I liked the skate fakes along the boards and some of the ideas behind his play. He's not a player I will push for, but I can see some reasons to like him.

**David St-Louis:** January 28th, 2022

Omskie Yastreby vs. Mamonty Yugry - MHL

Trikozov is creative, fast of hands, and pacey for this level. He creates in transition and off turnovers more than anything; he abuses and enlarges the gaps in MHL coverages, very quickly. He's aware inside his moves, finds back plays, and anticipates openings and teammates. There are a lot of mechanical quirks, especially in his shot (it's poor, but he uses it a lot), but his overall skill level is pretty high. He problem-solves, adapts to pressure, makes plays off first-touch, cuts the recovery route of defenders after dangling them. He looks like a potential top-45 pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 27th, 2021

Omskie Yastreby vs. Mamonty Yugry - MHL

Trikozov with the ol' Pat Bev according to Russ performance: lots of running around but achieving very little. The energy was high, but the moments of actual play disruption were few and far between. Skating's perplexing, simultaneously looking like a strength and weakness. It's clear that he lacks strength: highly inconsistent form. Struggles to access his outside edges (and when he does, there are clear stability issues) because he seems to straighten his legs, not get lower, when faced with contact or preparing cuts and turns.

He doesn't have much of an acceleration stage at all, he just immediately goes into his stride with his normal extensions, recoveries, and depth. He doesn't finish most strides, strides behind instead of laterally too often, has a significant heel kick, but he achieves an almost 90-degree knee bend. It's strange, it's like his posture and mechanics don't align at all. The form should be better and he should be more stable and quicker than

he is already, but he's, well, not. Some great passing ideas, and he even pre-scans before getting the puck. Ideas were usually sound, but he's too late to make the pass on occasion. Some foresight in transition, delaying instead of forcing a play up the boards. Even with his limitations, he's comfortable making plays through contact, dangling through two defenders to gain the middle of the boards. One-timer after rushing the middle between defenders. Looks like a fun potential third-line scorer. Maybe a mid-second.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 27th, 2021

Omskie Yastreby vs. Mamonty Yugry - MHL

Trikozov is obviously very talented. His playmaking stood out in this one. He's got really good vision and the way that he sees plays developing is really nice. He pre-scans before scooping a loose puck and finds his target in the slot. Or he sees a cross-seam pass between the goalie and defender and executes it to perfection. It was also cool how he used over-exaggerated chances of speed to beat defenders off the rush, other times he tried to force his way through players, where he wasn't as successful. Good handling skills and likely projects as a slightly above-average skater in my books. One thing that throws me off a bit is how relaxed and casual he looks in some shifts. Sometimes he pursues the puck hard on the backcheck, other times he glides for the entire shift. Some of his passing attempts were also a bit too casual and I thought that with a bit more effort he could have pulled them off. Trikozov's a first-rounder, but I'm not sure if I'd have him in the teens.

**J.D. Burke:** January 18th, 2022

Omskie Yastreby vs. Kuznetskie Medvedi - MHL

Now, Kuznetskie Medvedi may be a minnow in the MHL, but full marks to Trikozov for feasting on weak competition to the tune of a three-point (one goal and two assists) night anyway. He's an inside-driven playmaker with high-level details. He's constantly surveying the ice for options off of the puck, and makes quick-strike passes to catch his opponents off balance. His off-puck pace was through the roof in this one, constantly creating shooting opportunities for himself with well-timed movements into space, manoeuvring between checks with relative ease.

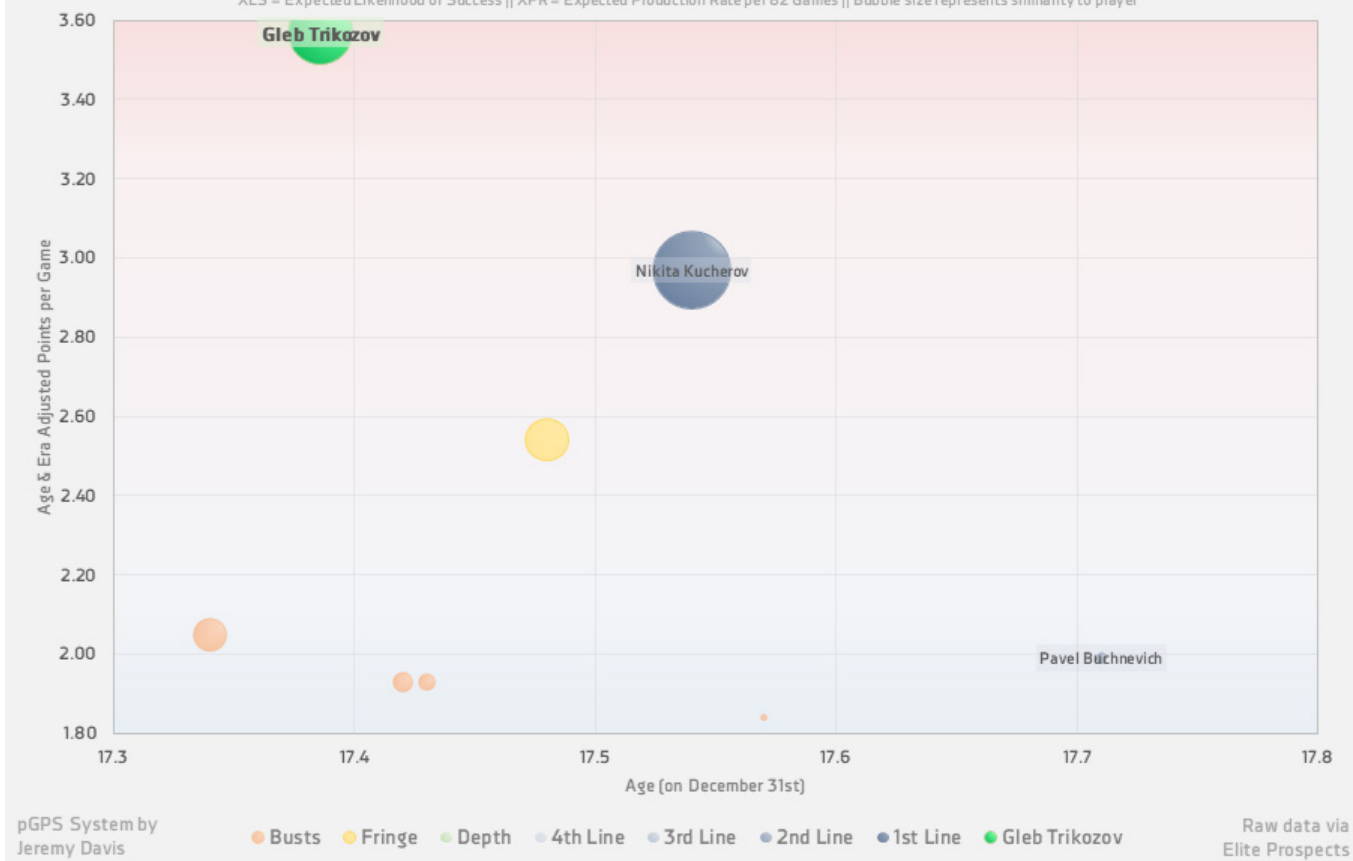
Picked up a goal with a wonky, no wind-up wrist shot on the rush, deploying the screen with his linemate and snapping it past the goaltender. Defensive work rate wasn't great in this one. He was straight legged for entire defensive sequences, scanning for threats but not really making an effort to intervene in any meaningful way. The skating worries me. Not a lot of bend there. Probably slightly below NHL average. Even so, Trikozov finds ways to diffuse pressure, with weight shifts,

## Gleb Trikozov 2021-22 MHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 7 || Base XLS: 63% || Impact XLS: 63% || XPR: 96.6 || Drafted Pct: 43%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



deception, etc. Fascinating player, and a clear first-round talent in my estimation.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 7th, 2021

Omskie Yastreby vs. Avto Yekaterinburg - MHL

Trikozov stood out during multiple shifts as a very crafty passer. He made multiple high-end plays on entries, dancing around two or even three players before slipping a pass under an opponent's stick for a clean entry. Showed understanding of give-and-go plays; entered the zone, delayed, passed and immediately skated to the slot for one-timer chance but ended up breaking his stick on the shot. Definitely doesn't mind taking risks to gain big rewards. He once tried to one-time pass cross-ice near the DZ blue line, which ended up getting intercepted and resulted in a scoring chance against. Ended up scoring in the second period from a penalty shot (nifty move to the backhand) he drew himself. I thought that when he tried, he looked very capable off the puck, using his body to establish position or separate the opponent from the puck along the boards. It's just that his pace off the puck was pretty low most of the time, a lot of gliding.

**Dylan Griffing:** December 4th, 2021

Omskie Yastreby vs. Avto Yekaterinburg - MHL

If Gleb Trikozov just had slightly better hands, he could really make a case to be a top-12 pick in this draft. He did a lot of skating directly into the defense and hoping he could brute force his way through, which was pretty unsuccessful. His 1-on-1 skill let him down while playing at pace, but he has good enough hands and strength to hold up play and allow for lanes to open. He had one assist in this one, but very well could've had three or four more just through his really strong passes into dangerous areas. Pre-scanned effectively, as usual, but it shined through on his breakouts, and he was completing them with ease in this one. Still had one or two passes under pressure that were just flat out bad, but his game has cleaned up a lot as the season has gone on. Forechecking pressure was quick and hard, allowing him to gain possession or give the F2 time to sneak in and get the puck. Quick reads in the defensive zone, cut off space and recognized/closed down lanes.

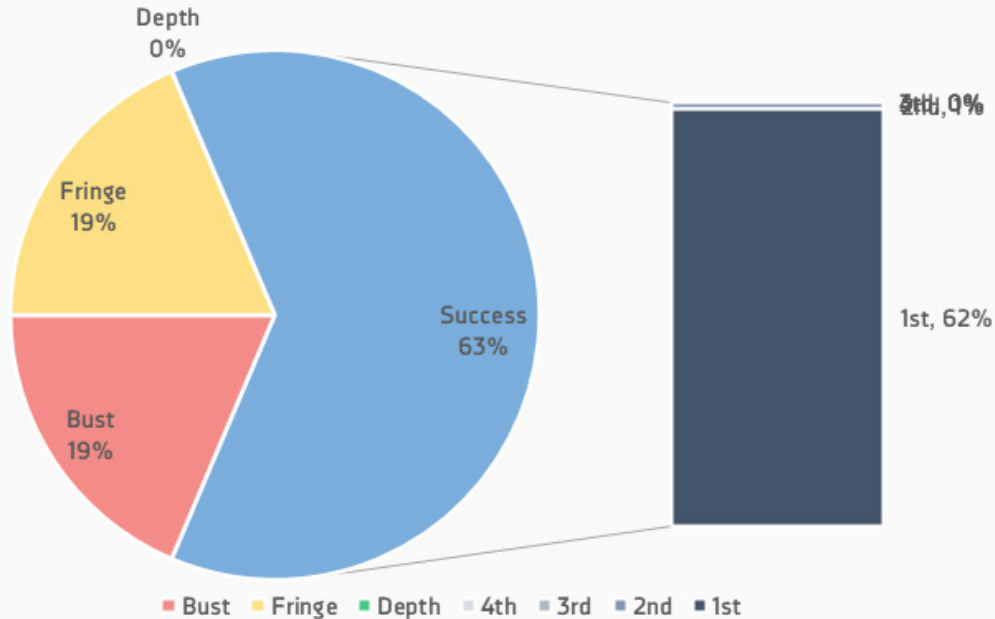
**Mitchell Brown:** December 3rd, 2021

Omskie Yastreby vs. Avto Yekaterinburg - MHL

Trikozov's shot is much better off the pass than in flight. It might have something to do with the ultra-high grip he uses. It won't work at the next level – too easy to get underneath his

## Gleb Trikozov 2021-22 MHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



stick and take the puck away from him. Off the pass, he has his hands spaced out on the stick and in front of his body, allowing him to generate downforce once he creates distance between his feet, so the sweeping motion goes away. I don't really see a ton of ability to get open inside the OZ, but he's also puck dominant. Speaking of which, I can't recall the last time I saw a player try and fail so many advanced passes while also failing to even identify easy-to-hit, high-value ones. He pretends defenders aren't even there half the time, identifying his pass, waiting too long, and then trying to pass through three at a time. Then, he'll take an awful shot with a point-blank chance for a teammate just a hook pass away. If there's a consistent theme, it's that he's late: late to recognize space, late to recognize passing lanes, late to shoot. He wants to get plays to the inside, but he lacks of depth prevents from exploding through his jabs to the middle. Doesn't scan sometimes, and doesn't his puck protection ability is quite limited. The hands are the star here, but not mechanically. His high grip will cripple his ability to shoot in-flight, handle in tight, and escape battles with possession at the next level – it's easy to dig underneath his stick and knock him off balance. The hands serve more a problem-solving skill: deft passes reception to get the puck to his forehand, backhand-forehand to cut inside that masks his skating, and reactionary dekes along the boards. He's faster than his mechanics suggest, so maybe that's the path to improvement. But right now, he just looks like a generic skill prospect who requires significant growth. Not sure if I'd pick him in the second round.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 18th, 2021

Omskie Krylya vs. Ermak Angarsk - VHL

Hot start to this one, picking up an assist in his first shift after a solid effort on the forecheck. He continued with the strong off the puck play into the defensive zone, playing physical and reading plays quickly to attack. He did lack the deceptive stickhandling in 1-on-1s to be able to go for the inside lane, but his puck protection skills and speed were enough to get past defenders on the outside and send passes into the slot or try to power his way inside to get a shot off. Anticipated pressure, scanned well, executed his passes. It's clear to see he has steadily improved based on his ability to perform while being pressured in this league. Instead of forcing an uncontrolled breakout pass, he opted for safer options and used his defensemen. Really looks like he belongs in the VHL and should probably be given an even bigger role.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 12th, 2021

Reaktor Nizhnekamsk vs. Omskie Yastreby - MHL

Dominance. The mix of technique and physicality made Trikozov just about impossible to stop in this game. What first stood out was his forechecking, piling on pressure quickly and easily taking the puck away quite a few times. His poise and patience with possession opens up the ice like Moses parting the Red Sea, using fantastic hold up play -- strength and tight area stickhandling -- to allow his teammates to move around and force the defense to collapse. He used all the time he was given and wasn't afraid to look off options to wait for a smarter or a more valuable pass. If a pass wasn't on his agenda, he used his power to drive right at defenders and get into a more

dangerous area to distribute the puck from there instead. He kept the defense on their toes by using his shot effectively, as well. While he had two complete whiffs, the shots he got some mustard behind were coming from dangerous areas. Led the power play, again, using that patience to draw defenders away from his teammates and distribute the puck at the last possible second.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 7th, 2021

Sputnik Almet'yevsk vs. Omskie Yastreby - MHL

First half of this game was pretty uneventful for Trikozov. Barring one clean breakout pass, he was getting knocked off the puck often and really struggled to get off the walls. Used his frame to his advantage and threw hits like there was no tomorrow. He turned it around in the latter half, finally being able to cut into the inside lane using his hands and power and generated some big chances for his team. Picked up a goal by getting to the front and putting the puck on net. Breakouts and playing with pressure are still major areas of concern, with a few reckless passes from the defensive zone to absolutely no target. Pretty underwhelming performance in the grand scheme of things.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 27th, 2021

Omskie Yastreby vs. Chaika Nizhny Novgorod - MHL

Finally getting some more ice time in the MHL and he made the most of it. The speed in which he scans and the pre-scanning make his playmaking a thing of beauty. He easily manipulates defenders at this level, uses his physicality and hands to toy with them and attacks the inside lane. Really aggressive with his size, crashing the net and playing human bowling while working the puck to his teammates. His shot is improving more and more this year, a really quick and deceptive release on his wrist shots and a lot of power behind his one-timers. His patience with possession gives him so many options and he tends to find the best one. Still finds issues with trying too much at times, making it tricky for his teammates to understand what play he is going for. No doubt he should be back in the VHL soon.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 17th, 2021

Chelmet Chelyabinsk vs. Omskie Krylya - VHL

Trikozov saw just under eight minutes of ice time, his second lowest of the season. His pre-scanning was all he was really able to show off, using it to string together plays with one-touch passes. He struggled to find open ice for most of the game, so when he was getting the puck, he needed to move it right away or he was going to turn it over, which he did do a couple of times. He started to find soft ice on the power play as the

game progressed, getting one dangerous look on goal, but his teammates were really looking him off and opting to shoot from lower quality areas. Had some nice hold-off plays with the puck in his last few shifts, but was failing to win any battles.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 9th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Czech Republic U18 - Friendly

Very interesting game. First period, he was completely checked out. Unassertive defensively, which ended up being the case all game. Passive stick and body positioning basically gave the puck carrier a free pass into the zone. He shot from anywhere and everywhere, but nothing dangerous. Passes weren't even close to coming off in period one. As the game progressed, he began to hit his stride and complete just the craziest, unprojectable passes. Stickhandling was fine, just left the puck far away from his body. Skated into turnovers often. Would rather shoot from a low percentage area than take someone on 1v1. Skating was stiff as a board with no speed whatsoever, really slow turns. Strength with the puck on his stick is one of the few consistent positives, just wasn't really taking advantage of the time he was giving himself to operate.

**Cam Robinson:** September 16th

Omskie Krylia vs Neftyanik - VHL

This was an interesting showing by the 17-year-old. He has clear patience and creativity with the puck. Confidence is certainly no issue. I liked how he handled the puck in transition through the neutral zone and gained the offensive end with an eye towards the middle and making a high-danger play. However, my god, did he ever try to force a bunch of outlet passes on one-touch slaps that did not work out. He was attempting to catch the defenders moving the wrong way but was consistently missing his mates with them. Otherwise, he looked pretty good for a young player in the VHL. When he has the puck in-flight, I like his calmness and ability to wait for lanes. But those breakout attempts were garbage. Intriguing size/skill combo and so young for this crop. There's definite upside here

**Dylan Griffing:** September 7th, 2021

Omskie Krylia vs. Rubin Tyumen - VHL

Plain and simple, Gleb Trikozov is a madman. He plays with the confidence of a player who has been around for years, despite being the youngest player in the VHL. His off the puck movement really stood out this game. Finding soft ice to put his heavy one-timer on display and cutting across the ice into space to go to work there. Switching wings earned him a goal off the rush and what should have been his first assist in the league, with a crazy pass from the right wall, through the entire Rubin team, and into the slot to a wide open teammate

who decided not to shoot. It only took one quick glance over to that teammate before picking up the loose puck and rifling it over, which was a theme of this game. He makes quick decisions. This includes attempting and completing a three line cross ice pass with no pre-scanning, which lead to a 1-on-0 for his team. One knock would be that he does make every pass with all of the power he has, which made his teammates' lives difficult at times.

**J.D. Burke:** August 7th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Trikozov is such a smart, creative player. He finds ways to create offence even when the odds are stacked against him. Attracts multiple defenders into his orbit and only dispatches of the puck at the last second to create the best possible opportunities for his linemates as a distributor. Showed far more touch as a distributor in this contest than in my last viewing too; the puck landed on his teammates' sticks rather than their shin pads. Made just an unbelievably smart, creative backhand feed on the rush in this contest. Played dutiful hockey in all three zones. Even created a chance by stealing the puck from his opponent on the backcheck and immediately turning play in the opposite direction. Looks like a no-brainer first-round pick, to me.

**J.D. Burke:** August 4th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Czech Republic U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

It's over for his opponents when Trikozov starts to calibrate his passes in such a way that they reach their desired target with any sort of consistency. He's seeing the ice exceptionally well, constantly showing a bordering on elite level of creativity, but he can't seem to connect on these otherwise high-level plays. It's quite the conundrum. Plays with pace, working one- and two-touch passes with varying degrees of accuracy. Took the puck inside when the opportunity presented itself.

Took a great line to cut off an attempted Czech breakout and create a chance. Picked up a primary assist on a 3-on-2 rush with a hook pass to Ivan Demidov for a catch-and-release goal.

**David St-Louis:** August 4th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Czech Republic U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Gleb has no concept of plays being open or closed. He makes his choice before giving the puck and he executes, not caring that 90% of his passes end up as turnovers. If the teammate on the receiving end is open, then it can lead to highlight reel worthy play, but carelessness is not desirable. The skills aren't good enough to bet on such a poor decision-making improving, especially when we know that the pace of the game is only going to increase at higher levels and the passing windows only become smaller. Trikozov has passing and handling skills, but he lacks physical elements (puck protection). He looks like a pure "skill" player who will have success in the MHL, but not ever translate his game to the NHL.

**J.D. Burke:** August 2nd, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Finland U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Okay, Gleb Trikozov. You have my attention. That was an inspired performance, one that left him with more notes on my page than any of the other Russians in this contest, Matvei Michkov, Ivan Miroschnichenko, and Alexander Perevalov included. The success rate on a lot of what Trikozov attempted in this contest wasn't especially high, but the vision on display was really something to behold. You can attribute much of that to his lack of touch as a distributor -- so many pucks into teammates shin pads, and so on. Found teammates through layers. Nice blend of pace and patience with the puck. Some straight line attacks in space, none of which worked. Strikes me as a player that could become something special with a great deal of refinement.





23  
Rank

6.5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

A  
Grade

6.5  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

## DANILO YUROV

RW | METALLURG MAGNITOGORSK

HEIGHT 6'1"

D.O.B. DEC. 22, 2003

WEIGHT 179

SHOOTS LEFT

"Being barely played at the KHL level has clouded what Yurov is as a prospect. He has a great combination of skill, strength, and awareness. Some team is going to be extremely happy with him and might even get him later than he should be available." - Western Conference scout in February 2022

SHADES OF: Reilly Smith

41%

2022 XLS

40%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

37%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

1.30

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
MHL	23	13	23	36
KHL	21	0	0	0

### Scouting Report

Few players entered the year with more name recognition than Danila Yurov. Scouts on the team side and in the public sphere alike have been tracking his progress for years now, going as far back as his play at the U17s in the 2019-20 season.

Yet for all the many chapters in the scouting community's book on this player, Yurov's projection is as fraught as any in the 2022 NHL Draft. All that time in the scouting community's sights, and his future has only gone further and further out of focus with time.

The worst part is that this lack of clarity isn't even Yurov's fault. He was too good for the MHL, but Metallurg Magnitogorsk refused to play him when he was with their KHL roster. The 6-foot-1 winger only averaged 3:19 a game in the KHL over 40 regular season and postseason contests, his season-high a whopping 10:37, according to our partners at InStat.

The minutes were more plentiful in the MHL, but the viewings less meaningful. But that's the best Yurov's season offers, so we had to make do.

If nothing else, we got a pretty decent understanding of the tools at his disposal. The most imposing of the lot is probably

the Chelyabinsk-winger's footspeed. That was a consistent, positive theme through just about every one of our viewings.

"[Yurov] boasts a powerful skating style. He has quick feet that are capable of generating speed in a hurry via short accelerating strides and quick cross-over laden cuts," Elite Prospects Dir. of Film Scouting Cam Robinson wrote in a Film Room deep dive. "Additionally, once he's going, his posture and mechanics are fairly clean. He blends a strong lower half and core to propel a perpendicular knee bend and recovers under his body well.

"At Elite Prospects, we have rated him as a 6.5-grade skater. This indicates that his level is that of an above-average skater at the NHL level. As he adds further strength, his mechanics indicate that rating could improve further."

His plus-level skating, well-maintained mental map of the ice through constant scanning, a willingness to play the body and cut opponents off at the hands, and great lines to the puck made Yurov an excellent forechecking presence in many of our viewings. He's an absolute nuisance on offensive zone retrievals, unrelenting in his pursuit, working every bit as smart as he is working hard.

Some of these same principles of his game make him every bit as effective in the defensive zone, where he's a legitimate shutdown force as a winger. He's an engaged off-puck defender, constantly scanning for threats, activating to cut off passes, and closing on threats without hesitation.

You don't start the year off as a potential top-five pick because of strong forechecking and defensive diligence, though. There's a lot to like about Yurov's offensive profile, too. There's the aforementioned skating -- that's the starting point -- but he's also a high-end puckhandler. His hands work independently of his feet, and he has a real knack for getting opposition defenders moving one way and cutting across them in the opposite direction.

"He loves drawing defenders towards him to open up space for his teammates," Elite Prospects Russia regional scout Dylan Griffing wrote in a September game report. "He was egging them by stickhandling 1-on-1 with the puck away from his body, so when the opponent reached for a poke, he brought it back towards himself and moved the puck out of the area.

"Creative rush patterns to constantly find pockets. Really smart player and makes great reads," Griffing added later in that same report.

Those hands are probably the best part of his offensive build. Yurov's shot rates as about average, and he's far too reliant on hope passes to rate as anything better than an average distributor at present. The optimist in our staff probably sees his playmaking as a better projection than what we saw this season, with the occasional flash of high-level creativity buoying our assessment. But that's a bit of a leap of faith based on this year's tape.

You're almost certainly getting an NHL-calibre player with Yurov. There's no real concern there. The question is whether he'll be an impact player in the top-six or a middle-six, defence-first winger with adequate puck skill and playmaking chops. It essentially boils down to which sample you find more indicative of his true talent level -- the one of his draft-minus-one and draft-minus-two seasons or his draft year. Time will tell.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 5th, 2022

Russia vs Russia U20 - MHL

This was a chance of pace for Yurov. After playing only seconds in the KHL, he got close to 20 minutes in this exhibition game. He showed his handling skills multiple times, including a sequence to start the game where he won the zone and beat a defender one-on-one by passing the puck behind him then stick lifting him as he tried to get it before passing to a teammate in the high slot. Few players in the draft can do that. Actually, maybe only Brad Lambert. He backchecked hard, communicated with teammates for positioning, and switches, tried to establish body positioning, and attack inside ice as often as possible (mostly with his hands). I still think the hockey sense is closer to average, however.

**Dylan Griffing:** February 22nd, 2022

Stalnye Lisy vs. Loko-76 Yaroslavl - MHL

This was far from a top-10 performance from Yurov. He barely touched the defensive zone and opted to cherrypick at the red line and wait for a breakout pass. Tried a lot of fancy dekes and ended up without possession most of the time, including a bad giveaway in his own end that led to a couple of chances for Loko-76. Volume shooting from all over the zone, seven shot attempts in total, with just one real look that did end up in the back of the net. Disappeared for chunks of the game, as well. He created some chances through his passing to the slot, but his lack of stickhandling

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Maxim Shalunov

YEAR: 2011

SIMILARITY: 86%

2 Pavel Buchnevich

YEAR: 2013

SIMILARITY: 85%

3 Alexander Remov

YEAR: 2012

SIMILARITY: 84%

4 Nikita Kucherov

YEAR: 2011

SIMILARITY: 83%

5 Alexander Gogolev

YEAR: 2010

SIMILARITY: 81%

6 Nikita Gusev

YEAR: 2011

SIMILARITY: 81%

consistency and breakaway speed left him to be a passenger through transition, relying on Kantserov and Kvochko to do more of the heavy lifting there.

**Dylan Griffing:** January 26th, 2022

Belye Medvedi vs. Stalnye Lisy - MHL

Pretty underwhelming performance from Yurov. Solid back pressure and made a couple of plays off of it, but he was kind of a non-factor unless he received a spring pass from his teammates. Found pockets to skate into, but struggled when he needed to use his hands to beat defenders. Losing control of the puck or getting it checked off of his stick, the failure to escape pressure really stood out. This isn't a performance a top-10 pick should be having in the MHL, relying on his strength or his teammates to hit him while he's in motion, and I really don't think he belongs in the top-10 at this point.

**David St-Louis:** January 25th, 2022

Belye Medvedi vs. Stalnye Lisy - MHL

Impressive, impressive defensive performance from Yurov, which is an aspect of the game I didn't really highlight from him before. He cares about positioning and cares about his check, constantly scanning for him, scanning for backdoor plays, and not being overaggressive; good angling technique, good shot blocking technique, good shuffle steps to stay at the right angle. He pressured in the right way on the penalty kill, stealing a puck with a sneaky, well-timed, well-planned route. His speed was a defensive asset. He even turned a takeaway into a breakaway in the third frame. Awareness, defensive care and habits, some playmaking ability, problem-solving abilities, and the posture and above-average tools to add more skills. He is a bit vanilla as a prospect, but there is so much there that I would take him in the top-10 still. He's an easy projection, has scalability, and more potential to develop in new ways.

**Cam Robinson:** January 21st, 2022

Stalnye Lise vs Belye Medvedi - MHL

Not the most dynamic game from Yurov at the junior level but he was clearly a head above most of the competition. This is likely a harsh criticism but due to how dominant he's been at this level earlier in the season. Yurov drove the middle of the ice constantly. At one point receiving a cross-slot dish while attacking the open space with a defender right on his hip. He cradled, head up and finished all in a flash. He had five shots at even-strength with four of them being high-danger. He was able to fight off defenders while transporting the puck and was very mobile and creative on the man-advantage. Just the one point in a high scoring game, but he was good in all three zones.

**David St-Louis:** December 28th, 2021

Russia U20 vs. Switzerland U20 - WJC-20

Not many puck touches for Yurov, but I liked his involvement. His technical ability is still one of the best in the draft. He can link plays together fast and he's always moving his feet, pre-reception and post-reception. He cuts to the net, with and without the puck and plays system hockey well enough at this stage. He remains one of the hardest players to evaluate in this draft as he rarely gets the puck in favourable enough conditions often enough to really show his full skill level and potential manipulation abilities. It's annoying guessing work. On tools and habits alone, he is a high pick though. He has a similar upside as many other player we have ranked around him a 2 or 3 wing.

**Dylan Griffing:** December 27th, 2021

Russia U20 vs. Sweden U20 - WJC-20

Another limited role for Yurov where he wasn't really able to do much. I liked his defensive zone scanning, made a nice play in his first shift to read and cut off a cross-seam pass and turn it into a breakout (which is a rare sight for this Russian team). Other than that, not much happening here. Decision making was off, resulting in some weird plays, like hounding down a loose puck in the defensive zone, just to recover it, turn, and ice it down the other end. Wasn't expecting a lot given the circumstances, just an okay outing.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 17th, 2021

Metallurg Magnitogorsk vs. Amur Khabarovsk - KHL

10 minutes of ice time for Yurov in this one and he had his moments. Skating with the puck was his biggest issue here because he wasn't able to find pockets to skate into quick enough, so he was taking on defenders 1-on-1 and the hands weren't quite good enough to get past. His decision making while pressured was inconsistent. Small area game was really solid, the combination of his hands and strength in the tighter areas let him fight off the defender with his body while maintaining possession. Reading of play in the offensive zone was good, made smart passing options when not rushing himself and made supporting moves off-the-puck to be an outlet whenever possible. Cut to the crease to screen the goalie and attempt to get a tip quite a few times, as well. Applied pressure quickly and managed his area of the ice defensively.

**David St-Louis:** November 14th

Sweden U20 vs Russia U20 - PreWJ20

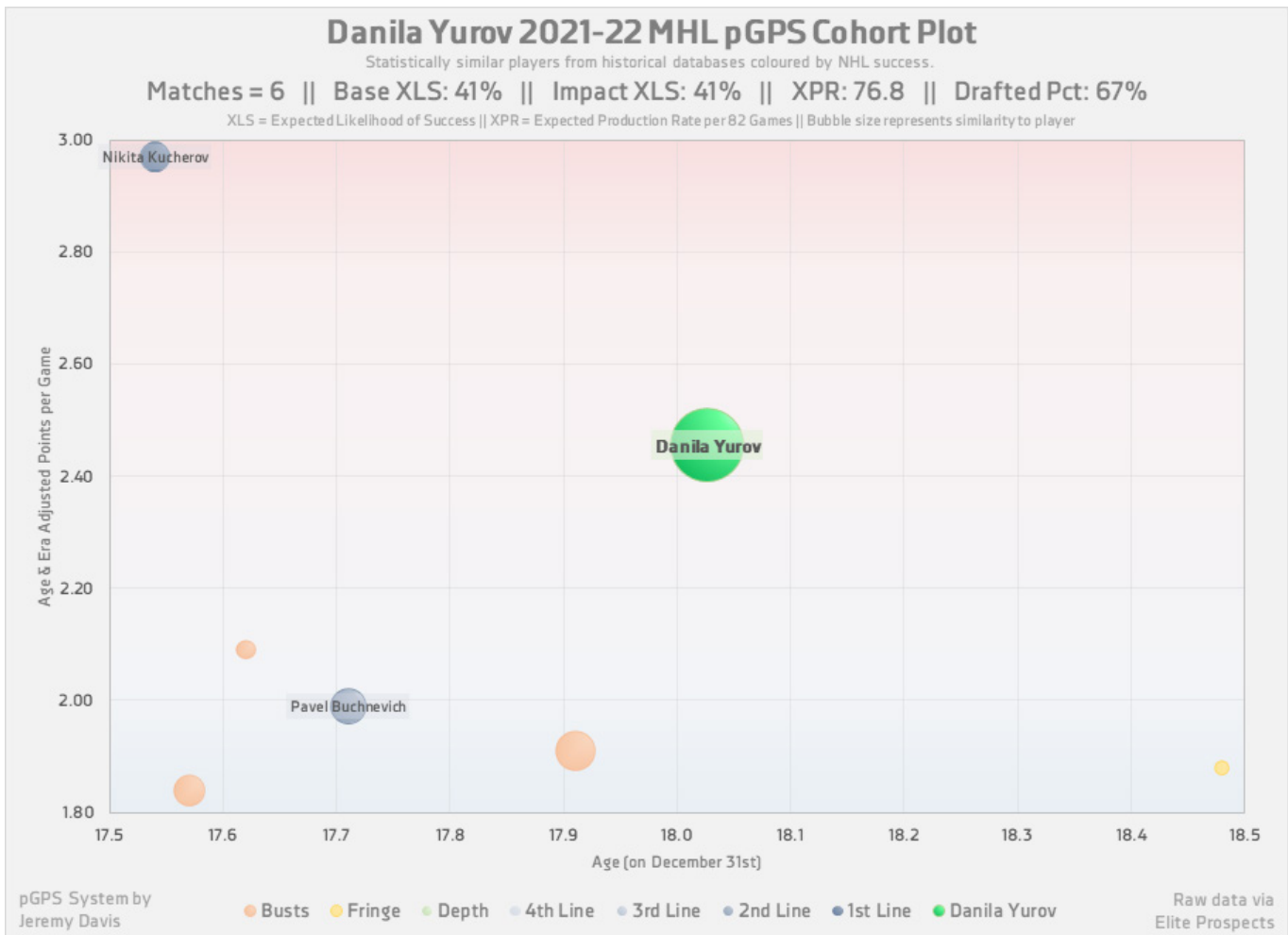
Yurov's skills all rate above-average, his skating, handling, passing, and even his physical skills. Yurov can work his hands and feet independently and protect the puck with his outside edge, by making preemptive contact with the opposition, by leaning on them, with skating moves... He can make plays inside contact and do so with a lot of pace. His processing speed is also clearly above-average. I'd put him more in the problem-solver category than planner, however. I still question some of his decisions on the ice. He seems to force plays under pressure when he doesn't have clear, good options.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 12th, 2021

Russia U20 vs. Finland U20 - Four Nations

Really liked what Yurov was doing off the puck this game. Stepping up aggressively on the puck carrier as the F1 to force them to make the first move, and he had the active





stick and physicality to really put the pressure on. He was really clean with his takeaways, stealing the puck in stride to be able to quickly get it moving the other direction.

There were a few too many uncontrolled dumps out of the defensive zone from him where it looked like he wasn't aware of all of his options and opted to chip it out and re-group defensively. On offense, he was consistently moving the puck to the dangerous areas of the ice, either with his passing or by himself, using his strength to hold off anyone who challenged him. Picked up a nasty assist off the forecheck, stealing the puck and cutting across the slot and backhanding it over to his teammate. Facilitated play well as the bumper on the power play. Very strong and deceptive along the boards.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 28th, 2021

Stalnye Lisy Magnitogorsk vs. Sibirskie Snaipery - MHL

It's hard not to laugh while watching Yurov play in the MHL, because he quite simply is a man amongst children. He was the first to every loose puck, winning puck battles all over the ice, and maintained possession with ease. The physical aspect of his game mixed with his incredible scanning and reading of the ice makes him a force every time he steps out there. While he only picked up one point in this one, he very

well could've had five. Some unfortunate puck luck, but the plays were all there in full force. Stickhandling in and out of tight areas and drawing attention to himself to clear ice for his teammates. Taking hits to make plays. Just another performance that showed off that he is way too good for this league and really, really needs a VHL loan to challenge himself while getting ice time he isn't getting in the KHL.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 11th, 2021

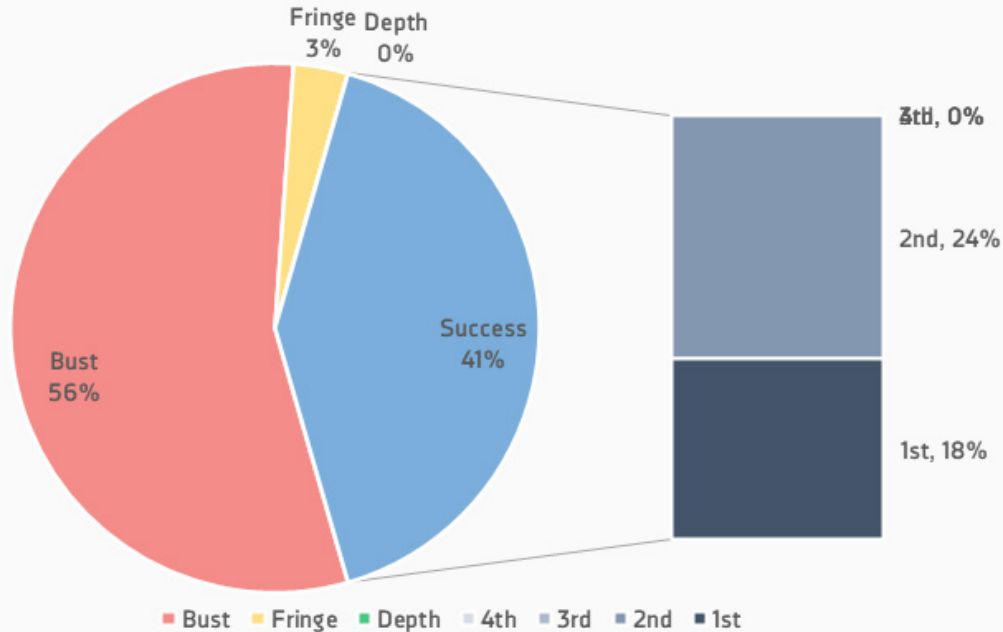
Metallurg Magnitogorsk vs. Sochi HK - KHL

Yurov actually got a decent amount of ice time in this one, which seems to be rather rare for him at the KHL level. A few things stood out. I thought that his skating looked good. Good knee bend, proper depth, decent ankle flexion. His skating habits seemed solid, too. He played with rather high pace without the puck, was active on the forecheck and closed empty space quickly. Based on this one, Yurov's much more of a playmaker than a shooter.

There was one rush where he probably should have just released the puck himself, but instead looked for a cross-ice slip pass that ultimately didn't quite hit the mark and they weren't able to get a shot off. I liked how he was pre-scanning on the breakout, which allowed him to make one-touch plays towards the middle when pressured. He also scanned quite a

## Danila Yurov 2021-22 MHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



bit on retrievals, which helped him to identify the best play quickly. Pretty impressed with this performance.

**David St-Louis:** October 11th, 2021

Metallurg Magnitogorsk vs. Sochi HK - KHL

Yurov tends to defer to teammates in his KHL minutes, but that's pretty normal. At some point, he got a chance one-on-one with the goalie, an almost breakaway, and he decided to pass back to a 2nd rusher who had to receive the puck on his back-end. I like the awareness -- Yurov showed it through the game -- but he should have more confidence in his abilities. Yurov kept his feet moving during the game, jumping in and out of scoring areas, attacking the net, and repositioning inside space. He looks effective at this level, even defensively, he can hold his own.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 5th, 2021

Metallurg Magnitogorsk vs. Spartak Moskva - KHL

Seven and a half minutes of ice time for Yurov in this one, with some penalty killing time in his final shift of the game. Hunched over posture didn't stop him from building up speed quickly to win races to the puck and getting back quickly to cause a turnover. Really just slotted into the checking role and did his job. Everything in the offensive zone was mostly just cuts towards the net in hopes the puck would find him, or planting in front to screen the goalie. Had one nice pass through a Spartak player to start a breakout, but made a few poor judgements and overcomplicated passes.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 1st, 2021

Metallurg Magnitogorsk vs. Avtomobilist Yekaterinburg - KHL

Just four minutes of ice time for Yurov in his third game back with the main club. He didn't touch the ice at all in the opening period, picked up two shifts in the second, and five in the third. When he was out there, he made impacts in the defensive and neutral zones with his off puck play, creating turnovers and moving the puck back up the ice. Had a good battle for possession against the wall near the defensive blueline and he managed to escape with the puck, beating three Avtomobilist players and starting the breakout. Picked up a shot on goal in his first shift after finding a pocket to break into and attacking it.

**David St-Louis:** September 24th, 2021

Stalnye Lisy vs. Omskie Yastreby - MHL

I know Yurov scored four points in this game, but it wasn't the most eventful performance. I liked his playmaking flashes, the cross-ice passes and the ones coming from behind the net. Yurov has his head up, his next play in mind, and he knows how to take advantage of prime passing areas. I especially liked his goal at the end of the 3rd period. He was alone at the far-post and it was an easy score, but he still shoulder checked two, three times to register any incoming defender. He didn't want to get surprised. Yurov is an aware, skilled forward, who can rush the puck up-ice with crossovers and connect plays in the offensive zone. Not much missing.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 23rd, 2021

Stalnye Lisy vs. Omskie Yastreby - MHL

Pigs are flying, the moon is blue, and Danila Yurov got 19 minutes of time on ice in a hockey game. An expected impressive performance, with his first shift back in the MHL ending on a dangerous shot on goal. He loves drawing defenders towards him to open up space for his teammates. He was egging them by stickhandling 1v1 with the puck away from his body, so when the opponent reached for a poke, he brought it back towards himself and moved the puck out of the area. When his feet were moving with the puck, he skated into traffic to engage with as many defenders as possible, so when he came out with the puck, he always had a wide open passing option. Creative rush patterns to constantly find pockets. Really smart player and makes great reads, but lacked the finishing pass on a few chances for his team that were off target. Uses his point men well, taking their man off of them so he can drop it back and then find space off the puck. Seemed disengaged on the defensive side of things. Cheated for offense a bit and had a poor defensive positioning play that allowed Yastreby to pick up a goal. Easily too good for the MHL, a loan to the VHL would be ideal.

**David St-Louis:** September 23rd, 2021

Stalnye Lisy vs. Omskie Yastreby - MHL

I'm rewatching this game late in the season and not seeing the elements that made me enjoy Yurov at the start. He's skilled, very skilled: can catch pucks mid-air, knock them down, and pull off a dangle in the same movement. He's flashy with his close to perfect skating stride and fast handling at his hip. He looks like a top-6 player, but he doesn't have the hockey sense to support such a projection, at least it wasn't ever evident this season. Bad decisions in this game in situations with evident good plays. No real manipulation or anticipation of the position of teammates in scoring spot. Blind passes sent to no one. There is defensive engagement, a ton of fast switching between opponents and lanes, but not gritty defensive engagement, as he turned away from shots instead of blocking them.

**David St-Louis:** September 22rd, 2021

Stalnye Lisy vs. HC Novosibirsk - KHL

Good defensive performance from Yurov. He played the F1 role quite often in the defensive zone and in transition and picked up his man without hesitation. His speed wasn't as impressive against professionals, but that's expected at this stage of his career. His hips are raised a bit too much, but I still think he will become an above-average NHL skater. He had a great scoring chance, controlled his speed arriving

across the ice as an option for a teammate driving the net. That teammate missed him. Off the rush rush, Yurov showed an ability to read defenders and move counter to their feet to create offensive zone entries.

**Cam Robinson:** September 10th, 2021

Metallurg Magnitogorsk vs Admiral Vladivostok - KHL

Another game, another three minutes of ice time for Yurov. He was slotted in as the fourth line winger in this one, and saw four shifts in the first frame, and two in the second. But after his team went down on the scoreboard, that was virtually the end of his night. In his few shifts, he caused a turnover, and put a shot on goal. He plays with clear intelligence - his head is up and he looks unfazed by the KHL level. He doesn't explode into pockets, but reads the play and gets to spaces effectively with his anticipation. I really like this prospect, but we need him to get more minutes. A stint in the VHL should be coming.

**Cam Robinson:** September 3rd, 2021

Avtomobilist Yekaterinburg vs Metallurg Magnitogorsk - KHL

This is what I'm talking about. Yurov was all over the ice in this one - despite seeing under 10 minutes overall. Playing the middle of the ice, he was responsible positionally, engaged in all three zones, and showcased a high level of skill and awareness. The skating is a bit hunched over, and he's not overly dynamic with it, but his anticipation helps get him to pockets quickly. He screams pro level player by simply knowing where to be on the ice and how to anticipate the play structure. He had several rushes with creative routes and handles. He applied steady back pressure on the back swing, and popped up when he took his lumps physically. A very impressive performance at the KHL level for the 17 year old. The kid looks like a rock solid top-10 pick and if he can add some better speed, top-5.

**J.D. Burke:** September 3rd, 2021

Avtomobilist Yekaterinburg vs Metallurg M. - KHL

On the one hand, you love to see Yurov finally getting some actual ice-time at the KHL level rather than the usual one or two or three shifts. On the other hand, even all the extra ice-time afforded him in this ice-time didn't really move the needle one way or the other. Yurov played a conservative, defence-first game, helping his defencemen low in the zone, backchecking diligently, and making sound off-puck reads. He took draws, playing the game mostly at centre, and held his own in the dot, though one's mileage on how much that matters may vary. Nice show of puck skills on one foray into

the offensive zone, but it was a lot of flash and very little substance, resulting in a low percentage shot that sailed wide of the net and left the zone. Skating form looked downright vile. He was top-heavy, recovered wide, and didn't seem to generate a lick of ankle flexion. Just kind of a whatever performance from Yurov.

**Dylan Griffing:** August 5th, 2021

Russia vs. Traktor Chelyabinsk - Sochi Open

A relatively quiet game playing on a checking line. His explosiveness shined through early on, garnering a shot on goal off the rush. Played as the F1 for most of the game and was quick to apply pressure. Physicality came in flashes, but was having issues along the walls. In a game where everything was coming off the rush for his line, he drove positive results in that direction, but they just could not get anything going.

**David St-Louis:** May 6th, 2021

Finland U18 vs Russia U18 - MHL

Yurov was the offensive driver of his line. He knows how to create successful rushes by moving counter to the feet of defenders and he manipulates those with east-west movement to open lanes for himself and buy time for teammates to get in position. He clearly plays with a plan in mind. He is comfortable playing at the edge of defensive sticks and always looks in control, in command of the ice. His skills all look above-average. He could be a high, high pick at the 2022 draft. He looked much better than Miroshnichenko in this game. His mental game is clearly ahead.

**David St-Louis:** May 5th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Belarus U18 - MHL

I'm coming back to this game after watching a bunch of 2021-22 Yurov to see how he does against his peers. Yurov's game seems to really be all about skill, pace, and hitting first-options quickly. I don't see him create advantages by himself. He is a problem-solver, but only when the deck is stacked in his favor do you see him manipulate the defence. High processing speed and high skill-level is still worth a lot, but I don't think it's top-5 value. I like the defensive involvement.

P



elite | hock  
prospec





24  
Rank

5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

6.5  
Passing

B  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

6  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

# JIMMY SNUGGERUD

F | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 6' 2" D.O.B. JUN. 1, 2004  
WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS RIGHT

46%	35%	12%	1.28
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	59	24	39	63
USHL	26	6	20	26
WJC-18	6	3	4	7

> Committed to Univ. of Minnesota

## Scouting Report

Jimmy Snuggerud is anything but your run-of-the-mill support player. He's flashed skill this season that would fit comfortably within the first 15 picks of this draft, if not better.

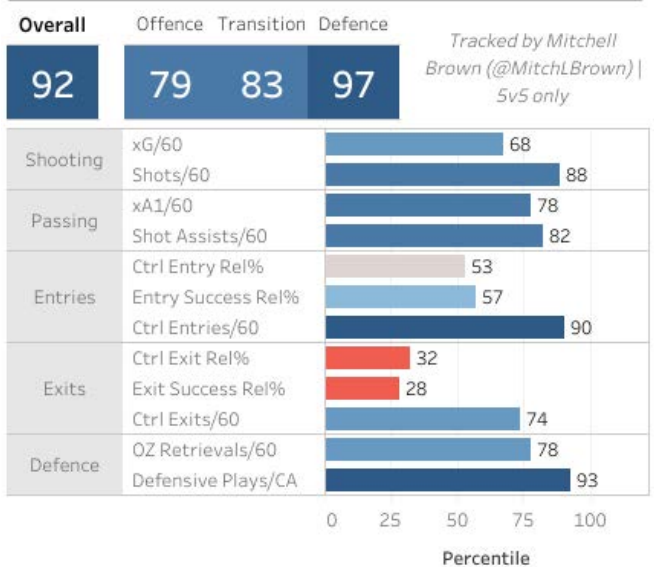
At his best, Snuggerud is an offensive driver with his puckhandling and playmaking, a conduit through which his team's in-zone offence flows. He'll display an understanding of offensive rotations and the game's motions indicative of an advanced thinker, worth at least a 6-grade for hockey sense.

"Snuggerud continued to show the same playmaking flashes at the tournament," Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis wrote in an article summing up his play at the 2022 U18 World Hockey Championship. "He really has a great understanding of how to create for others. He holds on to the puck to let plays develop, cuts alongside the width of the ice to manipulate defenders, and deceives them with look-offs. You see both a high-level processing speed and anticipation abilities in some of his plays."

You'll even get the occasional flash of deception from Snuggerud, be it in the form of a look-off pass or a shoulder feint. Anything to open room to handle or a passing lane. And he has the touch as a passer to capitalize on those openings, feathering pucks through sticks and bodies, almost always onto his teammate's stick in prime shooting positions.

"While not as much of a facilitator as [Frank] Nazar or [Logan] Cooley, the Minnesota commit is particularly adept at finding teammates in transition and turning the play up ice quickly," Elite Prospects American regional scout Joey Padmanabhan wrote in a mid-season profile of Snuggerud.

Games Tracked: 14 | Minutes Tracked: 206.5



"In the offensive zone, he opens up passing lanes with look-offs, stick handles, and fakes,"

You'll have no doubt noticed by this point the pains we've gone to to make sure that we qualify any admiration of Snuggerud's skill as appearing in flashes. That's the catch. You can go a week or two or three or more at a time without seeing it. And even at his very best, Snuggerud's low pace can sometimes limit his effectiveness as a distributor. He's not especially fleet of foot either.

The one constant is excellent support play at both ends of the ice. That's Snuggerud's bread and butter.

There aren't many better retrieval artists in the draft, and he may well be the strongest player in the class from his

hands to his elbows -- good luck parrying one of his stick-lifts going into the corner for a loose puck.

He's also a pretty effective defensive forward, with the high motor and strong reads combo that's formed the foundation of many an NHL checking line winger's game. You won't often catch Snuggerud out of position, and if you do, then you'll see him busting his ass to get back into the thick of the play post-haste.

The hope with Snuggerud is that his flashes of high-end

handling and passing skill are signs of better things to come and that he'll start to reveal his quality on a more consistent basis as he's put in situations to drive the bus. That wasn't really the case last season, as he often took a backseat to Logan Cooley and Cutter Gauthier.

At a minimum, you're probably getting a bottom-six winger who can feature in both phases of special teams and move up the lineup in a pinch in Snuggerud. History tells us that's a pretty solid outcome at this point in the draft.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Aaron Palushaj YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 91%	2 Jason Gregoire YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 88%	3 Corey Tropp YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 88%	4 Zemgus Girgenson YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 88%	5 Brock Trotter YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 88%
6 Chad LaRose YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 87%	7 Ryan Potulny YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 87%	8 Kyle Okposo YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 87%	9 R.J. Umberger YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 87%	10 Brandon Saad YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 87%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

USA vs Germany - U18s

There is so much skill in Snuggerud's game. He understands the flow of the play and complements it, moving under or above the puck off the rush, connecting plays, not forcing ones that won't work. The hockey sense seems quite high. Again, it takes time to appreciate because his occasions to make plays are much more limited than Cooley's, for example. His skating looked potentially above-average in this game. I really like his puck receptions: soft and precise, mostly leads to the next play. A lot of potential there. I'm starting to like him more than Gauthier.

**J.D. Burke:** April 26th, 2022

Germany vs. Team USA - U18s

I'm not sure if Snuggerud really wowed me at any point in this hockey game with his skill level or tools, but he looked like an elite level support player. That counts for something. Really brilliant, well-conceived routes as a forechecker, and one of the strongest sticks at the tournament. Managed to force a few turnovers in this game by timing a stick lift perfectly, including on one occasion when he did so, corralled the puck, and set up a goal at the net-front. It just looked easy. Snuggerud took really intelligent routes off the puck, played with a high off-puck pace, and consistently put himself in the right spots, at the right time.

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Czechia vs Team USA - U18s

Snuggerud might have just as good a release as Howard but less opportunities to use it, partly due to external factors and also partly because he might not be as good of an off-puck attacker. But when he does get chances, he can release in tight spaces, scan goalies inside his firing motion and find the hole. There are still flashes of high, high-level skills in his game, moments where he dangles through an entire defence to set up teammates

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

I continue to mostly only see playmaking abilities in Snuggerud's game. He is deceptive and has an internal timing on passes that is above-average; he lets them develop, sees them develop, and moves to drag defenders out of way of lanes. He's a master of the delay; not necessarily off the rush -- his motor and speed and pace are pretty low which brings down his effectiveness -- but when he's already in the zone.

**David St-Louis:** April 1st, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs USNTDP U18 - USHL

Snuggerud rarely pops in games. You really have to look for him. But when you do, you see a talented playmaker who is capable of holding pucks to let plays develop, to attract defenders on himself and improve receiving conditions of teammates, and who is capable of reading the game away from the puck. But the precision of his passes left to be desired, to use the French expression. Pucks sent waist high to teammates instead of flat to the ice when there were no

stick in the way. His pace overall is quite low. The skating is average due to a lack of ankle flexion and a low stride rate. He tried to pull off moves on defenders in tight spaces but couldn't manage it due to a lack of explosiveness. I see him as a potentially manipulative playmaker, who isn't getting the chance to show his talent due to how much of a puck hug Cooley can be at times, but also because he doesn't have the carry ability of Cooley either. He's a connector on his line and a pretty good one, but I'm not sure his game would scale up efficiently to a bigger role. He could be a top-40 pick in this draft, but he carries more risk as his game is harder to evaluate overall.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Snuggerud is Snuggerud. He makes the odd top-line play and then falls into the background. In this game, he set-up a goal with a nasty look off pass through two defenders. It was an instantaneous read. The playmaking appears in every situation: cutting across the top of the zone, along the boards, in the neutral zone, and on the breakout. He clearly plans plays, identifying, deceiving, and then executing. And he reads the play a pass in advance. These attributes suggest a player who has a lot more to give, but in his current situation, he leverages these to become support play. I think he takes a more play-driving centric role with Minnesota next year. He's a first-rounder in this class: high probability of playing with top-nine upside.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Snuggerud's impact was minuscule compared to his linemates'. Still, he did the Snuggerud things. He won battles, creating battles on the forecheck, and piled up the steals on the backcheck. In transition, he looks for cross-ice or inside-lane options, creating space up the ice. I didn't see anything beyond those. A quiet performance, and with each passing one, I become less confident in his ultimate upside (although he clearly has top-nine skills).

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

A bit of a quiet game for Snuggerud. The transition passing was his best skill in this game, but there was only one notable play in the OZ. To be fair, it was a good one: fake forehand into a backhand pass around a defender for a point-blank look. Some games, he looks like a potential play-driver with deceptiveness, pace, and skill. In this one, he struggled when the puck was on his stick for anything longer than

a second. Snuggerud's game will probably scale up well to NCAA competition, higher than that? Not sure. But the way that his high volume, primarily short-range passing, board play, and handling skill could make him a play-driver in a different environment. Based on what I've seen so far, I'd be more willing to make that bet in the early-second.

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

I still don't know how to evaluate Snuggerud. He doesn't drive the play as much as Cooley or Nazar, but when he does get the puck in favourable situations (with at least one option and space), he makes things happen. He fakes, leverages one option to open up a better one, shows manipulation, above-average handling and passing skills, and some creativity. I like the flashes. Is there enough substance (hockey sense, off-puck play) to make him a first rounder? Not sure yet. I just haven't seen enough of him. I probably need to watch him in isolation.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Snuggerud was good in this one, and he facilitated offense much more than in previous viewings. On a few instances, he was able to drive down the dot lane and find teammates in high danger areas. Other times, he would get into soft spots around the net and generate shots himself. Snuggerud played on a line with Cooley and Gauthier, but was more than comfortable keeping the puck on his stick. He's not as dynamic of a skater as his linemates but has the edgework and strength to keep control even with pressure on his back. To me, he looks like a second-rounder.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 22nd, 2022

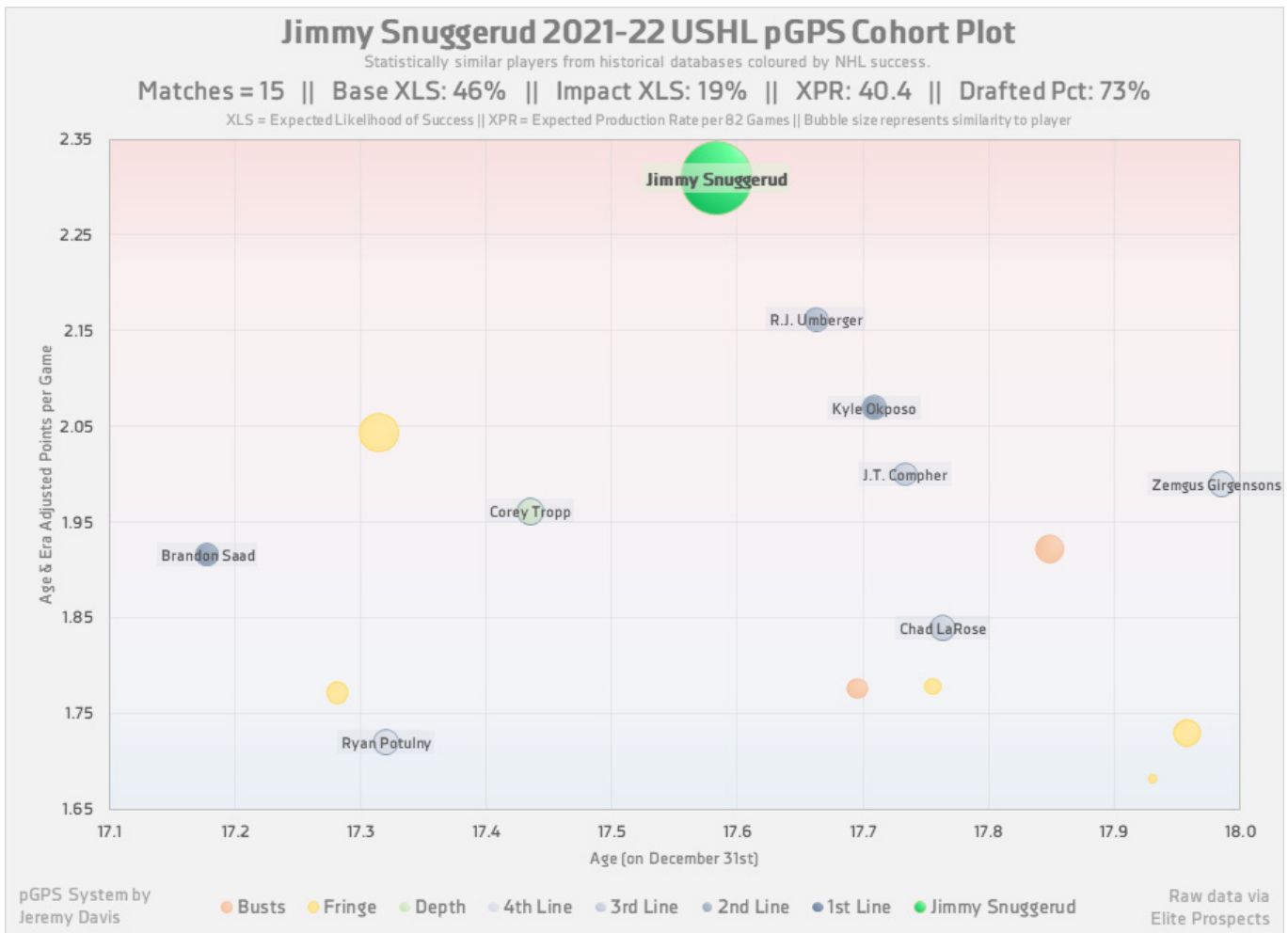
Madison Capitols vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Kind of a quiet night from Snuggerud. He's a useful asset on the man advantage and clearly thinks the game really well. He loves to employ lookoffs, stick fakes, etc. to create options for himself in the offensive zone. I didn't see him create much using his feet, he wasn't too keen on accelerating with possession and trying to beat opponents with speed, much of his decision making happened in a glide. Not his most impressive performance on a night where the offense was clicking for the stars and stripes.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Snuggerud decided to be a shooter in this game. It was, well, interesting. There were some moments of individual



skill to deke, cut inside, and get a chance. But too many low-percentage shots. Would benefit from bringing the puck across the crease, too. The dynamic qualities – change of pace, change of direction, inside play, manipulation – are very inconsistent. Had one crazy sequence where he won a battle, dangled through a tiny opening, and got a chance. Didn't see any standout mechanical elements to his handling, but he keeps his feet moving through moves. The usual puck support, backchecking, and retrievals. Maybe a second-rounder.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 8th, 2022  
 Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

In this game, Snuggerud was a really nice complementary piece for his teammates, offering an option for an outlet pass or, in the offensive zone, a quick shot on net. Carrying the puck himself, he's not always the most dynamic in terms of finding routes. It's a lot of perimeter play and sometimes he'll get angled into the corner and lose possession. Off the puck, he works hard and gets to spots where he's a threat for a shot. Maybe a second rounder?

**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022  
 Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Snuggerud only pops up from time to time in USNTDP game, making it hard to really evaluate his game. Is his lack of good puck touches his fault or the result of his usage? Probably a bit of both. I like his passing and shooting talent. He knows his next play and orients his body to make it quick. He had at least one catch and release shot in this game, receiving the puck in front and launching it instantly by falling forward. His plays are precise in general, too. He can connect sequences. There is a lot to like there, but hard to know the extent of his hockey sense and skill since the projectable plays are so few and far between.

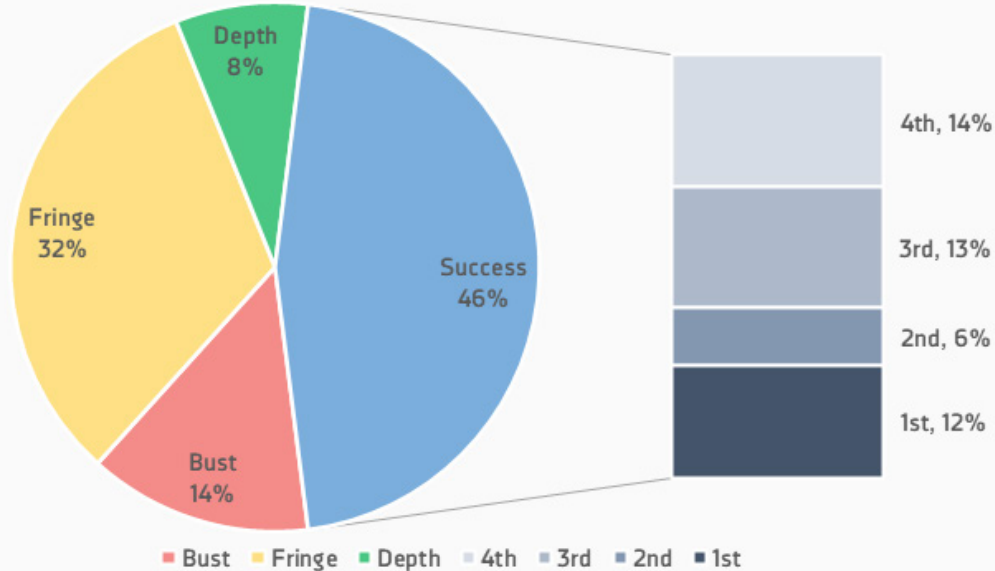
**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2022  
 Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18 - USHL

Snuggerud has some interesting flashes. He combines pace with above-average skills, and when the conditions are right, when he is setup to run around the zone with the puck or with space in the slot, you see him transform those occasions into great plays: deceptive passes through the defence, catch-and-release shots. He can problem-solve on the fly, repair play, and act as the shooter on a line, although he seems to overly favor speed of release over precision. Not sure what to make of him -- I will probably defer to others to rank him -- but he inspires some confidence that, placed in a main



## Jimmy Snuggerud 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



role, in a play-driving one, he will blossom.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

A much more diverse offensive game from Snuggerud than I've previous seen. He consistently found space just outside the slot, adjusting his positioning to receive the puck and fire off a chance. The shot still needs work: he kicks his outside leg back, but dramatically drops his shoulders over the puck to generate downforce. That limits control, power, and deception/release speed. That he was actually looking to shoot opened up the rest of his game. He did the usual stuff: quick passes to teammates in the slot and individual rushes turned into goals after setting up his teammates. I don't see a ton of deception, but this was an efficient performance from Snuggerud. As usual, a strong night aware from the puck. A number of interceptions and retrievals in the OZ, usually projectable anticipation-based reads, and some strong backchecking, too. He's a detail-oriented, disciplined off-puck player with a clear path to become an above-average defensive winger at the next level. He looked like a potential late-first or early-second in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Snuggerud's quietly effective. I like how he moves the puck cross-ice with passes, hits teammates flying the zone, and delays when most players speed up. Sneaky good on the forecheck and in pursuit, anticipating openings to dislodge possession. But this performance was marred by his lack of

skating and handling skill. He had one impressive cross-ice pass to start a sequence, but the rest of his passing was very much short-range, simple plays. He settles for low-percentage shots or passes over taking a bit of a risk. Looked like more like a mid-rounder in this game, although I appreciated his details defensively.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Snuggerud's one of the NTDP's most interesting players for the uniqueness of his game. He heavily leans pass in just about every situation, sometimes to the extreme which limits his impact. But the quality of his playmaking varies wildly from game-to-game and shift-to-shift. Early on, Snuggerud connected with two slick look-off passes, one of which was off the pass reception and the other a fake shot pass into space for activating blue-liner. Then, he kept things simple - too simple. He still connected on another four passes into the board, but they were easy to hit and obvious reads. The rest of his game doesn't exactly inspire; he's mostly an attentive defender that lacks activity. He's a puzzle.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 26th, 2021

Buff State vs. NTDP U18s - NCAA

Snuggerud is a much more effective player when he diversifies his game with some scoring attempts versus solely looking for passing outlets. The kid was a beast in this game, driving play towards the net in the offensive zone and firing off a quick wrister. Off the puck, he showed spatial awareness and found quiet areas to threaten a deadly one-timer or, in

one case, an easy tap-in. The skating is still a weakness and he'd be a much more effective playmaker if he could create space for himself better, but he flexed some scoring muscles that I hadn't seen before and a high quality shot release that is keeping me intrigued.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 5th, 2021

Adrian College vs. NTDP U18s - NCAA

I've seen what Snuggerud is capable of but this one was underwhelming. A bunch of terrible rush patterns, forcing plays into traffic, it was a sloppy performance. He's punishing physically and is strong on his skates, I just wish he would've used that to his advantage better than trying slick dangles or weak cuts to the inside. I'm not sold on his skating stride, there's a heel kick that hurts his speed, and he doesn't always fully recover. I really liked him in my last few viewings, but I'll have to pay closer attention to how he progresses.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

It's games like these where the limitations of Snuggerud's facilitation-based game appear. He passed a ton, connected with few, and never took the initiative with the puck. He delayed once and found the trailer. Lots of plays that missed their target, or didn't seem to have a target at all. Seems limited in the types of passes that he tries -- a slip pass would help him considerably. He has the skills to take charge, gain the inside, and create, but he's content just being a perimeter playmaker with a bit of forechecking ability. Took a couple of bad shoots, too. I need to see more.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Snuggerud was mostly a passer in this game, but a good one. He had a game-high 10 passes into the slot, nine of which connected. Most of them were small-area plays, getting the puck along the boards, seeing a teammate on the other side of the defender, and executing with perfect timing. None of the passes were of high difficulty, but he sees the value in hitting this options and relocating unlike most players at this stage. He's a crafty forechecker, too. Individual skill comes and goes; sometimes, he looks like a manipulative ruhs threat. Others, he's more of a chip-and-chase player. His handling skills and skating are roughly average projection. He's clearly intelligent and thinks a step ahead, but the inconsistent skill is concerning. I think there's a chance he becomes a first-round pick, but needs to develop a stronger offensive identity.

**David St-Louis:** October 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Cornell Big Red - NCAA

A better game from Snuggerud. He showed me more of his talents. He did force a couple of passes in transition, but I thought he was comfortable handling in traffic, at the edge of opposing sticks. His feeds were precise and he made them inside the right windows overall, and overall, his rush patterns were also a positive point, although he could plan them even better, use even more east-west movements to manipulate the defence and create entries. He is sometimes guilty of staying in the same corridor, but you can tell he understands how to move defenders out of his way and out of the way of teammates.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** October 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Cornell Big Red - NCAA

One of the best games I've Snuggerud play this season, for sure. On a night where Cooley and Nazar weren't at their best, Snuggerud showed some fantastic pace and passing ability, and shined brightest in the offensive zone. The Minnesota commit got a healthy amount of playing time tonight and demonstrated some shiftiness I hadn't seen out of him. Snuggerud uses inside edge cuts to dodge pressure and create open lanes to push the puck up ice. He's a smart distributor, he facilitated play in the offensive zone, looking for teammates and hitting them in dangerous areas; he has the spatial awareness to be a high-end playmaker. Someone to keep an eye on.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Snuggerud's an interesting combination of complementary skills and experimentation. He tries to push the pace a bit, highlighted by a crossover-heavy rush where he manipulated one defender and deked out the next, before running out of space and getting pickpocketed. Usually, he plays it a bit safer. At best, he gains the zone, quickly sets up a teammate, and relocated to become a scoring threat. At worst, he's just a dump-and-chase player without the individual skill or creativity to create. Even considering that, he's still a strong defensive player. He's a crafty forechecker with a combination of anticipation, motor, and physicality. He's definitely a pick, but not sure if he's a second rounder or end-of-board type.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

I don't know what to think of Snuggerud. There are showings where I see pace, deception, passing ability, etc. But there are games like this one where there's a slowness in his decision-

making. His skating is a question mark for me, he didn't seem to have the speed or edgework to give himself extra time to make decisions. When he's in space, he's generally good, getting his head up and finding outlets up ice. But this apparent intelligence doesn't apply in high-pressure/high-traffic situations. I've got mixed feelings, I want to keep an eye on him and see if he can iron his game out a little bit.

**David St-Louis:** September 17th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Snuggerud score from a perfect one-timer in this game. The puck came to him in just the right spot and he fired it past the goalie. His shot had depth, knee flexion, his feet were angled right for precision, his upper-body twisted to add power, and his stick was fully weighted. I would like to see him use his shot more overall. He tended to overpass in this game and I questioned his decision-making at times. That being said, he has the awareness, the small-area stickhandling, and the passing skills to become a great playmaker for this team over the course of the season.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 17th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Snuggerud's really interesting from a projection standpoint. It's clear he's intelligent: Aware of surroundings, makes plays quickly, many refined defensive habits (coming across the hips, timing, engagement, feet stay moving). The timing of his puck plays is all off; too late or too early to make the pass. But he sees high-value targets and tries to connect. At the same time, he doesn't force plays and understands how to build offence. Lots of off-puck movement with flashes of timing. He looks more like a secondary player on this team (hard skills + passing) right now, but I think he has the skill to become more.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Like pretty much every NTDP player in this game, Snuggerud lacked timing, but he showed much better instincts than any player not named Nazar. After getting the puck, he often immediately knew the next play and executed. Some of these

weren't perfect plays, but that he already has the pace is a positive sign for next season. Passing was the most interesting skill, again from the awareness, but he demonstrated the ability to adjust puck positioning pre-pass to minimize odds for an interception. A bit of deception, too. Involved in the backcheck and forecheck, getting a couple of plays up the middle before generate extending zone time. Lots of work to be done, but I can see him taking off next season.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

A nearly unprecedented numbers of details at this stage of development. When defenders come towards him, he scans, identifies opens, inverts it, and drives the inside. Once in the middle, he doesn't force plays, showing patience and awareness and plays open up. However, he's not creating lanes or making the best play at this stage. In puck battles, he uses well-timed, creative stick lifts to take on stronger opponents. Extremely involved in the backcheck, often getting ahead of the play and then angling the attack to the perimeter. Prefers to pass in transition, and understandably so. Lacks individual skill, but he plays a pro-style game already. I think he's already a possible NHLers. Upside depends on skill growth over the next season and a half.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

Snuggerud wasn't the best player in this game, but his details were top-notch. Ability to read pressure was the defining part of his game. Whatever the situation calls for, he recognizes it and moves accordingly. Sometimes, that's waiting a split-second. Others, it's sprinting up the ice. Invert pressure through passing plays or a quick pivot. Skilled as a handler, but doesn't overhandle. Give-and-gos to beat defenders, then get the puck in favourable positions. Some timing skills around the net and slot, but it's the playmaking that stood out the most. Lacks some deception, but identified options quickly. Involved in the forecheck, backcheck, and DZ coverage. Comes down low to support regularly. He looks like a player going to explode in his draft year.





25  
Rank

B  
Grade

5.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

5.5  
Puckhandling

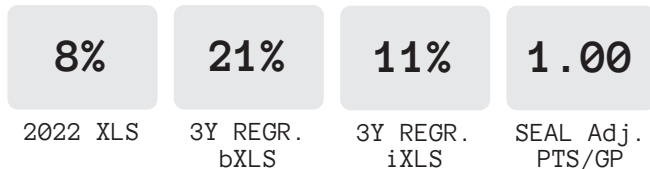
5  
Hockey Sense

7  
Physical

# NATHAN GAUCHER

C | QUÉBEC REMPARTS

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. NOV. 6, 2003  
WEIGHT 207 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	66	31	26	57

## Scouting Report

Every draft class features a handful of players that you can point to and confidently say they're destined for the NHL. Nathan Gaucher is one of them in this year's draft.

This is how Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis opened his profile on the Québec Remparts forward on EP Rinkside.

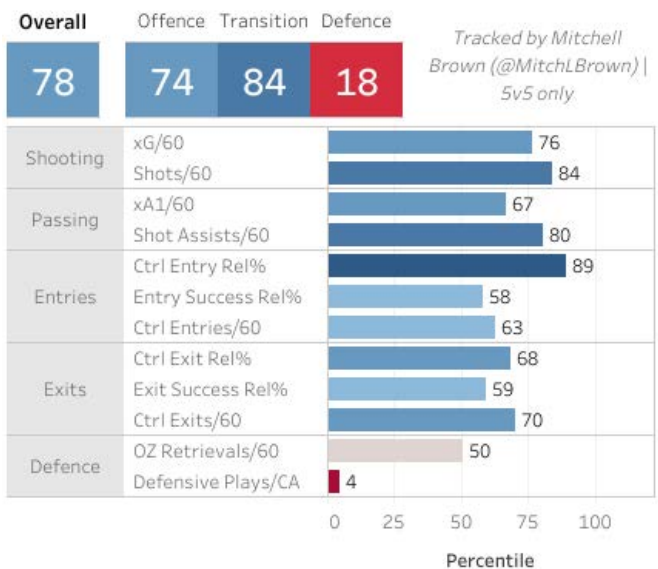
"The certainty of Gaucher's projection is the reason why we included him in our top-32 board this season. Few players possess his combination of power and speed, his physicality and motor. These attributes give Gaucher a stronger NHL foundation than most. On their own, they could earn him a long career in the top league - if he learns to maximize them."

Gaucher is already a fierce forechecker, someone who can knock opponents on the boards, steal pucks from them, and protect them long enough to find an outlet with a deft backhand pass. Those passes were a trademark of Gaucher's game all season long. His ability to slip pucks around or under the stick of opponents to open teammates allowed his team to quickly transition the puck from zone to zone.

Gaucher also provides value in front of the net, where his imposing frame prevents goalies from tracking shots. With a little more technique and work on his hand-eye coordination, he could earn himself more than a few NHL goals by tipping shots every season.

"He was physical, intense on the forecheck, and screening goalies, almost scoring a couple more goals by getting his stick on rebounds," St-Louis wrote in a late-season game report. "His constant pressure made the plays of Rimouski

Games Tracked: 6 | Minutes Tracked: 87.3



is quite difficult. His playmaking game shines when he has clear plays to make, but there are no high-level ideas here, no inclination to manipulate or control his speed, or leverage good scoring chances into great ones."

Despite the lack of high-end playmaking and manipulation abilities in his game, his passing precision and ability to fire off passes still give Gaucher upside. If he can refine his timing and deception, he could become a mainstay on a top-6 line down the road, as a complementary forward, a puck-retriever, defensive presence, and finisher. While it's more likely that Gaucher ends up being moved to the wing due to his small-area skill-set, he could also hold on to a center position due to his ability as a quick distributor.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Anton Zlobin YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 98%	2 Matt Brown YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 97%	3 Philippe Cornet YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 96%	4 Philippe Dupuis YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 96%	5 Michael Lambert YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 96%
6 Michael Chaput YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 96%	7 Marc-Andre Bernier YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 95%	8 Kevin Asselin YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 95%	9 Patrik Zdrahal YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 95%	10 Philippe Paradis YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 95%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 19th, 2022

Rimouski Oceanic vs Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Same Gaucher. He was physical, intense on the forecheck, and screening goalies, almost scoring a couple of goals by getting his stick on rebounds (he did get one). His constant pressure made the plays of Rimouski Ds quite difficult. His playmaking game shines when he has clear plays to make, but there are no high-level ideas here, no inclination to manipulate or control his speed, or leverage good scoring chances into great ones. I liked his supporting game in the defensive zone, the low arcs he drew to give passing options to them. I'm pretty sure he's a winger at the next levels, however, as his game fits that role a little bit more. He doesn't benefit from the C position as much as he can't leverage runways into offensive zone entries at a high rate.

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2022

Baie-Comeau Drakkar vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

A good reminder of Gaucher's value as a prospect. He sees passing moments, times where he can create advantages for his team by moving the puck, but he doesn't create these moments. He drives the net, but he's mostly there, waiting for the puck. He pops in pockets of space, but in evident moments. He has offensive talent, but limited to complementing plays, not play-creation. He's intimidating, however, very intimidating even, as he barrels down the ice with the puck. The skating is clearly above-average and at his size...and his physicality, the way he can protect the puck and separate others from it along the boards. He could be scary in the NHL...In a middle-six or more realistically bottom-six role.

**Cam Robinson:** April 19th, 2022

Québec Remparts vs Chicoutimi Saguenéens - QMJHL

There are a lot of translatable skills here. Gaucher took

really strong route around the ice both defensively and offensively. He was heavy along the walls and came off it with quick acceleration and showed some nice hands to evade pressure and turn it into a dangerous opportunity. His skating is clean for a big man and he uses it to attack lanes and engage physically. He's not a nuanced distributor, but he does have this knack for waiting for the last second as pressure comes and sending a little slip pass across to his mate. As the netfront on the PP, he showed some quick hands in power move positions and grabbed what looked like two helpers - only credited with one. I think there's a 3C in there with a chance of a top-six upside if he can add some more east-west, creative, manipulation traits. Or, if he can continue to build his defensive prowess and be a heavy driver down the middle for some more offensive minded types.

**David St-Louis:** April 15th, 2022

Québec Remparts vs Moncton Wildcats - QMJHL

There are a lot more doubts about Gaucher's game when he doesn't have space. He doesn't find the right solutions and forces plays. His skills stop shining. He will be able to protect the puck and extend possession at higher levels, but I'm not sure he has the small-area sense and skills to create off the walls and in the slot regularly. This is something he will have to develop.

**Cam Robinson:** April 9th, 2022

Québec Remparts vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Okay, I can see the buzz around this kid. A big strong forward who can give and take contact and skates well. From this viewing, I'd say his skating is clearly above-average. Posture is good, extends and recovers well. Wasn't overly dynamic on the edges, but did make a great cut to the netfront after absorbing contact, pushing through it and making the sharp cut. Chipped it just over the shoulder and

high but went and recovered it and grabbed an A1 for his troubles. His speed and anticipation showed off later when he created two separate 2v1s and sent just beautifully timed passes for tap-in goals. The first probably should've been intercepted but handcuffed the defender. The second one was pure. He was running around and throwing his body a bit too. Did well in the dot. 4 point night so clearly a fun one, but he was very good.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Gaucher was mostly quiet in the game until the end, where he scored with a projectable in-stride wrister with five seconds remaining on the clock. Impact was most consistent in battles. He sprints into every battle, skates through the defender's space, and then turns his back. Didn't make any plays after winning battles, preferring to extend the cycle. Nothing else from Gaucher in this game.

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Québec Remparts vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Gaucher plays with a lot of pace in the way he skates up ice and passes the puck, a lot of instant passes, one-touches into space. He makes a lot of first-option play, which I usually don't like that much, but the pace of his decisions are projectable. When needed, when he play needs it and he sees it, he can hold on to the puck and wait for lanes to open. He's still physical and his puck protection looked a bit better in this game (better recognized pressure, moved the puck into space for himself, holding multiple opponents). He's confident, looked dominant, and just an easy projection to the NHL, especially if his defence continues to develop. He is a high-effort player, or at least, projects as one. I think the awareness and the creativity is going to continue to develop slightly.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2021

Québec Remparts vs. Victoriaville Tigres - QMJHL

A great game from Gaucher. He scored twice. The Drummondville defence didn't show up, but he knew how to abuse it, jumping in pockets of space for catch-and-release shots, and creating odd-man rushes after defensive plays. He is at his best when playing with pace, when supporting breakouts low in the zone, and making quick passing plays to get to the offensive zone, then working the boards, before going to the net. That will be his game at the NHL level. He was physical and relatively defensively engaged in this performance. Same player, just a better version on this night, helped by the weaker opposition.

**Cam Robinson:** December 17th, 2021

Victoriaville Tigres vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Gaucher was skating heavy miles in this one - almost exclusively north-south, but the mechanics are clean and the power generated is real. He got a step on a defender coming down the outside lane, made a slight adjustment toward the inside and absolutely ripped it short side under the bar. Very pro looking shot with little pullback or telegraph. Best release I've seen from him. Otherwise, it was a fairly simple game. Hard on pucks, smart on the PP as a net front/bumper pop out guy, physical along the wall. I struggle to know if his skillset is destined to build enough to become a top-six option, but he looks the part of an NHLer with his physical tools.

**David St-Louis:** December 17th, 2021

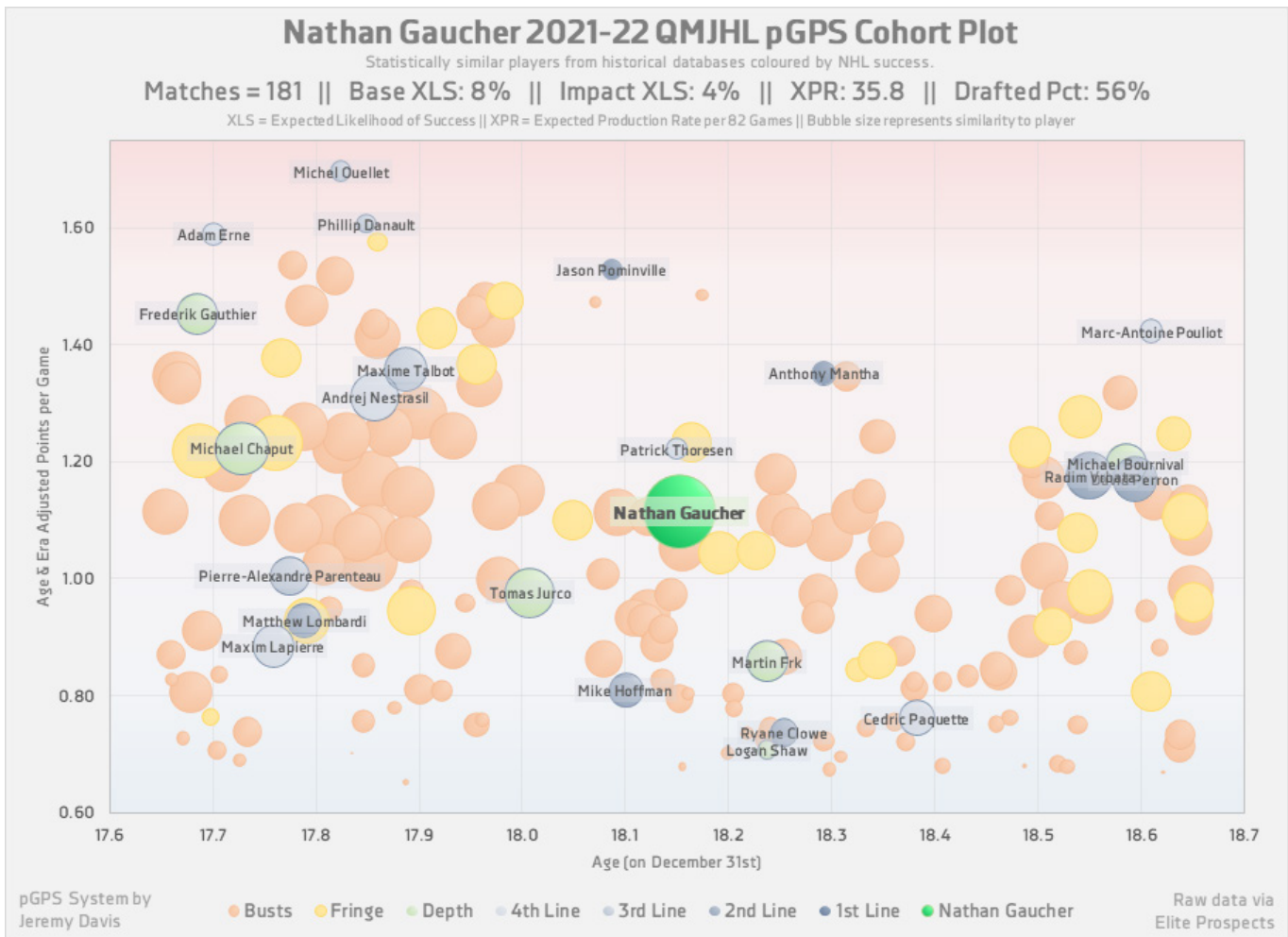
Victoriaville Tigres vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Nothing new for Gaucher in this performance. His game is still pretty straightforward. He's a puck protector and a passer in small spaces (especially with his backhand) and a play who goes to the net and tries defensively. He can connect plays, but misses offensive advantages constantly, which suggest average to below-average NHL hockey sense. The one play that really stood out to me was his goal. I questioned his shot before, but on that breakaway, his release was quick, no drawback, and hard and precise. He had space. Can he fire that way under pressure? I haven't seen it. Gaucher is a safe NHL projection with his tools (his skating projects are average to slightly above-average) and his size and his inside-game. Is it worth a first-rounder? Maybe, but I'd like more upside for my pick. Gaucher is a bottom-six for me.

**David St-Louis:** December 4th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

This was a better game from Gaucher, in that he showed his potential a bit more. He again connected plays very fast with slip passes and backhand and displayed his explosiveness a bit more. His stride looks a bit heavy, but his form is sound. His skating is probably a 5-6 on our scale. I liked his insane game, the way he rushed the net to support plays, and some of his defensive reads, like picking up the loose man net-front. In terms of awareness, anticipation, the ability to recognize offensive advantage and take them, or even better, leverage them, it's not really all there. His hockey sense is more of a 5 and this severely limits his upside. Basically, Gaucher will play system hockey well in the NHL, backcheck, forecheck, net-front, and pass in transition to gain the zone. I doubt he becomes an impact player. The numbers are concerning, but he plays with James Malatesta who lacks vision. Gaucher was wide open at the far-post at some point and Malatesta



missed him. As Gaucher is not a high-level creator himself, his production is quite normal. Still a yellow flag.

**David St-Louis:** November 6th, 2021  
 Saint John Seadogs vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

Gaucher is aware, but my main grip with his game is that he is simply a connector, someone who enhances advantages, but doesn't really create them, doesn't really manipulate or beat defenders by overskilling them. Most of his plays are made from planted feet or glides. His skating rates potentially as a 5.5 for me after watching it live. His form is good: appropriate knee-bend, hips unlocked, not hunched over too much, and he can speed up-ice, although he had trouble creating a true 2-on-1 in the second frame, being a step behind to really become a good passing option, or at least give his puck carrying teammate a better fake to make before shooting. In summary, Gaucher isn't an exceptional offensive driver, only a complementary one, even at this level. I respect the tools, but I only see a middle-six NHLer right now, who scores a point every other game or less.

**David St-Louis:** October 28th, 2021  
 Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL  
 Gaucher is at his best on short-passes. He locates teammates

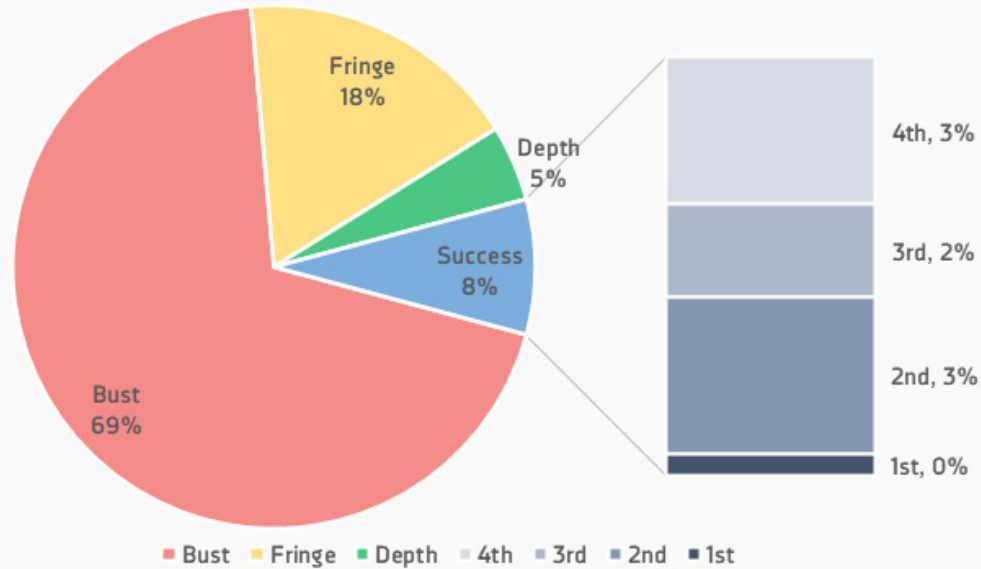
around him and one-touches them the puck as they attack open ice. These small-area feeds added to his physicality and tools, like skating and handling, makes him a relatively easy NHL projection, but I find that he doesn't scan enough and doesn't maximize his passing skills. I have some hockey sense concerns, although I think there are environments, even NHL ones, where he could drive offence a bit more. I appreciate his net drives and his desire to play in slot-traffic. He can tip pucks, but he doesn't have a precise enough touch to fire hard shots inside reduced spaces.

**J.D. Burke:** October 9th, 2021  
 Québec Remparts vs. Chicoutimi Saguenéens - QMJHL

Not a whole lot going on in this game for Gaucher. Managed to connect on a few moderately interesting short range passes – including one particularly skilled play that had him one-touch a puck behind his back to his teammate in the neutral zone at full speed – but not much else. That's about it for positives. Mostly, it seemed like Gaucher was last on a lot of loose pucks, not playing with enough pace, and not working hard enough to regain lost possession. Picked up a goal at the side of the net by depositing a puck that bounced off the back boards directly to him in a mostly yawning cage. His defensive work rate was okay. Not the sort of game I'd

## Nathan Gaucher 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



feel comfortable hitching a projection to.

**David St-Louis:** October 1st, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

Quiet night for Gaucher. The Remparts had trouble connecting plays and Gaucher was part of the problem. He identifies passing target fast and even anticipates them. He is pretty creative and deceptive to reach them, but very reliant on backhand drop passes to the point where I begin to think this is a scripted pattern in his game. He needs to hold on to the puck longer to pull the defence away from better options or move the puck into more space, like at the top of the zone. Skating looked better. Might be a 5-5.5 now.

**David St-Louis:** April 30th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

Gaucher displays some higher hockey sense abilities, like play preparation, processing speed, adaptability, but only infrequently. Physicality is not projectable due to the lack

of technical refinement in puck protection, a high-stance, lack of hip wall, but he can fight through checks for sure. Passing was his best attribute in this game; he could thread the puck through multiple sticks, and adapt to closed lanes. Defence could improve; lots of drive-bys and wide arcs away from the play. He reacts and reacts late. But he did play PK.

**David St-Louis:** March 23rd, 2021

Quebec Remparts vs Rouyn-Noranda Huskies - QMJHL

Gaucher's tools look about average, except for his physicality; he dominates other physically already as a 17-year-old. He protects pucks well off the rush and uses his body all over the ice, but he's stronger than technically sound, if I can say it like that. He still needs to refine his sealing and protection technique. His puck decisions were on and off. He knows his next play and shows some adaptability, but he forces some passes still. He's cheating a bit offensively. I really liked his off-puck game; he moved in position ahead of the play and with the right orientation and timing; he understands rotations. **P**





26  
Rank

B  
Grade

5.5  
Skating

6.5  
Puckhandling

6  
Shooting

5.5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Passing

5  
Physical

# MATTIAS HÄVELID

D | LINKÖPING HC

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JAN. 1, 2004  
WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS RIGHT

SHADES OF: Tyson Barrie, Torey Krug

13%	8%	3%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	29	10	9	19
SHL	23	0	0	0
WJC-18	6	4	8	12

## Scouting Report

You'd never guess it based on Mattias Hävelid's place in each of our four rankings this season, but he was one of the most challenging evaluations in the class. We went back and forth on his game from our first board to our last, but never enough to move the Linköping blueliner from his perch in the mid-20s.

Ultimately, we felt that was a worthy compromise that represented a middle-ground between the immense upside Hävelid flashed at times this year and the challenges he'll face as a 5-foot-10 defenceman in the rough and tumble NHL. A way to split the difference between his electric back half of the year and his so-so start.

The draw here is obvious. You watch one Hävelid game, and you get it - It's the shot and hands combo that makes him one of the draft's most potent offensive defencemen. If you caught him at the 2022 U18 World Hockey Championship, you saw the Swedish blueliner leverage those tools for four goals in only six contests en route to the gold medal and tournament All-Star honours.

It wasn't just by the force of his release, though. Hävelid showcased many projectable elements in the way that he set up each shooting opportunity, whether it was creating shooting lanes with deception and four-way mobility or improving the chances on each shot by attacking down into open space.

"What a game by Hävelid! In a win or lose semi-final, he

puts up a hat-trick with three amazing goals," Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin wrote in an April game report. "The first one was a hard one-time slapper from the left circle on the power play. The second was a deke and shot from the point. And the third goal was a top corner angle shot down on the rush. All three goals displayed his excellent shot in three different ways."

Our only real qualm with his shot is the way Hävelid leans on that one skill, often to the detriment of his team's offensive output. It wasn't uncommon for the Täby-born Swede to miss passing options to wind up for a low-percentage bomb from the point.

That isn't for lack of passing skill or vision, though. Hävelid consistently displayed the ability to find the best option on the breakout rather than settling for the first one available to him, and never had any issue getting that player the puck. The hope, on our part, is that this passing skill will become more of a feature of his in-zone offensive profile as he works his way up to the NHL.

For those within the NHL, the main concern with Hävelid is his skating stride. You know the old saying. You can be small, and you can be a poor skater, but you can't be both and hope to play in the NHL, and so on. It's not a weakness of his, by any stretch of the imagination, but even our staff has gone back and forth on whether it's an average or above-average projection. If you're a team side scout who holds

it as an average projection, well, that could make all the difference in where he lands on your board.

There's also the defensive side of the game to consider, and Hävelid is probably an about average player in that regard, too. He empties the tank on every shift and isn't afraid to play the body, even against men as a diminutive 18-year-old. The reads aren't always there, though.

Those defensive and skating-related concerns are the reasons you probably won't see Hävelid walk the stage on Day 1 at the draft, but he could be an early Day 2 pick. There's going to be some team out there who shares our assessment that he could be an offensive defenceman with transition value in the middle of a team's depth chart, and they'll happily make that bet.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Jonas Liwing YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 93%	2 Robert Hagg YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 93%	3 Tomas Skogs YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 92%	4 Eric Moe YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 92%	5 Anders Danielsson YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 92%
6 Simon Bertilsson YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 91%	7 David Lidstrom YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 91%	8 Fredrik Styrman YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 90%	9 Calle Andersson YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 90%	10 Dennis Persson YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 90%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 30th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - U18s

Hävelid hit more closed lanes in this game in transition. He was a bit overly confident in his abilities to hold on to the puck under pressure, but I prefer this than another prospect panicking against forechecking pressure. He's not a high-end offensive creator as his point-play is entirely his shot right now. But if a teammate clearly opens himself up near the net, Hävelid can hit him. So a bit of a mixed bag in this game: some high-end puck-moving moments, followed by turnovers, some missed opportunities, followed by great displays of quarterbacking...He can pin and pokecheck on defence, but that facet of his game will still require a lot of polish.

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - U18s

Awesome, awesome game from Hävelid, who showed way more puck-moving potential than in my previous viewings: abilities to move to shake the forecheck, high-level handling skills, use of backhand, of hook passes, developed awareness, adaptability, capacity to find the best play, and a lot of poise. He could be a true quarterback, if his breakout passing also translated to the offensive end. Hävelid has some strong defensive moments, too, in his rush defence and his ability to pin opponents to the boards. He's a hard projection, still, due to his size, but it's quite easy to identify development paths for him. A top-30 pick for me. He's probably better (because more controlled) than Kyrour in the OHL, less manipulative, but a bit younger, and more NHL projectable.

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Sweden vs Switzerland - U18s

Hävelid started the game strong and made me reevaluate his potential, but then the elements I dislike in his game came back: the overshooting, the lack of risk management on defence...He's probably a second-rounder still because of the mobility, the smooth puck control and passing, and his adaptability in puck-moving sequence; he can see through forechecking layers and find the best option, and I like his ability to manipulate on the offence, although he uses it, again, almost exclusively to shoot. He reminds me of Cormier in the QMJHL because of this, but Hävelid is a much better puck-mover and defensive player at this stage.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 10th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs Linköpings HC U20 - J20 Final four

A gold medal for his team and Hävelid was, by far, the best player of the event. He scored a hattrick in the semi final and in the final he had three assists. On the first assist he just competed insanely hard winning a battle in his own end skating it through the neutral zone he opened up in the offensive with a small deke and passed the puck to a player who scored. He drove the offensive play all game and was strong in his defensive play as well.

He had some good showings across the blueline where moves smoothly sideways with the puck, especially skating backwards. His north-south skating is good too but he needs to use strength to his strides to keep them fast so they're far from perfect. When he skates at top speed he uses much energy which can be costly at higher levels. Speed is good though.

He carried a lot of puck and took action. He plays more of an aggressive play driving style in these games than I have

seen before. He can take some chances and risks now but still show impressive decision-making. The only detail I would knock on is that he sometimes tends (or if it is the team system) he crosses passes too much over the neutral zone. The problem with that is that it often slows down the play.

I still want to see him on the point on the power play, not the left circle bombing shots like Ovechkin. I like his shot but he would be used better on the point where he can display more of his skills than just his shot.

If he can take action and be this aggressive at the U18-WJC he will solidify himself as a first round pick. The abilities have always been there but he played too much of a low-risk game all season making scouts having a hard time to project what kind of player he will become. He will be a top 4 defenseman with both a good defence as well as offence. He has special talents to play a power play as well. He is strong in balance and skates quite well to overcome his modest size.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 9th, 2022

Linköpings HC vs. Örebro HK - J20 Final four

What a game by Mattias Hävelid! In a win or lose semi final he puts up a hattrick with three amazing goals. The first one was a hard one-time slapper from the left circle on the power play. The second was a deke and shot from the point and the third goal was a top corner angle shot down on the rush. All three goals displayed his excellent shot in three different ways.

Hävelid is a lower-body balanced skater who is very hard to knock off. His balance is all angles elite strong. The top speed is not elite but good. Moves well in all directions.

Hävelid is a smart puck-mover. He pushed play more in this game and I liked that from him. He also has some skilled and slick moves with the puck which he needs to use more.

His decision-making is solid. Moved the puck well and positioned himself well.

When he plays at his best, he is a first rounder for me and with such a solid and consistent foundations I believe him to become an NHL defenseman, not top pair but solid in a second or third pairing.

**David St-Louis:** April 9th, 2022

Linköpings HC vs. Örebro HK - J20 Final four

Hävelid's shot is impressive. It gave him three goals in this game. The fact that he's used on the half-wall on the powerplay is another testament to his release effectiveness. Hävelid showed flashes of a bunch of elements in this game: abilities to carry pucks, to pass to the back layers of the offence (hits not just the first option but the better positioned one), and to create lanes for shots. He used skate fakes on retrievals

and tried to attract forecheckers on himself before moving the puck. The skating is not high-end, or at least it didn't look top-grade in this game, and at his size, it might be problematic, but there seems to be offensive upside in Hävelid's game. Defensively, he's not the best net front defender, but he did pin opponents to the walls to prevent them from escaping with the puck, leveraging his lower center of mass.

**David St-Louis:** March 26th, 2022

Linköpings vs. Rögle- SHL

Hävelid looked a bit overwhelmed in his zone in this one, but overall, there were more positives than negatives. He has fast processing speed on offence, can link manipulations with attacks down the wall, while scanning for lanes to the net, and he can recognize options inside his move, too. He's adaptable. His skating is about a 6 for me; the stride is long but the ankles don't flex fully so he sits back on his skates, removing a bit of manoeuvrability. On retrievals, he used his acceleration to make first contact with the puck but then had a lot of trouble moving them off the wall, mostly because he had no space to do so and limited options. He was effective in rush defence: tight gap and very adaptable footwork; it's hard for opponents to move around him. He really needs better engaging techniques in the defensive zone, but his rush defence, puck-moving potential, and offensive awareness will make up for some of his deficiencies. I have my doubts but he's probably a first-rounder.

**David St-Louis:** March 23th, 2022

Sodertalje vs. Linköping - J20

Again, I'm not sure Hävelid has the offensive creativity to become a top-four defenceman. I see a potential bottom-pairing, powerplay specialist, if he continues to develop his shooting ability, and further solidifies his rush defence. The skating is a 5.5 for me due to the limited ankle flexion and "sit back" posture. The speed is not top-end and the agility is somewhat limited compared to other diminutive offensive defencemen. Hävelid doesn't have the one-on-one game of a Lane Hutson either. I'm not convinced of the overall upside. More of a B prospect, a second rounder for me.

**David St-Louis:** February 3rd, 2022

Linköpings vs. Rögle- SHL

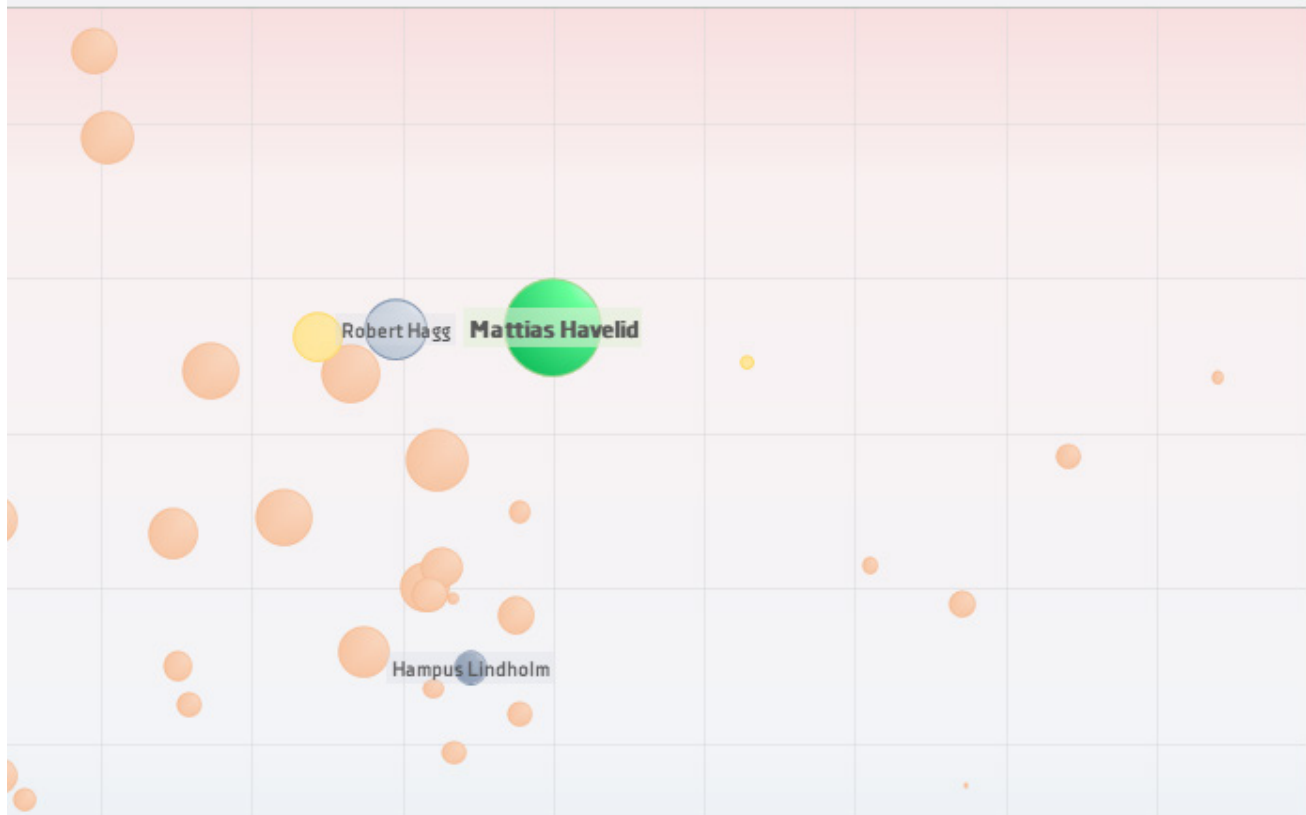
A lot of good moments from Hävelin. He walked the line, maintained the powerplay, and distributed the puck well, fast and intelligently. He carried the puck out and reached players inside space. The defensive game will continue to be a problem for him. The skating is not quite high-end enough to make up for his lack of range and strength and reads. I'm

## Mattias Havelid 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

40 || Base XLS: 13% || Impact XLS: 7% || XPR: 42.3 || Drafted Pct: 28%

Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



also not convinced Hävelid is going to be dominant enough offensively to make up for the defence.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 24th, 2022

Timrå IK vs. Linköpings HC - SHL

Mattias played on the second pair all game and looks comfortable at this level. He is strong physically and in tight situations with the puck. He covers the puck well, he can spin away with the puck smoothly and fool the opposite forechecker and start an attack. He makes himself open for a pass without the puck, but most often as the last guy in the backend. I would like to see him take more initiative with and without the puck. He rarely travels with the puck or makes a creative pass from his backend. Often the teammate that received the puck from his first pass in the neutral zone got tightly checked before entering the offensive zone and the play ended. Hävelid tends to choose the best option to succeed with the delivery of the first pass rather than plan ahead of that play. Hävelid had some good showings in the offensive end but could get anything particularly dangerous through. The best part of his game is how handles pressure at the pro level with quickness, balance and strong puck handling.

**David St-Louis:** January 24th, 2022

Timrå IK vs. Linköpings HC - SHL

Hävelid was a bit overwhelmed at times in this game, but overall, it was a great showing from him. He doesn't lack confidence at all, willing to make plays versus the forecheck, saucer passes over stick, deceptive feeds....He mostly passed to his partner but the forwards on the ice with him struggled to get open so it was the right choice. He communciates defensively, is physical (and sturdy for someone his size), blocked shots, IDed his check quickly, closed out fast on opponents...He wasn't "shutdown" level good, but stil impressive for someone in his first steps in the SHL. Offensively, he's good at finding shooting lanes and shooting spaces for himself but he didn't get to play a ton at the point.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 20th, 2022

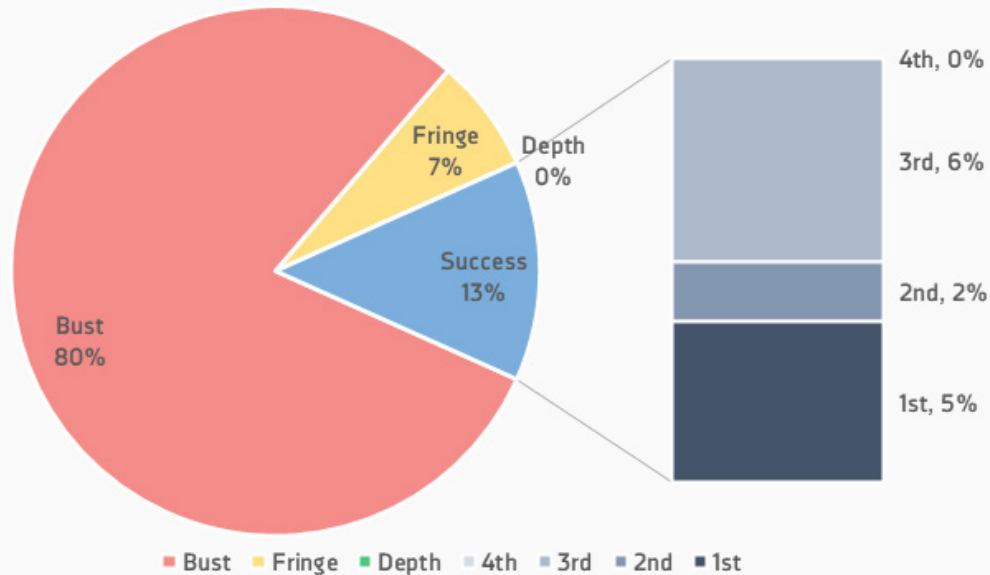
Linköping HC vs. Frölunda HC - SHL

Mattias played 11 minutes in the game. He played on a regular 5 vs 5 shift rotation with no time on special teams.

Mattias looks more and more comfortable at the SHL level. His balance and physical play adds up well. He plays with smart gap control and can use his body to shut down opponents. He uses his stick wisely to control gaps in his own end and on the rush.

## Mattias Havelid 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



Hävelid's skating helps him out of trouble. He had one lost pinch (although with forward coverage behind him) where he got back time and closed a gap down the middle giving the puck carrying opponent no threatful option down that rush. His technique and lower-body strength helps in tight situations where he is tough to knock off the puck. He can play bigger than his size, if I am to use a cliché.

I still would like to see him be more risk taking and proactive offensively. His production has been picking up a bit at junior level. In this game, he uses the board a lot when he moves the puck and almost never tries a cross over pass. His puck moving in this game came exclusively straight forward on the same side. For him to become a top 4 defenseman he needs to use the whole ice better and to find space other than just the lane in front of him. I still believe that he has unused potential in his offensive game. You see it more at junior level but he should be able to do more with his tools there too.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 21st, 2021

Timrå IK vs. Linköpings HC - SHL

Mattias stands as the seventh defenseman on the roster but plays a regular shift rotation but without icetime in special team situations and no icetime late in the game. He played a total of 07:20.

Mattias skating is not elite in speed but he has good technique and balance. He can skate away from situations with pure speed but he skates with strong lower body balance and shows strong control even when he is checked hard by the opponents. He also skates with ease and does not need to use

much energy to keep up with the pace of the game. He can play relaxed with his head up trying to find the right play.

Mattias is solid with the puck. He plays simple when the situation demands it. His passing is elite, he is calm with the puck and makes a good play almost every time he has the puck. The hard and precise. He is not a creative force but he drives play from the backend well even at this level. He works well with his stick in defensive situations also and can close gaps effectively even if he is not a big player in size.

Mattias shows a good understanding of the game and makes smart decisions. He was not a noticeable player in the offensive zone but positioned himself well both offensively and defensively. He was a positive force for his team and made good plays in almost every shift. I would have liked to see him on the power play with his passing abilities. When I saw him in junior I would have liked to see Hävelid playing with smaller marginals and be more creative, but at this level I like the way he plays with marginals as he makes good plays.

I like how Mattias competes along the boards, he tends to play away the puck a bit too fast when he is facing a hit but it is also smart sometimes to do so when you are in a vulnerable position as a 17 year old versus men. The lower body strength and balance on his skates helps him to handle the physical side of the game well at this level.

All in all, this was a good performance by Hävelid and I think he can grow into the senior game fast and I can see him being a regular defenseman with power play time later in the season. For the draft I still see him more as a first round pick after this viewing than the latest. The speed is not overwhelming but the skating technique suggests that



more strength will add the speed that he needs. His brain makes him relaxed which can overcome some lack of elite speed. His potential for me is a smart top 4 defenseman with elite passing skills.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** September 8th, 2021

Linköping HC vs. Södertälje - J20 Nationell

Played a top 4 role and on the top power play unit. On the power play he was used as a left side playmaker/shooter.

Hävelid is an above average skater. He moves well in all directions and is particularly smooth across the offensive blue line. He moves well sideways and can use agility to fool opponents and to find openings. His speed is not elite fast but his mobility makes him hard to catch.

Hävelid has above average puck skills. He can stick handles his way through as well as he is an elite passer. He has good control of the puck. He could use some work on his shot. He had opportunities but failed to get the shot through. With his fine skating you would like to see him pick his shots better.

Hävelid has high risk playing skills but does not play a high risk game. That both frustrates and impresses me. He rarely made mistakes but did not create wow-moments either. He sees the game well and play a responsible game, both defensively as offensively.

He competes hard for loose pucks and although his size is modest he has good balance and is strong on the puck.

All in all Hävelid is a legit top 4 D prospect. He can set up a power play and he drives play from the backend. He can drive play in various ways as he is a skilled passer, strong stick handler and skates well. I do not see an elite potential defenseman but as he does not have any obvious flaws with strong skills he is a rather safe pick in the 2022 Draft as a late first rounder or as a second round pick.

**J.D. Burke:** August 4th, 2021

Sweden U18 vs. Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

The thing about Mattias Hävelid... he's great at finding a way to get his shot through traffic. Picked up one of Sweden's three goals in this contest by faking a forward out, quickly pivoting inside, and then threading the puck through a maze of bodies and past the Slovak goaltender. Was sturdy defensively. Played a tight gap. Was physical, and contained well in body-on-body defensive situations. Looks like an early day two pick.

**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

Sweden U18 vs. USA U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Strong performance from Hävelid. He pushed the pace every time that he took the ice in this contest. Not exactly a burner, but his skating habits allow him to cover a tonne of ground anyway. Picked up a goal from the blue line with a laser of a shot. Made good defensive reads.



27  
Rank

6  
Skating

5  
Shooting

6.5  
Passing

B  
Grade

6.5  
Puckhandling

6.5  
Hockey Sense

3.5  
Physical

# NOAH ÖSTLUND

C | DJURGÅRDENS IF

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAR.11, 2004  
WEIGHT 163 SHOOTS LEFT

8%	27%	11%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	32	9	33	42
SHL	11	0	0	0
WJC-18	6	4	6	10

## Scouting Report

The third and final member of the well-renowned Djurgårdens trio, Noah Östlund presented the most challenging evaluation of the lot. We started the year with the skilled centre in the middle of our first round, right there with Liam Öhgren in the teens, but that endorsement became more difficult to stand by as the season wore on.

At his best, Östlund is a dynamic, shifty playmaker who takes full advantage of the width of the ice to build passing sequences. A dextrous distributor with the full array of reach-adjusted passes and the keen eye to find options through traffic, he was the most prolific setup-man in the entire Swedish junior circuit.

"Östlund is undoubtedly the sharpest player on Sweden's U18 roster and likely rates among the top-five in this draft for hockey sense period," Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin wrote in a pre-U18s profile of Östlund. "He is the glue that holds his teams together. He plays with strong puck support, drives play, and has a high motor."

The play-driving element that Hamrin cited is most evident in the way Östlund transports the puck up-ice as a transition piece. His constant support in the defensive zone allows him to link defence to offence, often as the main conduit for his team between the blue lines.

Far from a straight-line attacker, Östlund uses his cunning to create entries, changing speeds and lanes to keep defenders off-balance. Once the defenceman opposite him has committed his feet, the Swedish centre violently shifts

his weight in the opposite direction and explodes past them to gain the offensive zone.

"Dynamic: This is how one could best describe Östlund," Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis wrote of Östlund's work at the 2022 U18 World Hockey Championship. "The centre was flying all over the ice and taking control of Sweden's play for most of his shift. He was supporting breakouts by timing himself into pockets of space to offer passing options to his defenceman and moving the puck out of the zone quickly.

"He showed abilities off the rush, like dangles to beat opponents and in-stride releases, and in the offensive zone, like elusive skating cuts along the walls."

Where problems arise with Östlund's projection is in the way that he handles contact. He often struggled to sustain even the tamest physical play at the SHL level last season, spending entire games stapled to the perimeter of the offensive zone. It's kind of hard to score from there.

The absence of a wall game, concerns about his pace, and the lack of any finishing skill all conspired to keep Östlund further down our board than many of our peers in the public sphere, but there's enough there elsewhere that we can certainly understand their enthusiasm.

Östlund's combination of speed, handling skill, playmaking, and defensive instincts could augur great things at the next level, but he'll need to gain a little muscle and a lot of courage with the puck to take full advantage of his skill set.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Janos Vas YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 95%	2 Jonas Floberg YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 95%	3 Alexander Bergstrom YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY: 95%	4 Tony Vesterlund YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 95%	5 Johan Andersson YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 95%
6 Jesper Ollas YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 93%	7 Jens Jakobs YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 93%	8 William Karlsson YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 93%	9 Bobbie Hagelin YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 93%	10 Ludvig Rensfeldt YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 93%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 30th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - U18s

Östlund again showed the extend of his skating ability as he danced from edge to edge to pierce through Finland. He can shift his weight completly to each leg, which allows him to fake defenders and explode off those fakes. He's willing to build possession sequences, but sometimes does so a bit too much, as the puck stays on the periphery. He tries to be overly deceptive at times, but other times, understands the timeliness of a play, making his pass as quickly as possible to the slot.

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - U18s

Ostlund showed his rushing game in this one, over and over again. His teammates dropped the puck to him in the neutral-zone, which allowed him to pick up speed and break through the defence. He showed weigh shifts fakes, handling, and skating moves. He has better cut backs than I remember and is capable of shaking defenders in tight spaces. He's still mostly a periphery playmaker for him, someone who needs speed, a skill advantages, or space to operate, but there is no denying he looks dynamic in this tournament (which is, again, partly because of the runways he gets). I liked his supputing game in his zone, his ability to slow down to give large passing windows to his defencemen. He has some good defensive moments

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Sweden vs Switzerland - U18s

This was a great performance from Ostlund, which reminded me why I liked him so much in my first viewings: the speed, the pace, the elusiveness, the give-and-goes, the bold dangles at times, and his ability to build chemistry and an understanding with teammates. He's more quick and agile than fast in a straight-line (due to his hunched over posture). I still wonder what his game will look at on the smaller-ice, where he has to dig pucks on the boards and where his speed advantage will be negated. Can he add that extra level of creativity and manipulation to survive and thrive? Still not sure.

**David St-Louis:** April 10th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs Linköpings HC U20 - J20 Final Four

Östlund can only create through his speed at 5-on-5 and when he's placed on the power play. Otherwise, I'm not sure he's anticipating the game at a high enough level even at the J20 to really create dangerous looks consistently. A ton of poor decisions from him this game, but I did bump his skating a full grade as the mechanics looked sound in this game and the speed clearly dominant at this level. Really well executed crossover rushes at times (but if a defenceman stands in his way, Östlund doesn't know how to freeze and move around him). I'm not confident in his NHL projection. The hockey sense just appears more limited now after many viewings.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 10th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs Linköpings HC U20 - J20 Final four

The best thing about this weekend when it comes Östlunds game is that his shot is picking up. He scored another goal on an impressive shot in this gold medal game. He picked the top corner with a hard and quick wrist shot on the power play and it came from distance too at the top of the circle.

Other than that he worked hard, had good puck support and drove play. Midway through the game the coach had him playing with William Eklund. The two were a bit too alike as players but Östlund adapted his game to Eklund's game. He gave the puck to Eklund in good moments for Eklund to come with speed and be creative. Östlund then supported him well.

Östlund's skating looked more fluid in these games, He did not struggle as much with his strides and he showed good speed. For himself Östlund had a tough time cutting to the inside and creating there, even from the outside. He lacks the ability to open up and control pace and space with his hands.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 9th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs Rögle U20 - J20 Final Four

Noah carries a lot of puck in the game. His attack comes from the outside and he has trouble finding crossover space for a pass. No lack of trying and his agile skating helps him to walk around on the outside. Östlund lacks high-level skills with the puck and makes his puck carrying at times inefficient.



Östlund scored two goals in the game. One beautiful one-timer in the slot crossbar and in. He showcased an impressive shot in that sequence. He had a lot of room and the puck came to him though. The other was an open net goal where he tricked the defenseman with an agile skating move.

Östlund was, as always, solid in his readings, his support play and drove the play for his line.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** March 23rd, 2022

Timrå U20 vs Djurgårdens U20 - J20 Nationell Playoffs

Noah did not play the whole game and left it midway through but I liked his skating better in this game. He created time and space with his feet with shifty moves and was, as always, smart. He scored a goal on a one-timer where he was beautifully set up to score but still found the open space and tricked the defence in doing so.

If he can challenge smart likes this more often with his skates and hands in symbiosis I like his long term projection better. As this was half of a game I will need to see if this has become a pattern in his game or was just a few random plays.

**J.D. Burke:** February 4th, 2022

Linköping HC U20 vs. Djurgårdens U20 - J20 Nationell

There's a not-insignificant disconnect between Östlund's skill level and Östlund's confidence in his skill level. What's perhaps more concerning is that for all of Östlund's attempts at creating an AND1 mixtape on a shift to shift basis, almost none of them really advance the play in a meaningful fashion or gain him the inside of the offensive zone. In fact, short of one dart for a partial breakaway in the third period, I'm not sure Östlund ever gained the inside. I'm not really sure I saw anything particularly advanced from him as a distributor either. Which left me with a player who's best offensive quality is his hands, and some high-level defensive details. Does that sort of player belong in the first round of the draft? Probably not from where I'm sitting.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 20th, 2022

Mora IK U20 vs Djurgårdens U20 - J20 Nationell

A solid game by Östlund, although 20 minutes of play and no points on the board in a 6-1 win. He played on the power play in a play driving role from the right circle and he also played on the penalty kill.

Östlund works hard and can play at a high pace for long shifts. He had one particular shift where his line had been stuck in the defensive zone for almost a minute yet Östlund created the breakout using the board to play the puck to himself, beating the defenseman with speed. In the offensive zone he was closed in on by three players down the right

side but made a quick left turn and got past two of them to create a shot from the slot.

Östlund is continuously game reading. He supports all of his four teammates, he wants the puck constantly and he passes the puck with thought and precision. He has an impressive motor to just keep driving in combination with a high understanding of the game. He can plan ahead and can change his mind quickly and act on it if his first instinct is not open.

With the puck on his stick he has good puck skills. It is just not about making a simple play. He controls his own space with the puck well and can make quick turns to fool opponents. He can also create space with and without the puck. He is quite skilled with the backhand and I think his most dangerous shot is with his backhand. He uses the whole ice surface both in skating lanes and moving the puck sideways. He can also manipulate with a little body-hand movement to open up a passing lane.

The hardest part about evaluating Östlund is how much strength he can add. He competes well and does not shy away from physicality but he needs to win more puck battles. His skating technique is far from perfect but his explosiveness, quickness and agility is smooth. But with lacking technique his lower-body strength is even weaker and makes it hard for him to attack the middle facing opponents that can control his speed and quickness. With skating stride needing energy to be effective it also limits the smoothness in his hands.

His defensive projection is strong as his hockey sense is his best asset. If he can combine his puck skills, spacing and quickness with much more added strength and balance I can see a good projection in an offensive role as well.

**David St-Louis:** January 13th, 2022

Djurgårdens U20 vs Rögle U20 - J20 Nationell

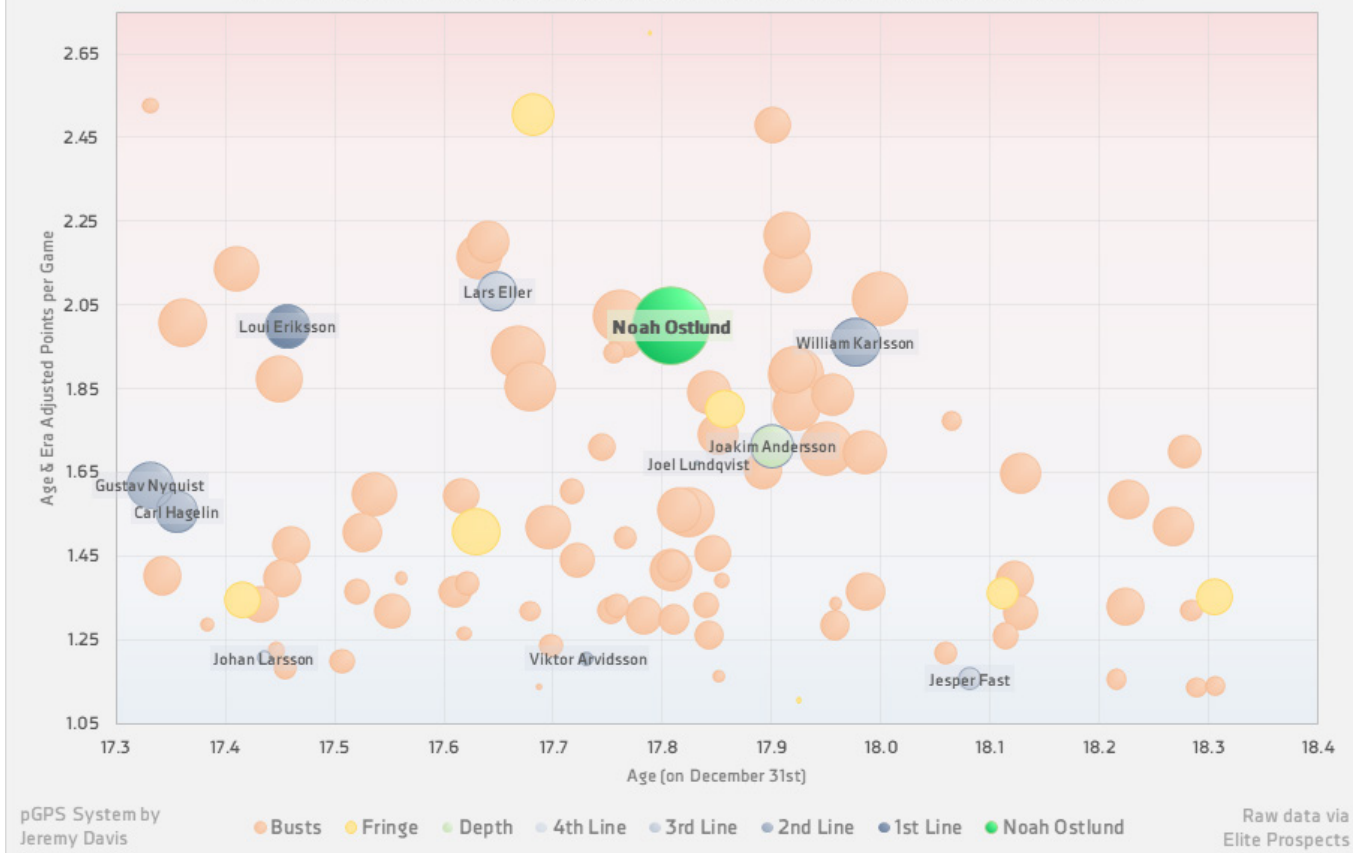
Östlund showed a bit more in this game. He probed the defence for openings, dangled through them, attacked the middle...all pretty much unsuccessfully. He reads the game, sees openings, sees what is not open (which is great for keeping the puck in control of his team, cycling, and building offences), but he can't pull the trigger, make that last deadly play. He tried a Lacrosse move twice in this game, failed both, wasn't even close. Just poor execution and poor setups -- poor spots to try them, which made me question his self-awareness. Does he think he is more skilled than he really is? But again, all game, right place, right time. Supports every play, connects them. Legitimately impressive with the downside that he can't really do anything else. Hands look average to maybe slightly above-average. He can play keep away if he has speed and space to escape the defence, but

## Noah Ostlund 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 100 || Base XLS: 8% || Impact XLS: 7% || XPR: 44.2 || Drafted Pct: 43%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



he can't manipulate defenders and generally doesn't have that much forethought. He does plan the next move, most of the time, but he doesn't really leverage advantages all that much -- or maybe he lacks the teammate support, the players to really take advantage of his constant good positioning.

**David St-Louis:** January 9th, 2022

Djurgårdens U20 vs Orebro U20 - J20 Nationell

I get the same read on Östlund every time. A smart, supporting forward who lacks the skills necessary to execute finer plays. The shot needs work. It lacks power, he doesn't hit it right, and it lacks precision, both on one-timer and wristers. I love that he prescans so much for his next play, for his space, and for teammates. He is always engaged, tuned in the game. But how much is an average-skilled, defensively competent, passer really worth? He does the right things, but do you draft a forward in the first round because of that?

**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022

Djurgårdens U20 vs Vasteras U20 - J20 Nationell

I continue to doubt Östlund's overall skill-level. I have some flashbacks to ranking players like Peter Reynolds too high, players who clearly read the game above their peers, play defence, support others well, and can pass the puck....but

just don't have that one exceptional skill to carry them to a top-nine NHL career. I doubt Östlund ever drives offence on his own. I really appreciate his hockey sense, however, the way he anticipates pockets of space, runs the right routes to give pass options, and scans for his next play. He doesn't really have a plan out there; it's give-and-go after give-and-go, exploiting space, but not really striking to the heart of the opposition. He missed one powerplay shot really badly -- I'm talking not even close to the net. I really need to see more flashes of skill from him.

**David St-Louis:** November 24th, 2021

Skelleftea U20 vs Djurgardens U20 - J20 Nationell

Ostlund's shots are sometimes questionable and they lack power. He is still very effective in support, supporting plays, connecting cycles, and has some offensive chops. One time, he turned back into a defender on purpose, to stop his course, pick up the puck, and get bumped in open ice, before making a pass to the slot. He prepares some passes with deception, too. Overall, he is mostly a defensively-oriented, supportive, play-connector. It has value, but it might limit him to a third-line role in the NHL, if he gets there.

**David St-Louis:** November 20th, 2021

Skövde IK vs Djurgårdens IF - J20 Nationell

Östlund strides hunched over. His form improves with crossovers, but generally he lacks some puck control because of his inconsistent body posture, his upper-body flailing a bit. His anticipation is a strong point, right place, right time. He shows defensive care, extra-effort and does the heavy lifting on his line defensively most of the time. He is reasonably shifty and agile despite his skating form; he can carry the puck for entries and evade defenders on the wall at this level, but the lack of separation speed should hinder his wall play at higher levels. He connects plays for his line, but tends to defer to teammates a bit too much. I would like him to take charge and create more.

**David St-Louis:** November 19th, 2021

Skövde IK vs Djurgårdens IF - J20 Nationell

This was an amazing performance from the centre. His skating looked average to above-average (a bit wide on the recovery), but the pace of his game was really high. Many of his plays were executed instantly on reception. He moved the puck into space, to teammates before being collapsed on and recognized and created offensive advantages at a high-level. He seemed to be planning many of his moves ahead of time, shoulder checking for his space before he received the puck, anticipating the angle of approach of defenders and cutting in the other direction. He connected a ton of play with his passing and smart off-puck movement and even looked involved defensively.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** November 10th, 2021

USA U18 vs. Sweden U18 - U18 5-Nations

Noah Östlund plays as the top center for the Swedish team in this game. He played on both the power play as well as the penalty kill.

Noah is not an elite skater but a good skater. His agility is strong and he can quickly shift his pace and make quick turns. He is slippery when controlling the puck in the offensive zone and can make plays through tight traffic with his agility as the weapon. He skates a bit leaning forward and his stride could be stronger and longer for more power. He needs to keep his legs moving all the time to play with speed and he uses a lot of energy to keep his speed. His balance is good but would also benefit from a longer stride. His lower body balance is good and he can skade with his legs wide to keep opponents away from the puck when he has it.

Noah is not a good goal scorer and his shot is a weakness. He seeks a pass almost every time he comes close to the

net. He works hard for tips and rebounds but he is not a dangerous shooter from outside the slot. His puck skills are strong though, his passing is borderline to elite and he likes to use his backhand to fool opponents with drop passing behind his back while skating in another direction. He can run the power play as a playmaker from the circle with precise one touch passes and he has a knack of seeing who is open for the best pass.

At even strength, Östlund is a great driver of play, always on the move and he has the puck a lot. He skates and battles hard and drives play without the puck as well. He controls the puck okay at high speed but his skating technique makes his muscle tone high which I suspect both limits his control and vision when he drives with the puck. A more energy saving skating style would help him to use all of his skills and vision better and be able to control the pace better.

Without the puck, Östlund is a very smart and competitive player. He detects danger in his own zone, he forechecks and backchecks both smart and hard in all situations. He makes himself open in easy passing lanes for his teammates and sees where the play is heading. He is an impressive work horse in all three zones and makes his team better when he is on the ice. He acts and makes stuff happen every shift he plays.

All in all, Östlund is an interesting top prospect for the draft. You notice him every shift and his competitiveness in combination with strong playmaking skills makes him a strong driver of play. With his modest physical size it is easy to think of Sebastian Aho when you see Östlund play. The big difference between him and Aho is the skating style. Aho is much more effective and economical with his energy and Östlund needs to find ways to improve his technique if he is to be a more productive player. At the higher levels you need to have a softer muscle tone to be at your creative best. He would also need to work on his shot. Östlund is for me a good late first or early second round pick with both a high ceiling and a high floor. His compete level and hockey sense makes him useful in more defensive roles as well as the offense has much potential if he improves in the right areas.

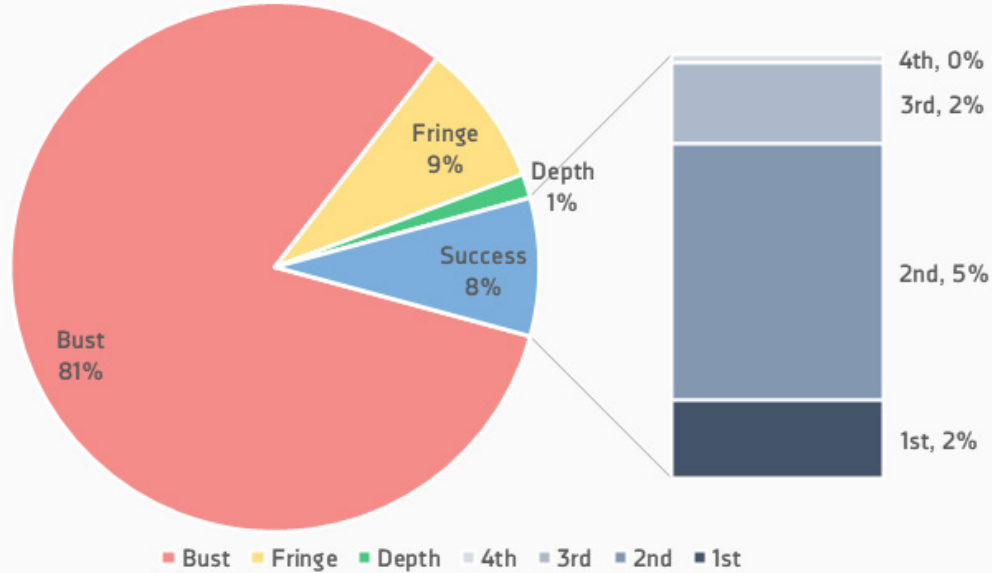
**Lassi Alanen:** November 6th, 2021

Luleå HF vs. Djurgårdens IF - SHL

Östlund played around 10 minutes in this one. Djurgårdens got absolutely destroyed 7-0, which should be taken into account. What stood out was Östlund's drive and effort off-the-puck. Playing center, he was spending a lot of time deep in the defensive zone and managed to do a fine job for the part, especially given his size and lack of strength. Östlund's skating looked like it projects as about average,

## Noah Ostlund 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



maybe slightly above (5-5.5). He made some solid passes in the offensive zone, showing understanding of OZ passing concepts and decent execution. There was one rush chance where he decided to go for a shot when he had a pretty open cross-ice option available. Then again, the amount of puck touches was very limited.

**David St-Louis:** November 2nd, 2021

Djurgårdens IF vs. Farjestad - SHL

Östlund looked comfortable, which is impressive for such a young player in a professional league. Of course, all he could do along the boards was hold the puck and wait for support as he lacked the strength to compete, but when he managed to receive the puck away from the walls, you saw more elusive moves out of him, cutbacks and some skate fakes to retain possession and move it. He knew his options due to constant scanning and knew threats defensively. I liked his routes and angling and his constant effort. He had poise. Hard to ask for more from him in limited minutes.

**J.D. Burke:** October 28th, 2021

Frölunda HC vs. Djurgårdens IF - SHL

It's really difficult to get a read on Östlund when he's playing with Djurgårdens men's league club. He's playing to not get benched. It's almost like he doesn't want the puck on his stick at times for a fear of making a costly mistake. One could just as easily confuse this for playing at a high pace, but it's really not that. It's all short range passes that don't really advance play for his team short of getting the puck on an SHL regular's stick. To his credit, Östlund is performing ably under those circumstances. His off-the-puck defensive reads continue to impress me. So too does his work rate, even if opponents can knock him off of the puck with a stern look. I'm having a difficult time getting a read on his skating. Seemed to be a bit stiff at the ankles, but he covered plenty of ground anyway. Probably an about average to above-average tool. Looked like a mid-round pick at best, but even then, my confidence in that projection isn't especially high.





28

28  
Rank

B  
Grade

5  
Skating

5  
Puckhandling

5  
Shooting

5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Passing

8  
Physical

2nd

Hardest Hitter

5th

Best Defensive Defenceman

# LIAN BICHSEL

D | LEKSANDS IF

HEIGHT 6'5"  
WEIGHT 225

D.O.B. MAY 18, 2004  
SHOOTS LEFT

"He's very raw, but also naturally and unbelievably competitive. Can he round it out and play in the NHL? He's a project, but if he plays then he'll be a horse for you defensively. I don't think there's a lot of points there, but he'll shut it down."

- Eastern Conference Executive in May 2022

56%	28%	25%	0.66
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	11	3	4	7
SHL	29	1	2	3

## Scouting Report

The first thing you'll notice with Lian Bichsel is his range. Standing at a lanky 6-foot-5 with room to fill out, this Swiss defenceman offers among the most enticing physical builds from the blue line in this entire draft.

Don't let his profile fool you, though. Bichsel isn't just some lumbering road paver from a bygone era. There's some legitimate speed and skill at the Leksands blueliner's disposal, even if he's still learning how best to put it to use.

His work on the breakout certainly stands out as built for the modern NHL. He sends false signals going in for the retrieval, swats away forechecking pressure as he explodes into the middle of the ice, and then makes the best play available to him. There's enough handling skill there to sometimes manoeuvre past the forecheck, but most often, he'll settle for a pass.

It is, however, worth noting just how uncomfortable Bichsel often looked handling the puck along the boards. Getting into space is vital for the Swiss blueliner to pull off even the most basic handling moves.

That's less of a problem in the offensive zone. There's a reason the Wolfwil-born defender finished the season tied for first among first-time draft-eligible SHL defencemen in points and led in points per game.

"Even in the SHL, Bichsel maximizes his odds of getting the puck through activation and movement," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a mid-season Scout's Notebook article. "In the offensive zone, he sneaks down the weak side, uses give-and-goes to get open for one-timers closer to the net, and occasionally tries to beat defenders with his hands. When combined with his possession-maintaining pinches, he projects as an above-average facilitator in the NHL."

You're probably not drafting Bichsel to put up gaudy point totals or quarterback a power play, though. His skill level is probably sufficient to one day play in the middle of a team's defensive depth chart, but it's never going to be as the offensive driver on his pairing.

Instead, his future is one that will see him as part of his team's defensive conscience. A player who counts their successes in the pucks kept from his net rather than those deposited in the opposition's.

Bichsel already understands how to leverage his imposing frame against opponents to win pucks. He moves on checks early, gets low and establishes position or pins for support, and does an excellent job boxing out forwards at the net-front. And you won't find many more forceful or enthusiastic hitters

in this class. When Bichsel sets his sights on playing the body, it's game over for the poor forward in his crosshairs.

The range of outcomes for Bichsel is reasonably varied. There's going to be a handful of teams who see him as an exceptionally raw prospect who can be moulded into something special with the due diligence of an NHL development staff. Then others with much less exciting projections but an appreciation for the certainty he offers as an easily pro-

jectable bottom-pair, defensive defenceman.

The Elite Prospects staff falls somewhere between those two extremes, probably closer to the latter outcome than the former. If nothing else, Bichsel should be a No. 5 defenceman with sufficient skills not to be a drag in transition and the offensive third and defensive range and force to be a legitimate play-stopper in the NHL.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Oscar Klefbom YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 88%	2 Tim Erixon YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 87%	3 Jonas Brodin YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 85%	4 Johan Motin YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 84%	5 Robert Hagg YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 81%
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## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** March 23th, 2022

Leksand IF U20 vs Orebro U20 - J20

Bichsel is limited with the puck. He tries, but you can tell the discomfort when he has to create play instead of just hitting the ones that are there. If an option is in front of him, he can hit it. That's pretty much it. He has average puck skills and an impressive skating ability for his size, but he seems to project more as a shutdown defenceman in the NHL than anything else. But what a shutdown guy he could be. He's violent, not letting anyone get near the net and trying to hit and battle with everyone. We probably have him a little high for my taste considering the technical and puck-moving limitations, but he's probably a top-40 guy in this draft, a decent bet to play in the NHL and a player that coaches will love.

**Daniel Gee:** March 10th, 2022

Leksand IF vs Djurgårdens IF- SHL

Bichsel only really played in the first half of the game but he was extremely impressive. While there are some hiccups and stumbles when it comes to his defensive skating, he is a proactive mover, who pivots early to aid side-board guides. Bichsel can be fairly aggressive, pushing hard pressure in the neutral zone and high in his own defensive zone, blending his size to seal off low access. His supporting habits stand out. Bichsel, on multiple occasions made deliberate shifts to support his defensive partners who were struggling with gap/speed. Anticipated passes; in the third, he was able to get his foot in the pass lane and poked a puck out his own zone. He's even better in sustained pressure. Bichsel is a constant scanner who kills secondary threats early. He combats cut-backs and spin-offs with his size and strength; absolutely envelopes opponents on the perimeter. Mobility is good enough to shadow threats.

Not much offensively here though. Bichsel has some acti-

vation habits and can one-touch passes. In the second off a broken play, he was able to activate off-puck through the slot and snap a shot that tipped off a goaltender's glove. Recognized the need to move off the point. There's probably more ability here but in general he's pretty conservative.

**David St-Louis:** March 8th, 2022

Djugårdens IF vs Leksand IF - SHL

Bichsel is still showing more defensively than offensively, but I liked his skills better in this game. He's incredibly physical and aggressive, mean even, a punisher in front of the net, who defends his goalie fiercely. He got into multiple altercations after the whistles. He's better in predictable defensive situations; when he has to turn around and switch to follow the play, he's a bit late on his reads, but I think that will improve with time. The motor and effort and combativeness are great traits. The skating looks average, but above-average for his size. And he uses his lateral mobility to find passing lanes in regroupings and he can win pucks by establishing body positioning on retrievals. He has poise with the puck, but he tends to default to others to make plays which is perfectly fine at his age in the SHL. He was used at the point at the end of the game with his team in need of goals, which suggest he might have more hidden offensive potential.

**David St-Louis:** March 5th, 2022

Vaxjo vs Leksand - SHL

Bichsel was used purely in a defensive role in this game. He played the penalty kill for long minutes, probably because his size and range lend themselves well to a net-front, shutdown game. I liked how he tried to find outlets on breakouts, not just defaulting to rims, but I'm not sure he will have the agility in his hands and feet to get pucks off the wall himself and fake forecheckers in the NHL. The defensive engagement is

a strong point and so are the tools, the mobility for his size.

**Marek Novotný:** February 27th, 2022

Leksands vs. Brynas - SHL

First I thought he was ejected from the game with such short ice time (3:41), but he appeared on the ice in all three periods and there was no penalty during that game. Even with such limited ice time Bichsel was again very physical, used his strength to push opponents away from the crease area and worked well with the boards to clear the puck out of the defensive zone. I am very impressed by Bichsel and how he can handle hard situations in the defensive or neutral zone with his physicality, strength and reach. He is a very valuable prospect.

**Marek Novotný:** February 19th, 2022

Leksands vs. Malmö Redhawks - SHL

Bichsel with a very limited ice time, but solid performance. This kid is huge and can keep up with the competition in the best European league. He was very physical, did some nice job of clearing the crease area. He made it very difficult for the opponent's forwards with his active stick, constant pokechecking and stick lifting. His reach is amazing and he definitely knows how to use it. I am amazed of how good skater he is and also with his speed. Bichsel was also part of the penalty kill unit.

**Cam Robinson:** February 5th, 2022

Leksands vs Linkping - SHL

Very physical showing from Bichsel in this one. He was stepping up in the open ice and laying the hammer on several occasions - once, resulting in a penalty for getting his hands up, he blew the player up completely. He was flashing the long power stride to get back and thwart rush attempts. Not a lot offensively in this one. Stepped into the high slot and snapped a quick shot on a turnover. Made a few poor outlet passes when trying to bank it off of the wall while in-flight circling the net.

Overall, had good posture and use of his stick while defending the rush, looked confident defensively.

**David St-Louis:** January 22nd, 2022

Djugardens IF vs. Leksands IF - SHL

Same physical monster in this game. Bichsel plays with energy, violence, even, and that will endear him to any coach. He takes hit to make plays but mostly likes to dish them, especially in neutral-zone pinches. He has great habits all over the ice, scanning and using his stick and denying space and switching on his check. The offensive and transition

awareness, or more accurately anticipation, could improve, as he gets surprised by pressure sometimes, and he doesn't always find solutions to defences...but there is a lot to work with here. And the violence and the first-pass skills and the shutdown ability will give him a pretty certain NHL role.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 18th, 2022

Malmö Redhawks vs. Leksands IF - SHL

A big game in the big league for Bichsel. He played 19 minutes and was used in key situations as being on the ice when his team defended the lead late in the game.

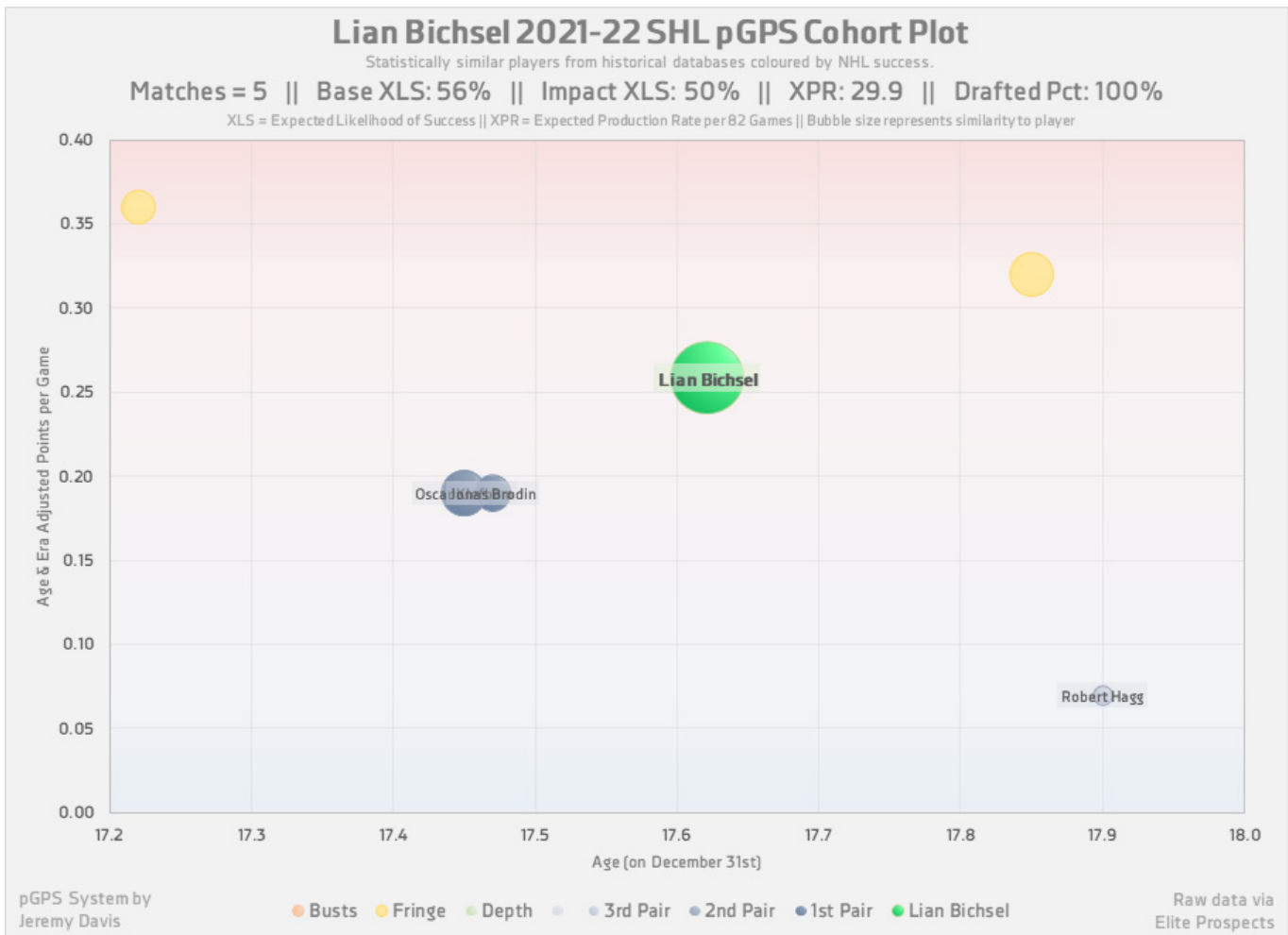
Bichsel is a fast skater, he has a powerful stride and keeps up well with the competition at this level. He can skate away with the puck, he is rarely beaten on the rush and he is fast to the puck in the corners. His skating technique and lower-body strength could be a bit better but he is so big and strong anyway so it has limited effect on his balance. The only part of his skating that would concern me long-term is the ability of changing smoothly from forward to backward skating. He handles the gap on rushes more with engaging physically to stop opponents to go by him rather than with effective backwards skating, but his defensive rush play still is effective at SHL level. His range and physicality makes his skating good enough. His forward skating is fast and naturally explosive.

Bichsel's puck handling tools are good. He is not overly creative or spectacular but he can deke his way out of a tight spot with decent control. His range is wide and he controls the puck well far from his body and okay close to his body.

His pass selections could be better. He plays with urgency and does not always plan ahead. He sometimes has trouble finding a good option with his first pass and circles back to find a new option. Sometimes that turns out well but sometimes he also plays himself into more trouble. His decision-making can be better and he needs to learn how not just to go for the first solution but to have various solutions in mind and show more awareness of those. Now, if the fits idea does not work he can struggle to find the second best one and at NHL level that will get you into trouble.

An outstanding trait in Bichsel's game is his motor and urgency to play and compete for the puck. He competes hard for loose pucks and is very effective in puck battles. He pinches with poise and likes to join the attack. He almost never stands still. In his own end under pressure he is urgent to locate where the danger is and he is very active with his stick and range in defensive situations.

Physically he is a huge kid that still needs to add muscle but when he does he could become a monster on the ice. He engages physically without hesitation and does not let anyone



pass him with ease. He plays a raw style of hockey and I see him as a two-way defenseman that lacks elite offensive abilities but can be a competitive force in all three zones. I think a lot of Nikita Zadorov when I see Bichsel play.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 11th, 2021

Leksand IF vs. Färjestad - SHL

Over 12 minutes of ice time for Bichsel in this one. What stood out was his aggressive pinching. He was closing in along the OZ blueline a lot, mostly with good results and was able to sustain pressure in the zone a couple of times. Breakouts with the puck were hit and miss. Handling looked a bit awkward at times. Looked to activate into the play quite a bit, once even dumping the puck in with speed and going all the way to retrieve it himself. Skating definitely has some flaws: inconsistent stride length, not enough knee bend, inconsistent ankle flexion. Also pivoted the wrong way in the DZ. Looked to maintain a tight gap in NZ and forced a couple of dump-ins. Didn't get many puck touches in the offensive third.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 7th, 2021

Leksands IF vs. Frölunda HC - CHL

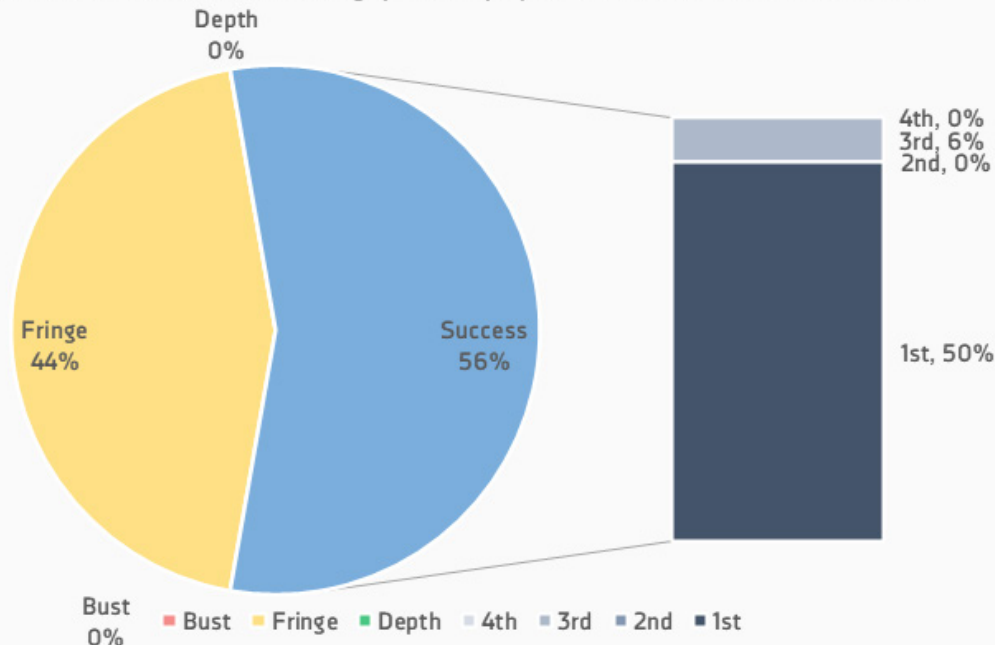
No doubt Bichsel wants to be involved in the play. He

activates constantly, with and without the puck. Sometimes combining the two with a give-and-go. His weakside activations are consistently strong, but deeper OZ positioning would take it to the next level. Once activated, he stays as long as possible without introducing risk. With the puck, things get a bit more complex. He's a fluid skater, able to transition between strides, crossovers, mohawks, and more. Changes of pace and quick hesitation moves with an underhandle allow him to beat players into space. But his first touch often lacks and he rushes passes under pressure. Tried to deceive with his eyes in two sequences but missed his target in both. Scored with a catch-and-release wrister, adjusting his feet to catch the puck across his hips and transition directly into the shot - NHL release. He lacks explosiveness, dropping his weight when pivoting instead of driving forward. A lack of ankle dorsiflexion prevents him from engaging his hips. His feet kick with inconsistent stride length, too. He was beaten wide in this game with a tight gap. The skating limits his defensive impact, even if he's an aware, well-gapped defender, especially off-puck. Struggles to switch between checks, either getting beat or turning a potential break up into merely disrupting the shot.



## Lian Bichsel 2021-22 SHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

Luleå HF vs. Leksands IF - SHL

Bichsel's defence was the best part of his game. His awareness of body positioning and sense of backpressure is really advanced. He gets low and drives his leg across the pressure, before following through his back. That base allows him to both protect the puck and win possession. On-puck, he's aware, generally gapped up tightly, and erases plays through reach and anticipation. Off-puck, he tends to let players move around him without much friction and picks up his check late, leading to a goal against. Activates regularly, pinches at the right times, and generally makes positive plays with the puck. Doesn't immediately head back to the point - he clearly wants to create. At the very least, he'll be a positive facilitator in the NHL through his awareness of space and timing. Sometimes takes too long make puck decisions, especially with pucks on the end boards. He looks like a first round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 26th, 2021

Skellefteå AIK J20 vs. Leksands IF J20 - J20 Nationell

Bichsel's activation and transition mindset look advanced. He jumps into the play at the right times, uses the inside lane, and adjusts his route to maximize his odds of getting the puck. Regularly steps inside before passing, drawing attention as he decides on his option, usually a kick-out play. All of this lead to his goal, combining transition skill and activation. Delays with the puck at the right times and generally moves the puck to the best target. Effectively uses his reach by tapping the puck into space and retrieving

it, often after getting the F1 chasing. Once activated down low, he's still figuring out what to do. He circles mindlessly, throws the puck away, or makes a no-chance play. Still, he's actively putting himself in these situations - improvement will come. And he nearly set-up a chance after his goal by burning a defender wide and passing cross-slot. Shooting mechanics looks like a 5.5 or 6-grade (distance between feet, elbow up, drives through shot, some power and control on the shot), but his inefficient puck positioning combines with his length reorganization of his weight every shot to limit his release speed. Bichsel's fluid but not explosive, and while he's physical, he's not particularly proactive as a defender. He gives off-puck rush threats too much space or loses them entirely. When engaging, he comes across the hips to establish body positioning, but in situations where he needs to pivot and make up distance, he usually ends up lunging to provide pressure - that'll cost him at the next level. He looks like a first-round pick, perhaps at the lower end of the range. Top-four mindset that will require skill and mechanical refinement.

**Marek Novotny:** November 16th, 2021

Leksand vs. Klagenfurt - CHL

This game wasn't that special from Bichsel as he had very limited ice time with only 7 minutes in the CHL game against Klagenfurt. He had a great impact with his physical presence and solid passing game, but that's mostly it. He also wasn't shy from starting the rushes. He caused a couple of turnovers which led to some dangerous chances for Klagenfurt.



**J.D. Burke:** September 23rd, 2021

Leksands IF vs. Frölunda HC - SHL

An efficient, quietly effective game from Bichsel, who played about 15 minutes, all of them at even strength, and left with a secondary assist and a plus-two goal differential. He wasn't shy about announcing his presence in this contest. His first shift came in the midst of an offensive zone cycle, and Bichsel did his part to extend with several blue line activations and the odd pinch. My only gripe is that I wish he'd maintained that aggressive posture for the rest of the game. Mostly, Bichsel kept it simple from that point onward. There wasn't much deception on his retrievals – short of the one that gave him the space to make a stretch pass that led to a breakaway goal and his secondary assist... imagine that. It was just a whole bunch of straight forward retrievals and defaults to the safe play, whether it was a short range pass or a glass-and-out play. Made some really impressive defensive reads. Made well-timed switches from one check to the next. His skating looked about average or maybe slightly below-average; he's very clumsy at times. Ultimately, Bichsel seems too limited to profile as much more than a bottom-pairing option at the NHL.

**Marek Novotny:** August 27th, 2021

Leksand vs. Slovan Bratislava - CHL

Bichsel did his job defensively quite ok and controlled the blueline very well. I love his physicality, he is able to prevent opponents from entering the zone just pushing them off the track and it looked so easy for him. He didn't hesitate to join the rush and help his team offensively. Bichsel poke checked multiple times and he did it without mistakes. I also liked his awareness in many situations, he seemed like he knew what's happening behind his back and was able to react. His reaction when he is under pressure is great, he is able to move his huge body quickly enough.

He set up his teammate for a breakaway situation with a beautiful pass. Sometimes he left a big space for opponents so they were able to get past just by a simple pass. The biggest problem however came with 2 minutes left in the second period when Bichsel laid a huge hit on Slovan's forward which appeared to be an illegal check to the head. He then received a 1 game suspension.



29  
Rank

B  
Grade

6  
Skating

6  
Shooting

5  
Passing

5.5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# JIŘÍ KULICH

C | HC ENERGIE KARLOVY VARY

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. APR. 14, 2004  
WEIGHT 179 SHOOTS LEFT

24%	15%	6%	1.37
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
Czechia	49	9	5	14
WJC-18	6	9	2	11

## Scouting Report

The scouting community's expectations couldn't have been much higher for Jiří Kulich coming into the year. A draft-minus-one season with some time spent in the Czech professional circuit, a strong showing at the U17s, and a roster spot at the U18s in Texas had him planted firmly on our radar.

It took Kulich some time to find his game and live up to the hype, though. He started the scouting season off with a just-okay showing at the Hlinka-Gretzky Cup, and he didn't exactly look like much of a difference-maker in his first few months of Extraliga tape, even if the points were coming at a high-end clip.

Mostly, we saw someone who projected as a bottom-six support player at the NHL level when we watched Kulich. There was a pressure game built on strong forechecking, diligent backchecking, and a motor that never stopped running, but little in the way of separating skill that would augur high-end production in the big leagues.

"Kulich's non-stop scanning and situational awareness during the game was just amazing, and the fact that he was so responsible and effective defensively against such skilled Canadian players definitely increases his value," Elite Prospects Czechia and Slovakia regional scout Marek Novotný wrote in a game report from the World Juniors. "He didn't give opponents much time to make a decision."

If anything, Kulich's interior-driven, contact-seeking style

seemed best suited to picking up the occasional goal at the net-front, sending home rebounds and loose pucks from just outside the blue paint.

By about mid-December, though, there were signs that the Czech forward was starting to hit his groove; signs that he may yet live up to his first-round billing coming into the year.

Perhaps most encouraging of all was the development of an off-puck game as a shooter. Kulich was starting to find soft ice away from the play and create chances to leverage his high-end shot to greater effect rather than standing at the net-front and hoping for deflections.

By the time the U18s rolled around, Kulich had perfected the art. And by the time the U18s had finished, the Czech forward had used his cannon of a shot to score nine goals in six contests en route to tournament MVP honours.

With that performance fresh in the minds of most scouts and executives going into this July's draft, don't be surprised to see Kulich go in the first 15 picks. There's always a market for hard skill, and this Czech forward brings that to the table in bunches.

Kulich's physical makeup, finishing ability, motor, and speed as a skater make him one of the easier prospects to project to the NHL, perhaps even in a high-end, middle-six scoring winger's role. Then again, maybe some teams see him as a centre at the next level. That would only help his stock.

**David St-Louis:** May 1st, 2022

Finland vs. Czechia - U18s

I got more excited at the start of the tournament when Kulich was performing well, scoring and showing more of his skills. But my thoughts on him are now the exact same as they were before the event. He's a straight-line rusher, a rush shooter, a net-driver, a backchecker/forechecker, an intense player with a pretty straightforward game that could become a bottom-six winger on a team. His only standout skill, besides the occasional angle-changed shot, is his energy and speed. His game already lacks diversity at this level so I don't expect him to add all that much in his path to the NHL. He could be a top-40 pick anyway just due to the certainty of his projection.

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

Canada vs. Czechia - U18s

Czechia spent so much on the powerplay in this one; we really got a good look at Kulich's one-timers and ability to set them up. He's effective at finding spaces and lanes, but I'm not sure he's a high-end scorer in that aspect, either. It took a bit of time for Czechia to set him up just right as he was locked into certain patterns. His handling skills are still a 5, for me. He doesn't know how to set up dangles off the rush; he's mostly head-straight, all hands. In this game, I'm back to seeing more of a bottom-six, retriever, forechecker forward.

**J.D. Burke:** April 26th, 2022

Canada vs. Czechia - U18s

The way Kulich is shooting the puck right now just seems inevitable. Everyone in the stadium knows that the Czech power play is built around getting him the puck at the top of the right faceoff circle for his one-timers, and there isn't anything they can do stop it. Kulich finished with three goals of that sort in this contest, willing Czechia to the 6-5 overtime win over Canada. If I wanted to nitpick, I'd point out that I didn't really see much from Kulich at 5-on-5 other than his high-end work rate, but you get a hat-trick and I'll let that sort of thing slide. Is looking like a late first-round pick.

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Czechia vs USA - U18s

An impressive showing from Kulich. His penalty shot, especially, will stay with me. He used movement deception, going east-west to force the goalie to move, and also angle changes (two) to beat the net-minder. These are higher level shooting skills that I didn't really know he had. Of course, there is a difference between firing on a goalie in a penalty shot and in tight spaces off passes. Kulich's hands are still

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Vaclav Nedorost

YEAR: 2000

SIMILARITY: 92%

2 Vojtech Polak

YEAR: 2003

SIMILARITY: 90%

3 Jiri Tlustý

YEAR: 2006

SIMILARITY: 83%

4 Tomas Plekanec

YEAR: 2001

SIMILARITY: 82%

5 Tomas Hertl

YEAR: 2012

SIMILARITY: 81%

6 Dmitrij Jaskin

YEAR: 2011

SIMILARITY: 81%

7 David Kveton

YEAR: 2006

SIMILARITY: 80%

a question mark, but if he gets a step around a defender, he can keep them on his back with a combination of puck protection tricks, his balance and overall strength. That's how he earned his penalty shot. I also liked his defensive game: a couple of interceptions.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Czechia vs Germany - U18s

Kulich lacks some refinement, especially in his rush patterns. He has some good ideas, but the timing and his routes still need work; he's entering the space of teammates and not getting open as well as he could. But the more problematic element remains his handling; it limits his ability to connect plays. That said, it's good enough for him to keep the puck away from defenders and to pick up rims quickly and to fire quickly, too. His one-timers and wrist-shot in tight spaces are above-average. He shows some deception on the powerplay, too. And his defensive game is still a strength, both in terms of effort and reads. He reminds me of Marco Kasper, but a notch below in terms of physicality and energy.

**David St-Louis:** February 17th, 2022

Sparta Praha vs. Karlovy Vary - Czech Extraliga

Kulich barely got the puck in this game, but he showed his motor. Completes his routes defensively and on the backcheck. He probably projects as an impactful defensive player from his engagement, that motor, and his scanning habits. His off-puck game, ability to find passing lanes to get pucks and fire also seems quite interesting. He battles for positioning and to win pucks back and looks to cut players at the hands to steal it from them.

**David St-Louis:** February 13th, 2022

Karlovy Vary vs. Zlin - Czech Extraliga

Kulich isn't a high-end offensive player, but he has some moments. He can hold the puck to let the best play develop, has some rush patterns in his game, criss-crossing movements he attempts, and reasonable anticipation of support, of teammates. He goes to the net and controls his skating when he gets there to remain open for passes. On defence, he was effective overall: a lot of scanning and pressuring, but switching on his man a bit late. The skating looks above-average and the handling maybe, too. The tools plus the defensive engagement and the flashes of offence are interesting.

**Marek Novotný:** February 6th, 2022

HC Verva Litvínov vs. HC Energie K. V. - Czech Extraliga

Nothing special to see in this game as he played with a limited ice time. Had some issues with physicality and missed a couple of passes. Other than that he tried to deflect some shots by standing in the crease area. And again was active with his stick and I saw some defensive effort.

**Marek Novotný:** February 4th, 2022

HC Energie Karlovy Vary vs. HK Hradec K. - Czech Extraliga

Kulich is back on the second line. He was constantly scanning the surroundings and it benefited his game a lot. The Czech forward is moving in every direction on the ice with great speed, using boards for sneaky manoeuvres and he was far the best skater on the ice in every game I have seen so far. He worked smart with the boards with either sending the puck out of the defensive zone or just making a pass. Zone entries also didn't seem like a problem for him. Puck control is one of his weaknesses. The issue is that he can't control the puck really well while skating quickly, but there is a solid potential for improving that.

**Marek Novotný:** January 26th, 2022

HC Energie Karlovy Vary vs. HC Vítkovice - Czech Extraliga

Kulich was skating on the third line, so he still wasn't in such a big role as he used to be before the WJC. I am struggling to find the hype I had for Kulich before and during the WJC. He was again, skating north-south really fast, playing his two-way game with an active stick, trying to be successful defensively, aggressive on the forecheck. Put himself in good scoring chances, showed some quick release as well and I liked how he tried to screen the opponent's goalie. Opponents had hard times stopping him with his blazing speed along the boards. His scanning and situational awareness is what is putting him in right positions on the ice and usually knows

where to stand. On the other hand he lost a puck couple of times with bad puck control at high speed. Had some issues with physicality.

**Marek Novotný:** January 21st, 2022

HC Energie Karlovy Vary vs. HC Plzen - Czech Extraliga

It's been difficult for Kulich after the WJC. He used to play a C1 or C2 role on his team, but since the return he has been stuck on the third line with very limited ice time. Despite limited ice time, Kulich was able to show his qualities. His skating is his weapon and his eagerness to have a puck on his stick is incredible. His quick reactions and decision making helped his line to keep the offensive zone for some time and evolve pressure. He was implementing forecheck throughout the game. Kulich was also responsible defensively to prevent scoring chances.

**David St-Louis:** December 28th, 2021

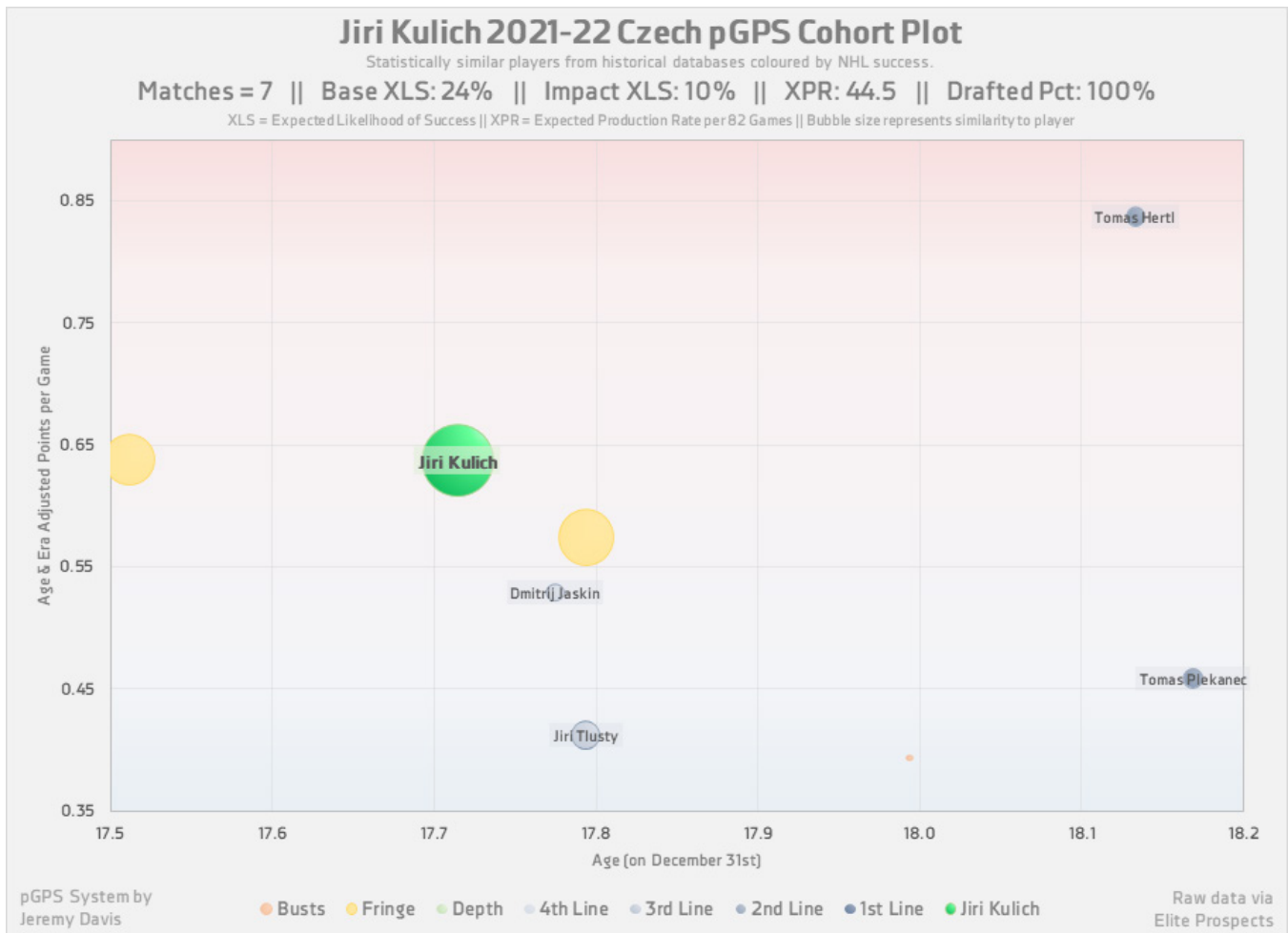
Germany vs. Czechia - World Junior Championship

Kulich was on the Czech's first-line (or second one) in this game. The skating looks clearly like an above-average projection but I can't say the same for the handling skills: in between his two feet, top-hand stuck at hip...These mechanical inefficiencies limit the kind of plays he can make, his receptions and even his shooting. He plays with a lot of pace but I doubt he will have the skill to make tight plays at that pace in the NHL. I like the physicality; he cuts players at the hands and he's defensively engaged, although a bit late on a few switches.

**Marek Novotný:** December 27th, 2021

Canada vs. Czechia - World Junior Championship

First game for Jiri Kulich at the WJC at the age of 17 and he was already on the second line. He was very dangerous, active and looked confident enough, although he wasn't playing as a center. He collected his first point (a secondary assist) quite early with 12 minutes left in the first period. Kulich played with great speed and with his puck protection drew a penalty. Kulich was strong on the forecheck and forced opponents to turnovers. He played great two-way game and was on the ice 2 goals for and 0 against. Kulich was able to carry the puck from coast to coast at high speed. His typical game and it was shown in this game as well is that Kulich can stick-handle around opponents with ease and then cut to the net. His non stop scanning and the awareness of the situation during the game was just amazing and the fact that he was so responsible and effective defensively against such skilled Canadian players definitely increases his value. He didn't give opponents much time to make a decision which



led to stealing a puck and a huge scoring chance. The Czech forward was part of the PP unit and was extremely active, especially with shooting the puck from the circle area.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 12th, 2021

HC Vitkovice vs. HC Energie Harlovy Vary - Czech Extraliga

Mostly liked Kulich's defensive work in this game. He consistently worked to get above the puck, even falling behind his defence for a couple of retrievals. Proactive tie-ups and anticipatory engagements down-low prevented a couple of chances. The stride needs work, but the crossovers are powerful, consistent, and generally see his momentum transferred forward rather than upwards. Mostly basic attacks, with a couple that failed because he fixated on the initial read and didn't adjust. Once more advanced sequence highlighted by a weight shift that saw him lean over his outside leg, push off, and extend his top hand across his body to maximize the range covered. Then, took a bad shot with a teammate rushing the net alone. Kulich shows something different in every viewing but never shows an ability to link those things together. Maybe it's a sampling issue. Only one way to find out.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 26th, 2021

BK Mlada Boleslav vs. HC Energie H. V. - Czech Extraliga

Quiet game from Kulich. His crossovers, pace, handling, and inside play seem like strengths. He consistently tries to bring the puck to the middle in all three zones. It didn't work in any sequence beyond one slot cut. In other sequences, he missed his teammates with passes to the inside – not a big deal. He's an active defender – scanning, moving, eliminating – but sometimes ends up chasing or overextending. Lacks strength but goes for the opponent's feet in puck battles, a projectable detail. Second-round tools, but not much impact in this game.

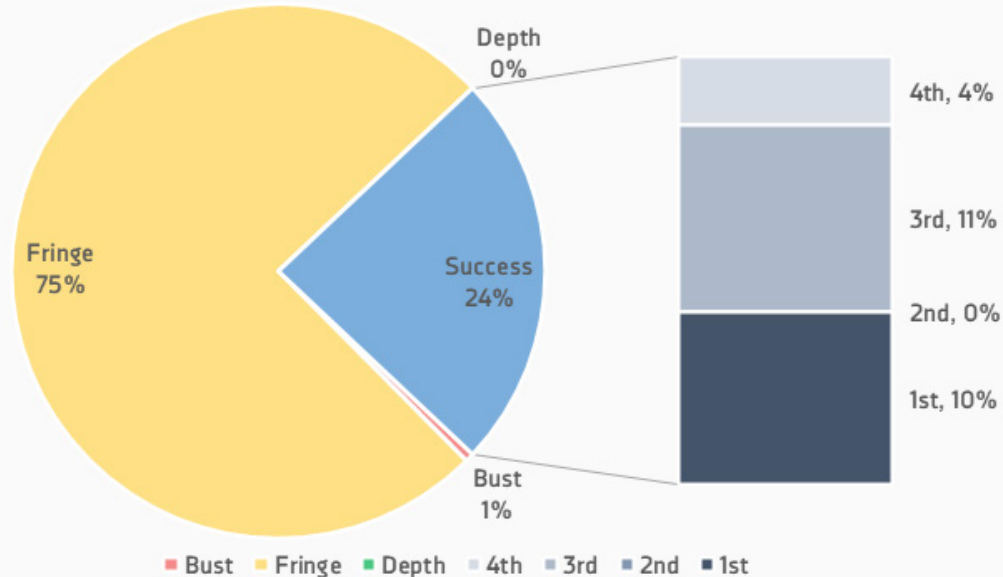
**Mitchell Brown:** November 17th, 2021

HC Rytiri Kladno vs. HC Energie H. Vary - Czech Extraliga

Some moments from Kulich in this one. The best was a two-touch backhand deke on a pass reception to a beat defender, before setting up a point shot. Plays fast and tries to gain the inside. He knows to wait for the reaction of defenders before cutting inside, but his routes more garden-variety crossover-heavy rushes than more manipulative ones. To get there, he'll need to use more changes of pace and deception. Still, his crossovers have power in them. He fully crosses over and often gets a full inside leg push-off while maintaining depth. Lacks a bit of depth through his stride, but he fully extends and recovers under the shoulders. Some off-puck

## Jiri Kulich 2021-22 Czech pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



ability, both offensively and defensively – mostly by occupying the right areas rather than more advanced movement and instincts. Pace, skating, and handling looks like strengths. He has dynamic potential, but he’s not quite there yet. Perhaps a second-rounder with third-line upside.

**Marek Novotny:** October 8th, 2021

HC Energie K. V. vs. HC Motor České B.– Czech Extraliga

Definitely not the best game from Kulich, but this was to be expected given the fact that his team was losing regularly at that time (Karlovy Vary were on a 3-game losing streak, which then stopped at 5 consecutive defeats). Kulich was on the second line and his overall game wasn’t anything special. He was pushed off the puck quite easily and also lost the puck possession a couple of times. He wasn’t impressive in battles along the boards. His defensive game wasn’t good at all, as he wasn’t able to recover to disrupt plays even though he’s a good and quick skater. Kulich started to look good during the 3rd period when he set up his teammates with dangerous passes and was quite creative in the offensive zone during the PP.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 17th, 2021

HK Hradec Kralove vs. HC Energie K. V. - Czech Extraliga

Great defensive performance from the centre. Cycling back to cover for his defensemen, reading and cutting off lanes, and forcing the puck carrier to the outside lane with positive stick and body positioning. Skating was impressive, really quick with effective crossovers. Offensively, he wasn’t pushing play forward himself and was mostly contributing away from the puck. Not a lot of open ice skill, so he was

mostly retrieving the puck and finding a teammate to do the work transitionally, then he planted himself in front of the net. With how smart he is off the puck and his skating ability, he has a very solid base to build off of, but the lack of dynamic play is concerning.

**David St-Louis:** August 6th, 2021

SKA-1946 vs. Loko Yaroslavl - MHL

The handling and skating are above-average, but the rest isn’t. A lot of bad decisions in his game, a lot of poor-vision plays, and an inability to really know how to create with his tools. There was one moment that suggested hockey sense and it was a deceptive pass to the slot as he skated to the goal-line. I don’t see an NHL player.

**David St-Louis:** August 6th, 2021

Czech Republic U18 vs. USA U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

I’m not saying anything all that special in Kulich’s game. He has the skills of a checker: the motor, the speed, the backchecking, forechecking...and some handling and passing ability, but that’s about it for me. He scored twice in this game, but there were more lucky opportunities, wide-open pucks in the slot that rebounded to him or a one-on-one with the goalie on the powerplay. He could be a 4th-line presence on a team. Is that worth a third-round pick? Maybe.

**J.D. Burke:** August 6th, 2021

Czech Republic U18 vs. USA U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

The defining quality of Kulich’s tournament was probably his motor. On a perhaps related note, the Czechs tournament

ended tonight with their loss to the United States. Having said that, this was probably his strongest performance of the tournament, one in which he picked up a goal on the power play with a one-touch finish from the net-front, and probably could've picked up an assist if he'd sent the puck to a teammate with a surer touch on a crafty hook pass in the first period. Showed some craftiness along the boards to protect the puck and diffuse pressure, but failed to really make anything of that skill. I'm leaving this tournament with the impression that Kulich is about a mid-round talent. Then again, it's just one tournament, so there's a lot of season left for Kulich to win me over.

**J.D. Burke:** August 4th, 2021

Czech Rep. U18 vs. Russia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Another uninspired effort from Kulich. Spent the majority of this game on the perimeter, more or less stationary, waiting for the puck to find him. Just about scored on the power play with a catch-and-release wrist shot that went post and out, but that was about as close as he got to impacting this game in a meaningful way. Showed some touch as a handler, collecting difficult passes without breaking stride, and corralling cross-ice feeds for one- and two-touch shooting with ease.

**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

Czech Rep. U18 vs. Finland U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Pretty weak performance from Kulich in this contest. Should've been a difference-maker for the Czechs in a tightly contested hockey game, but he couldn't seem to make much of anything work. Led a 2-on-1 up-ice, and then his brain shorted, and he couldn't even create a shot; he straight up ran out of space and made a rote shot attempt that hit the side of the net. Seemed endemic of his night. He just couldn't figure out how to get involved. Spent large stretches of this contest on the perimeter, shorting passes, and missing shooting opportunities. Had a glorious chance at the net-front on one shift, though, but he harmlessly fired it into the goalies pads, when he had the time and space to outwait him and beat him outside. Seemed to be gripping the stick too tightly, as the hockey men say. P







30 Rank

6 Skating

5.5 Shooting

5.5 Passing

B Grade

5 Puckhandling

4.5 Hockey Sense

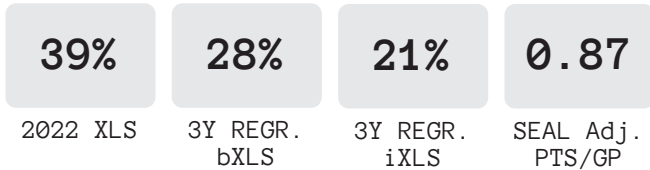
6.5 Physical

# RYAN CHESLEY

D | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. FEB. 27, 2004  
WEIGHT 201 SHOOTS RIGHT

"Elite skater and an elite defender. High character, high compete player. He will be a shutdown defender in the NHL." - NHL Scout in May 2022



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	59	12	17	29
USHL	26	5	10	15
WJC-18	6	2	3	5

> Committed to Univ. of Minnesota

## Scouting Report

There was a serious disconnect between Ryan Chesley's output this season and the tools at his disposal. Every item in his toolkit earned an average-to-above-average grade from our staff, but the sum was often less than the whole of its parts.

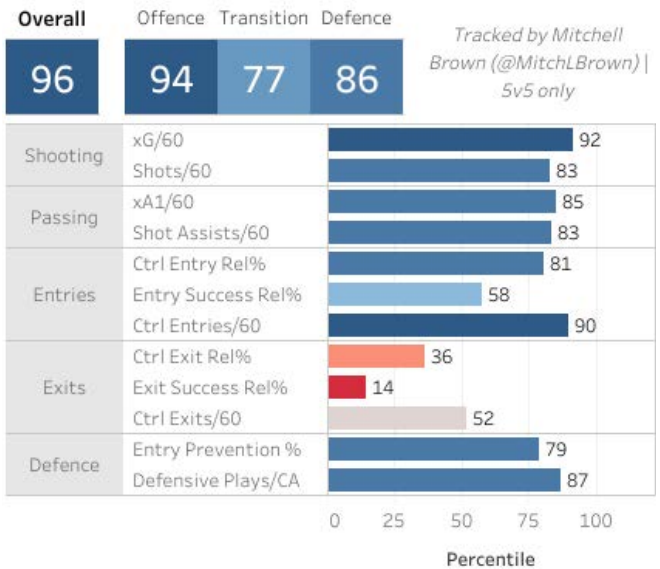
It was easy enough for us to identify where the disconnect occurred. When Chesley took the initiative with the puck and tried to make things happen, the game looked easy. When he wasn't playing with pace, not so much.

In no phase of the game was this more apparent than on the breakout. Chesley's four-way mobility and handling skill allowed him to manoeuvre past forecheckers with relative ease, but finding passing options further up-ice and getting them the puck in a timely fashion often eluded him. The result was lost opportunities to cue quick breaks and counter plays at best and costly turnovers at worst.

It's much the same story in the offensive zone, where Chesley's inability to register options and get them the puck in a timely fashion limits his effectiveness as a playmaker.

"Despite having the tools to make high-end offensive plays, however, Chesley rarely takes charge of the game," Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis wrote in a Scout's Notebook article on EP Rinkside. "He fades into the background. The defenceman [had] just 15 points in 41 games over the season, a low total for such a highly-touted player coming into the season."

Games Tracked: 13 | Minutes Tracked: 199.7



Some of these processing issues should improve with minor tweaks to his game; simple stuff like scanning for options going into retrievals and off-puck will go a long way. We also anticipate that a more predictable system that doesn't rely as much on the stretch pass as the program will help keep him on schedule. So, there's hope yet.

To his credit, Chesley finished the season on a strong note, playing his best hockey of the year in Germany at the U18s on the American top-pair alongside Lane Hutson.

"If I had room for a third defenceman on my U18 All-Star

ballot, I'd have a hard time thinking of a more deserving candidate than Chesley," EP Rinkside Editor-in-Chief J.D. Burke wrote of his work at the tournament.

"Our scouting team has always admired Chesley's tools -- the skating, the stout physical build, and the passing skill -- but concerns about his ability to process the game with pace have kept him from the first round of our board. We may have to change that, because Chesley was one of the tournament's most efficient puck-movers, regularly identifying the best option and getting them the puck without a moment's delay."

Short of any growth as a puck-mover, Chesley still has a durable defensive foundation on which he can build an NHL career. His skating form allows him to play a tight

gap through the neutral zone and close on attackers before they even get to the blue line. He's at his best as an in-zone defender, though, where his defensive radius and physicality make him a legitimate play-stopper.

Some team is going to bet on Chesley's immense physical gifts in the hopes that time with an NHL development staff can bring out the best in the Minnesota commit. They'll probably do so with a pick in the teens at that. It's not an unreasonable play, either. If things break right, you're looking at a right-shot, top-four defenceman with utility in both phases in special teams. The league places a premium on those sorts of players.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Bryan Miller YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 92%	2 Tristan Lush YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 92%	3 John Carlson YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 92%	4 Alexx Privitera YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 92%	5 Brett Lebda YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 91%
6 Eric Werner YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 91%	7 Torey Krug YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 91%	8 Blake Kessel YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 90%	9 Ian McCoshen YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 90%	10 Michael Brodzinski YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 89%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Czechia vs USA - WJ18

Chesley has some great moments. He's physical on defence and capable of repairing mistakes, like that one time where he caught up to a breakaway and pokechecked the puck away from the opponent, but I find that he's still too puck focused, offensively and defensively. He's rarely scanning for his next play. Is he going to be a bottom-pairing shutdown defender or a legitimate offensive threat? It's all in his hands. There are so many tools to work with.

**J.D. Burke:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

Really strong performance from Chesley from puck drop to the final horn. He was in full control of the game every time he took the ice, making smart decisions with the puck at pace, keeping play in front of him defensively, and even chipping in with a goal. The tools really stuck out to me in this game, especially his skating. This is probably the most nimble I've seen Chesley, even deploying the heel-to-heel for brief moments when pressured. He could probably stand to be a little more active and engaged in the offensive zone, but the hope is that this will come with time.

**David St-Louis :** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

A better performance from Chesley, one that could contrib-

ute to him getting drafted quite high, but just like Casey, the hockey sense concerns aren't going away: either he's a slow processor, a bad judge of risk, a poor scanner or all three, because Chesley, unless he has space and time to see things develop, forces a lot of plays. The tools and the confidence and the offensive activation and the rush defence and the potential that he figures it out, decision-making wise, still make him an interesting draft target.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

No doubt that Chesley has awesome moments. In this game, he pinched and immediately threw a pass into the slot for a scoring chance. He also created a solo look after breaking down the defence himself. But he's always behind. On the breakout, he sees the lane, waits, and then throws the puck away because he took too long. Other times, he misses options altogether because he's so singularly focused on a mediocre play instead. He's late to arrive to his check defensively, and late to engage too often. He's late to activate. In games where the other team lacks support and plays passively, he's a functional puck-mover with exceptional play-killing. But he gets cooked by teams that apply pressure. All season long. I fear my initial excitement for his game was misfounded. But his tools mean a team will take him high and invest in his development.

**David St-Louis:** April 1st, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs USNTDP U18 - USHL

Watching Chesley is just disappointing. He has the tools to be more impactful than he is, but the lack of scanning and slow decision-making plagues his every game. Same story every report. The top-four projection looks too optimistic for him -- a lot has to change in his processing of the play, offensively and defensively.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Once the game got out of hand, Chesley looked to create. Late in the game, he drew a defender wide, cut inside, deked around another, and nearly got a high-danger chance. Attacked the middle in the neutral zone, too. After beating players along the boards, he tried to bring the play to the middle and drive the net (that netted two chances). Despite his activity, it's hard to see how any of this will transfer to the net level. He doesn't sell any of his fakes – and he's late to recognize space. He's solid mechanically, but the puck rolls of his stick when he's looking to make moves. Not a planner, and lacks problem-solving. It's almost like he took an entire season off from trying plays! Weird. Anyway, I think the skating and defence are the crux of his projection. The defence is inconsistent, but it'll improve. He kills a lot of plays by mirroring footwork and engaging at the perfect moment. More off-puck activation will give him a clearer NHL identity. Perhaps a mid-second.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Season is almost over and I have more questions than answers when it comes to Chesley. He lacks pace; not physical, but mental. Most of his plays have the correct starting point. He attacks the inside, delays for incoming pressure, uses cutbacks to escape on retrievals, and sprints into the play. But they often fail. He misreads passing lanes. Turns into pressure and lacks problem-solving ability. He's slow to recognize changing situations. Ironic, but if he just delayed a half-second before forcing the play, he'd be way better off. He has the tools to out-skill and out-speed forecheckers. I like his play-killing potential, but he suffers from the same lack of planning and problem-solving. Establishing his gap early and taking control of the attacker's route is an easy way to stack the deck in his favour – he backs up instead and tries to get the steal at the blue line. When he's engaged, he's ending cycle, eliminating off-puck threats, and getting interceptions. Other times, he's tripping over himself to recover. What do I think? No idea.

**David St-Louis:** February 25th, 2022

USNTDP U18 vs Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

I had that conversation with Joey. Ryan Chesley is, in a way, a kind of boom-or-bust prospect. His decisions with the puck are slow and he checks out mentally in certain situations. The pace of his game needs to increase. But prospects usually manage to add the necessary urgency to play at higher levels. Chesley has the tools and he flashes offensive abilities. He could be a force on breakouts, too, if he just acted faster and become a bit more deceptive. Those things are all within his reach and I feel like he should be quite high on our board just because of his tools and his easier development path.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Chesley has a lot of physical tools, but he's late to recognize, well, everything. Several transition turnovers because he doesn't adapt to changing situations. And when problem-solving isn't the issue, it's his initial play decision that's limiting. He constantly puts the puck on his backhand and then makes the next play. But he turns his shoulders (blind to the play) and doesn't try to move it back to his forehand, leading to turnovers. And he constantly passes to teammates with more pressured than himself. The hitting, initial retrieval touches, and skating are strengths. The rest of his game requires a ton of refinement. It's comes down to focused development on reading the play, anticipating, and executing with pace.

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Chesley continues to process the game at a slow pace, which makes his projection hard. Is he just not scanning for plays and that delays his decisions or does he legitimately need time to find what to do? His habits on the ice are pretty good, even if inconsistent: cutting players at the hands, using the middle on breakouts, underhanding on breakouts... There is a lot to like but the nonchalance (?) is a bit off-putting.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 22nd, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

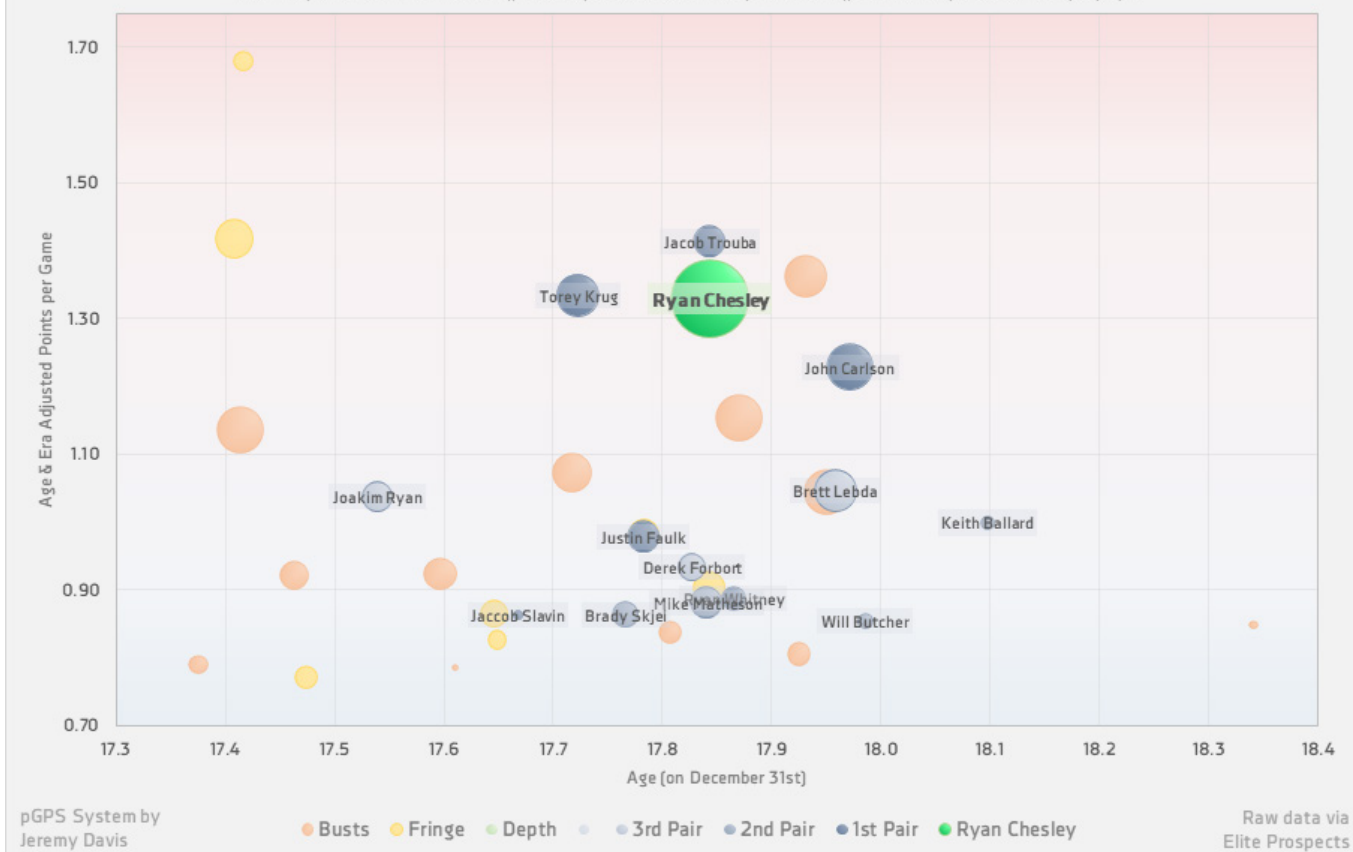
A nice performance from Chesley, finally got to see him show a little bit of skating ability. He used speed to burn forecheckers on a few occasions, and then found options in stride up the ice. I liked the passing versatility he showed too, hitting his center through the middle if the boards were clogged on the breakout. He's got the skill, I just need to see it more consistently, he's up there with Hutson and Casey when he's at his best.

## Ryan Chesley 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 32 || Base XLS: 39% || Impact XLS: 28% || XPR: 39.4 || Drafted Pct: 66%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**David St-Louis:** January 22nd, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Someone needs to give Chesley a good shake. He is always on the verge of making a good play, but takes an extra beat too long or is just a bit too nonchalant. The tools are there, the play killing ability, the defensive care even in some moments, and the offensive activations. He launched a beautiful bank pass to Howard after evading a forechecker in this game, a flash of what Chesley would be capable of routinely if his mind was just tuned a little more to the game, at least this is what I choose to believe, that some of his mistakes are mental lapses and not necessarily processing fails. If his play trends up, he might end up inside our top-20, if the lateness and the missed opportunities continue, his hockey sense grade will take a hit.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Chesley has the tools to jump in more, play faster, and make more skilled plays. Instead, his pace leaves him trapped. It seems more mental than physical, he's just too late to recognize opportunities (and also changing situations). It led to a massive turnover right in front of his net. One of the most impressive rush defenders in this class, however. He

angles, times his engagements with the pass, and generally leaves the puck in space for his forwards to advance. The flashes of a high-end skill from last season are gone. He's just a simple attacker with the odd inside play, but lacks the pace to make it work at the next level. Will another team unlock those elements? Maybe. But for now, he's probably just another tooly NTDP defender for the second-round and beyond.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 8th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

So Chesley is clearly a solid skater with a fluid stride, but he really lacks any kind of explosiveness to separate from opponents, especially with the puck. On a couple of occasions, Chesley would drive wide while entering the offensive zone or try to beat the first forechecker with speed in his own end, only to get angled off and stripped of possession. His inability to create separation is what's preventing him from becoming a really strong two-way threat. Most of his touches are in a glide or stationary passes. He's smart, don't get me wrong; a lot of his decisions are good ones, but the pace makes it hard to project him as a first rounder.

**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Chesley gets beat wide as he tries to play the pass off the rush instead of his man. He takes penalties after. Again, his pace was a bit of an issue this game again. Chesley does everything slowly unless he has a clear path to a great offensive chance. I liked the one time the puck squirted loose toward him at the point and he had space to attack down. He did so and made a great pass to his teammate across the ice, showing off his technical skill; while the pass moved one way he crossed over the other way, manipulating the stick of the defender in front of him. There are flashes with Chesley and if he just made his decisions a little quicker and tried plays more often, he could become a top-20 pick. He has the technical ability, the size, the mobility, and the handling skills, and also the care for the defensive game. I have some hockey sense doubts, overall.

**David St-Louis:** January 3rd, 2022

Minnesota Golden Gophers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

This was a better performance from Chesley. I didn't have to look for him as much; he popped again and again. He surfed to kill rushes and played decent in-zone defence. The thing that really hurts Chesley is his low pace of play. He takes so long to find a next move, when it isn't evident, that he gets stripped off the puck or further complicates that next play (as the defence has time to regroup). His skills look above-average: skating and handling, but there are some mechanical breakdowns at times. He participated in the offensive movements more this time, but those were always initiated by his partner, Hutson. I liked the one or two times he did evade the forecheck and made some more rapid plays up-ice.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Steadily, Chesley's looking more like the Chesley of last season. In flashes, the patience, handling, and activated have returned. He consistently uses the inside on the breakout, he outhandles and overpowers forecheckers before dropping the puck to partner, who now has half the ice to make a decision. He activates, something off a give-and-go or even by sprinting ahead of the play. Twice, he provided short side support and was rewarded with possession. In one of those, he set up a pair of looks for Nazar with a backhand pass. Gap control wasn't perfect in this game, but he recovered to grab number stops deeper in the zone. Physical, as usual. Still, he left tons of value on the table with the puck, throwing away possession without purpose, misreading incoming

pressure, and failing to identify the best option. This was an encouraging performance, but he still looked more like a mid-to-late second round pick.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18 - USHL

Ryan Chesley has the potential to become an effective shutdown defenceman. He can defend access to the slot and to the net better than everyone else on this blue-line -- when he's scanning and engaged in the play. He picks up his man early, takes care of stick, and holds defensive side positioning; he forces opponents to move around him to free themselves, which usually kills the play. Chesley's skills probably rank above-average, but he has some weird mechanical breakdown still. I'm not really sure what to make of them still.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Most active game I've seen from Chesley since last year. He was deking players, joining the rush, and activating from the point. Most impressive sequence: joining the rush, grabbing the loose puck, cutting inside, backhand touch under the defender's stick, then a pass into the slot for a deflection. He set-up another chance earlier in the game, showing that the vision and creativity are still there. Now, this was also a poor game by several measures. He missed passes, lost control of the puck several times, and trapped himself with the puck on the breakout. He relied more on skating and physicality defensively over reads, which allowed him to correct several poor decisions. That's not sustainable for this level, let alone the next. Chesley looked like an early second, but I didn't see good enough execution to return him to first-round status.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

I'm not really sure how to square the Chesley of this season and the one I saw last year. He's clearly far less aggressive with the puck, and when he does he try to make something happen, the execution's inconsistent. He activates into the play, uses the middle, and deceives, but at a low volume. Mechanically, he should be much better than he is: Skating, shooting, puckhandling are all NHL-calibre, at least. Defensively, he's very physical with angling ability while toeing the line between risk management and aggression. Beat once by committing too far wide too early, but not a pattern in his game. On tools, he's a late-first. On current level of play, he's an unspectacular second-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

This was more of Chesley I saw last season, but still not enough. There was the usual stuff: suffocating rush defence, physicality, and advanced off-puck reads and defensive timing. He ran through a couple of players without much hassle. Activated into the play on occasion, once getting a chance for himself and once setting up a chance with a look-off slip pass. Deferred a lot to Casey in transition in this game, but I liked how he pushed possession to the inside before making decisions. He's mobile, but not explosively. Crafty, but not dynamic. He looks noticeably less active and confident offensively this season. He's probably more of a late-second, early-third unless he can recapture the transition and offensive skill that made him effective last season.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 26th, 2021

Buff State vs. NTDP U18s - NCAA

It's just kind of the same stuff with Chesley. Like he's not bad, he doesn't make mistakes, he defends the rush well, he uses his body. Those are all important things, especially on a roster with some pretty average rush defenders but I just feel like I come out of every viewing wanting more. There's no initiative to lead the breakout or transition, he doesn't really have the speed to do that. It's always a north-south pass to the adjacent winger. I don't know, it's just kind of bland. I want to see more out of a projected first-rounder. I want to see some of the offense Casey brings. That's what's stopping me from really loving the kid. More to come...

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 5th, 2021

Adrian College vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

I've seen Chesley play a few times now and I still don't see much that really catches the eye. He's a sound rush defender, and in-zone he's smart positionally. He's a strong body and engages physically in corners, but beyond this, there isn't a ton of intrigue. He's a below average skater, which seems to prevent him from activating in the rush. His passing decisions are pretty bland; he defaults to hitting the strong-side winger way too much, even when he has a center option moving with speed. He had a couple of bad neutral zone turnovers where he got flustered under pressure. To me, he's not a surefire first rounder but we'll see.

**Cam Robinson:** November 5th, 2021

Adrian College vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Not an especially noteworthy game from Chesley in this one but still solid all around. Defensively, he remains very strong. His gap is tight but malleable to adjust to different patterns. He boasts a good stick, engages in the corners, gets

good position at the netfront and ties up sticks effectively. In transition, he had a nice rush in the 2nd that carved through NZ beating two defenders before entering and putting a LD shot on goal. He jumped up to create a 3-on-2 where he received the pass and cut hard to the netfront on the backhand, moved it quickly to the forehand for the shot but just missed the net. In the 3rd, he had another nice little rush where he once again serpented through the NZ, tried a toe drag outside in move with a shot attempt that got clogged up.

He's not the most creative player, and the stride is a little sluggish. His nuanced defensive game likely leads to an NHLer, but it's debatable whether he has serious second pair upside. I think it's in there, but he looks more like a high B prospect than a locked in A.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Chesley was ejected for a hit at the halfway mark of the game. Tough to have an eventful game with only 9 minutes of ice time. He beat a defender on the pass reception, then activated straight down the middle and beat another. Questionable backhand pass decision but I like how he tried to create. A couple of step-in shots showed his awareness of space offensively. Defensively, he's solid as usual. He closes his gaps early, drives plays to the perimeter, completing eliminates off-puck threats, and understands how to engage around the net. He instantly turns steals into breakouts, but the skill didn't show in this game. Not sure what to think.

**David St-Louis:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - NCAA

Not a very eventful game for Chelsey. I expected more out of a prospect who is projected to go this high. His defensive game seems on point. Early close-outs in transition, aggressive defensive zone posturing, and even some help defence. He defended odd-man rushes well and laid a massive hit on an opponent. He was involved offensively, active in transition, and made some fakes, but was overshadowed by some of Casey's play.

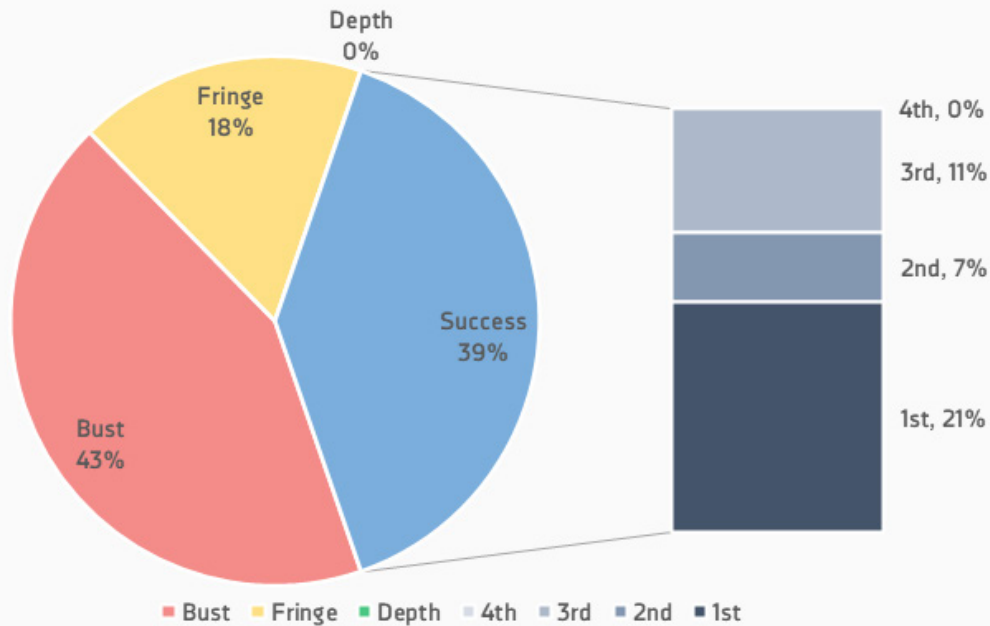
**David St-Louis:** October 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Cornell Big Red - NCAA

I continue to not see much from Chelsey besides good defensive positioning. He is in the right place, but he is not aggressive in his defence, not urgent, and so projecting him as a shutdown defender is a bit hard. His skating clearly projects as above-average and he has some good puck-moving moments, like a tight turn to evade a forechecker followed by a short-pass to his F1 on a breakout in this game, but

## Ryan Chesley 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



generally I find him uninvolved, not creating much, even when he gets clear offensive opportunities. He doesn't take charge of the offence.

**David St-Louis:** - October 16th, 2021

USNTDP U18 vs Michigan Tech Huskies - NCAA

Chesley flashes some manipulation skills, when he gets a runway in the offensive zone. But overall, his offence has all but disappeared this season. Sometimes he misses plays due to a lack of awareness (he passes to covered teammates) or due to skill failure (the puck springs off his stick). His defence was a strong point in this game. He identified his coverage, positioned well, took good angles to kill plays, and generally had the right gap off the rush.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Chesley didn't do much offensively -- that's still a concern. But he's advanced in transition. He steps inside, manipulates forecheckers, connects with cross-lane passes, joins the rush, and completes most of his plays. If can leverage that into more offence, I have little doubt he's a top-15 pick. Defence remains his best dimension. He got turned around one sequence but recovered to disrupt the shot, and otherwise had a perfect night defending the rush. He angles out attacks with c-cuts and heel pushes, closes space with authority, and has tons of play-killing instincts. Times his engagements at the point of least resistance. Based on this game, he looked more like a late-first/early-second type. Really depends on the offence.

**David St-Louis:** October 9th, 2021

USNTDP U18 vs Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Chesley started the game well, making some good reads defensively, some simple controlled plays. He deferred to teammates a bit, but I don't mind a conservative defence-man if he boasts the necessary skill to make plays when he has to. His skating projects as above-average, especially his four-way mobility, giving him a large defensive radius off the rush. He mitigates risk in his zone, boxes out, and provides option for breakout. But then things got a little more complicated for him as the game went on, making me question his hockey sense. He missed opponents behind him, committed way too hard to stops in his rush defence, getting beat around. And his skill failed him at times, just like in previous games. He doesn't really recognize or create advantages offensively, but seems to simply go through the motion, sometimes, as if the opposition wasn't even there. Pace and decision-making are issues.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

One thing you can say about Chesley is that he's certainly sound. He plays the rush well, engages hard in corners and often comes out with the puck, and finds teammates nicely in transition. But that's kind of...it? I knew there was a lot of hype surrounding him coming in to the year, but beyond the defensive play and not making many mistakes, there's pretty limited offensive upside, and there's not a ton of explosiveness or evasiveness either. I'll have to keep watching round now but I feel like guys like Chesley are a dime a dozen in the



USHL, are they not? See: Damien Carfagna from last year? Maybe I'm missing something, it's still early so hopefully there's more to come.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 17th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Chesley was the best player on the ice in this game. Refined rush defence: On check early in the NZ, limited crossover use, angling, and timed checks. Forced dump-ins and broke up possession in the NZ several times. Lots of transition skill, even if some plays weren't successful. Manipulates forechecking pressure with eyes and body orientation. Anticipates reactions, but the deception doesn't consistently carry over to the passing. Took a few too many point shots, but also found himself in scoring position a few times. Short-handed goal with a far-side wrister inside crossovers -- really impressive. Elbow up, hands in front, controlled body position -- projectable form. Looked like a first-round-calibre prospect in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

The best player on the ice. Chesley's transition decisions are immediate, and he's usually making the best play. Manipulates forecheckers, steps inside, goes cross-ice for breakout passes. It's been years since a draft-minus-one NTDP defender showed this much creativity and consistency on the breakout. His breakout passes consistently create space for his teammates. When he leads the rush, he manipulates pressure then dekes around them, before finishing his off-puck route. Just so involved and refined. And he's quite physical defensively to go with an instinctual break-up-focused game, risk-mitigating footwork, and controlled stick work.

The OZP needs some work: moving on pass receptions, pre-scanning for options, patience to open up lanes. But I

think he's an NHL player. A possible top-15 pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

The smartest defender in this group, at least at this stage. Brilliant timing. He feels pressure, throws out a fake, and cutbacks the other way. Punch turns are deep and led with his upper body. He separates down low and usually makes a controlled play to exit the zone. Passes in motion to get up the ice. Give-and-go game, combining with rush activation for quality chances. Saw some playmaking that I haven't seen from him previously, but the passes were off. Really strong rush defender as usual. He kills plays early, and when he can't, makes up ground without committing his feet, angles out the attack, and kills the play along the boards. Very physical, but with control and always exited with the puck on his stick. Looks like an easy first-round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

Chesley's the best defender in this group. Very proactive: Tons of scanning, positional adjustments, and timed checks. Really confident on-puck defender who plays to the perimeter, or jumps up with the incoming pass to get the breakup. Easy to see an NHL role given his strength prowess. But the transition skill interests me a lot more from an upside perfect. He's manipulative, active, and high pace. There are mistakes and poor reads, but he clearly understands how to create advantages up the ice through handling and skating. Lots of rush activation, directly leading to a point-blank scoring chance. Offensively, perhaps he takes a few too many shots -- missed some teams in better positioning than himself and he's clearly in an environment that allows for creative passing from the point. If the transition playmaking translates to the offensive end, he'll be a top-20 pick.





31

31  
Rank

B  
Grade

7  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

6  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

4  
Physical

# VLADIMIR GRUDININ

D | CSKA MOSKVA

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. DEC. 9, 2003  
WEIGHT 159 SHOOTS LEFT

22%	12%	5%	0.62
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
MHL	18	2	11	13
VHL	12	1	2	3
KHL	6	0	1	1

## Scouting Report

You don't need an InStat subscription to have at least a passing amount of familiarity with Vladimir Grudin. He's already made two relatively high-profile appearances in international competition on Russia's blue line, first at last year's U18s in Texas and then again at the World Juniors in Alberta.

For an undersized, underaged defenceman like Grudin, just making those teams was a hell of an accomplishment. Far from just surviving in a depth role, one could build a credible case for the 5-foot-10 blueliner as one of, if not Russia's best defender in those tournaments -- one of which only lasted for two games, but still.

You have to be able to skate if you're going to hang in professional hockey at Grudin's size, and he passes the test. The only question for our staff this season was whether to rate his stride as above-average or high-end. Ultimately, we settled on a 7-grade on our 1-to-9 linear scale, placing him roughly in the 93rd percentile for the players accounted for in our database.

Grudin's forward stride has the proper mechanical makeup, but it's his four-way mobility and comfort on his edges that consistently stood out in our viewings. There's a skating move in his arsenal for every occasion, whether it's the cutback to circle back from pressure or the mohawk stride to get around it entirely.

"An undersized defenseman who can really get moving, Grudin's footwork and agility make up for his size disadvantage," Elite Prospects Russia regional scout Dylan

Griffing wrote during his draft-minus-one season. "Grudin thrives on the rush because of his fantastic movement in transition, but he can also set up plays at the blue line and pick his spots there."

Our only real critique is that Grudin hasn't used that elusiveness as a skater to create plays at the offensive blue line in professional play to the degree that we'd like, whether at the VHL or KHL level last season. One could hardly blame him for taking a more deferential posture with the puck in two of the sport's most challenging professional settings, but it would certainly bolster our confidence in his offensive projection to the NHL if we had proof of concept in a like setting.

Until then, our confidence in the player is buoyed by his transition skill and a durable defensive game that stood up no matter the competition last season. If nothing else, that part of his game is all too easy to project to the NHL level.

Grudin kind of inverts expectations in that sense, conjuring images of the rare undersized defensive savant in the Sam Girard or Troy Stecher mould rather than a high-flying offensive dynamo like Quinn Hughes or Torey Krug. He's a proactive defender who shadows opposition forwards and stands up exceptionally well in puck battles. The CSKA Moskva product gets underneath opponents, cuts them off at the hands, and escapes with the puck with relative ease.

The skating, transition ability, and in-zone defensive play should be enough to elevate Grudin to a third-pairing role at the NHL level. That seems like a reasonable baseline here.

With a better understanding of how to calibrate risk in the offensive zone and take advantage of his skating to become a more dynamic blueline playmaker, something more ambitious like a middle-pairing role seems within reach.

You'll probably see Grudinin go a fair bit lower on draft day than where we've placed him on our board. You know how it goes. The Russian factor, an undersized defenceman, and so on. We're confident in our ranking, though.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Nikita Nesterov YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 95%	2 Konstantin Vorshev YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 92%	3 Kirill Dyakov YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 91%	4 Roman Dubinin YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 91%	5 Grigori Zheldakov YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 90%
6 Ruslan Ibatullin YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 88%	7 Viktor Postnikov YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 88%	8 Alexander Lopatyu YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 87%	9 Oleg Misyul YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 87%	10 Danil Mamayev YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 86%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 11th, 2022

Krasnaya Armiya Moskva vs. Omskye Yastreby - MHL

I'm not as convinced anymore of his potential. There is a lot more panic in his game and a lot less problem-solving than I first anticipated. The skating is still really interesting and I like the defensive proactiveness and the flashes of manipulations, but he's not a creator as he doesn't know how to become one. It might happen, but with the development path ahead of him, the fact that he will have to become more conservative to earn a spot in the KHL, I doubt he develops the tools he will need to become a top-4 NHL defenceman. Even the bottom-pairing offensive specialist that I had in mind at first seems less likely.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 30th, 2022

Krasnaya Armiya Moskva vs. Loko Yaroslavl - MHL

Grudinin's skating stood out as it often does. Good acceleration pattern with toes pointing outwards and hips elevated. Ankle and knee flexion looked solid as well, further helping him with his agility. Very good explosiveness and first steps. There was one particularly good situation where he was able to catch up to the forward with a few quick strides and dislodge him from possession by dropping his weight and cutting across his hips – essential play for a smaller defenceman. One weird sequence in the third where it looked like he had already created an exit by beating the forechecker, but failed the pass and turned the puck over, with him and his partner both diving to intercept the following 2v2 situation, resulting in a backhand spin pass and goal against. I'd put that on Grudinin as he should have positioned to take out the second forward instead of continuing to pursue the puck. Not a whole lot of puck touches in the OZ, but I liked how he was looking for give-and-gos. Could have benefited from more DZ scanning, especially on retrievals. Some sequences

where he had more flash than substance; mohawking himself into the boards instead of a quicker pass to the middle or a simple D-to-D pass.

**David St-Louis:** March 30th, 2022

Loko Yaroslavl vs. Krasnaya Armiya Moskva - MHL

Grudinin continues to line-up good MHL performances. He forces some passes and shots, but overall has an ability to create advantages for his team through his skating that few other prospects in the draft can bring: activations, two-zone carries, rush patterns, puck retrievals in the offensive zone... He can be all over the ice and still come back defensively to kill plays. I appreciate how he sticks to his coverage in his zone, too. He's not just an offensive defenceman: he has some care for the shutdown game and could become a fierce rush defender. He showed some advanced scanning habits in this game when on retrievals. There, he didn't force middle plays but defaulted to rims when he had no options. Fine plays.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 25th, 2022

CSKA Moskva vs. Spartak Moskva - Friendly

Just over 14 minutes of ice time for Grudinin is this one. Got a high-danger chance in his first shift of the game, getting the puck in motion near the point and making use of the free space ahead of him. Mobility is clearly a plus-level tool. Mixes a lot of mohawks into his skating and is actually pretty effective with it. Makes the right decision with the puck most of the time, but doesn't show any high-end passing skills. Defensive footwork is good, but he has the habit of diving/dropping low too easily when defending against a dangerous rush or 2v1/3v2. Some other defensive miscues that could be likely avoided with more scanning. Solid 1-on-1 defender despite the lack of size, knows how to utilize body positioning. Also made some good pinches to

keep the play alive in the OZ. Looked comfortable shooting from either leg. Grudinin is a project worthwhile investing into, even if I'm still a bit skeptical if he has high-end upside in the OZ or in transition.

**Dylan Griffing:** February 14th, 2022

CSKA Moskva vs. Sibir Novosibirsk - Friendly

Grudinin just continues to impress. While this may have only been a friendly, his awareness, agility, and puck moving ability shone bright. Picked up a scoring chance of his own by starting the breakout with a deke around a forechecker, passing it to his teammate for the entry, and then following the play and picking up the loose puck and getting a shot off. He has to limit his game when he puts on the CSKA sweater, but he still finds ways to make himself stand out. Defensively, his risk-mitigating footwork was enough to trap play around the perimeter. Made up for the lack of physicality with quick feet and thinking. Deceptive on his retrievals. Just a lot to like here.

**David St-Louis:** February 8h, 2022

Ryazan vs. Zvezda - VHL

I'm not overly impressed with Grudinin's game at higher levels. He defers so much to others and seems to lack the confidence to create advantages himself. He misses occasions to manipulate defenders, even though he has the skill to do so, and rarely moves in ways to create shots for himself, again, even if he has the skill to do so. The timing of his moves is also not as precise in the VHL.

**Dylan Griffing:** January 29th, 2022

Krasnaya Armiya Moskva vs. Almaz Cherepovets - MHL

A typical performance in this one, pure dominance. Three primary assists and a heap of other chances created, he was unstoppable. His problem solving is fantastic, thinks on his feet, bounces around forecheckers so he always has time, and showed off a bit of his pace rushing the puck forward in this one. Not the best planner when carrying the puck through the transition, so he was left with an uncontrolled entry and a carry-in to the zone, but was forced to spin and pass behind the net for a turnover. Outside of that, not much negative to speak about. It's clear he is at a level above this league, so he was clearly taking some liberties to extend higher up and play as a forward as the team was struggling to extend their lead. He cut to the net on a few occasions and opted for shots most of the time, quick release, but the timing is an issue.

**David St-Louis:** January 29th, 2022

Krasnaya Armiya Moskva vs. Almaz Cherepovets - MHL

Wow. The skill-level is incredibly high, especially on the skating side. Grudinin kept subverting my expectations. I thought he would lose the puck attempting certain moves all game long and he came out of scrums with the puck. He can pull off plays that nobody in this draft class could ever hope to pull off. The skating looks to me like a 7.5: speed, acceleration, and an unbelievable agility, the mohawk moves, the acceleration out of mohawk moves, the explosive and deceptive weight shifts... I'm very impressed. Every single one of Grudinin's passes were either executed quickly, to hit teammates before lanes closed or set up with full-body deception. Every single one of his touches lead into the next play. And I even liked his risk management at times. He could have beat opponents one-on-one, but decided to use teammates to do so instead. Defensively, he lacked awareness, but he can shadow attackers very well and showed an ability to get on them as they received the puck.

**Dylan Griffing:** January 7th, 2022

CSKA Moskva vs. Vityaz Podolsk - KHL

As clear it is that Grudinin plays more conservatively in the KHL than in other leagues, he was still incredibly dynamic. His breakouts were an issue in this one, choosing passing options was a challenge. Not picking up players who are in stride and opting for the overly safe option, which was typically a lateral pass that killed the momentum. Other than that, I was impressed. His blueline control is fantastic, not rushing, waiting for lanes to open, and he even picked up his first career KHL point after his shot was tipped in by Mikhail Grigorenko. He clearly wanted to run plays that he made in the VHL/MHL, give-and-goes where he cuts straight to the net, but he understood his responsibilities defensively, so there were some weird instances of him starting to go to the net, but then heading right back to the point. Pinched hard and effectively along the boards and kept the puck in the zone quite a few times with his individual efforts. Defensive game was strong – his defensive footwork made him tough to get past, denying entries with his agility, and even getting his body involved. The hiccups are there for sure, moving up and down the leagues in Russia means adapting your game, but I don't think he's going to have any issues becoming a quality KHL defenseman quickly.

**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022

CSKA Moskva vs. Vityaz Podolsk - KHL

Grudinin wasn't his usual creative self in this one. He deferred to teammates for most of his plays and simply

## Vladimir Grudinin 2021-22 MHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 11 || Base XLS: 22% || Impact XLS: 0% || XPR: 0 || Drafted Pct: 9%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



decided to throw pucks away when they came to him. It's normal. He was trusted in a bigger role in the KHL for one of the first times. His coach probably didn't want him beating opponents one-on-one and he probably didn't feel comfortable doing it either. You still saw his lateral mobility, his ability to create lanes by moving away from checkers, and his rush defence was mostly on point throughout the game. He was on his checks at the right time, but showed himself a bit too aggressive at the end of the game, double covering an opponent, which led to a goal.

**Dylan Griffing:** December 27th, 2021

Russia U20 vs. Sweden U20 - WJC-20

A lovely surprise to see Grudinin playing for the World Juniors team. While this wasn't a great game from him, it isn't farfetched to say that he was the best blueliner for Russia in this one. The clear issues came from his breakouts under pressure and his lack of size. Grudinin failed a lot of dump-outs. This is a clear shift from his league and even his Karjala Cup games where he didn't limit himself to trying to force the puck out as soon as it touched his stick. There was no creativity, just try to get it out of the zone and then hope there's time to either re-group or get off the ice. It wasn't all negatives in his own end, though. His defensive game was

mostly strong, some hiccups against the rush, but overall, he closed gaps better than anyone else on his team – a low bar, sure, but he did cross it. Stuck to his man, played the body, and cut off a ton of options despite how little he is. Pretty deceptive on most of his retrievals, but struggled against bigger forecheckers. I liked his activations on the rush and in the offensive zone. He joined the rush a few times, twice to carry the puck in and try to set up offense and once to barrel towards the net, which resulted in him taking out two defenders and giving Yurov a shooting lane. He showed creativity on the blueline with his hands and feet. Garnered himself a scoring chance off of a give-and-go, as well. Most of his offense was just playing the puck around the boards to allow his big teammates to go at it behind the net. Coaches love that.

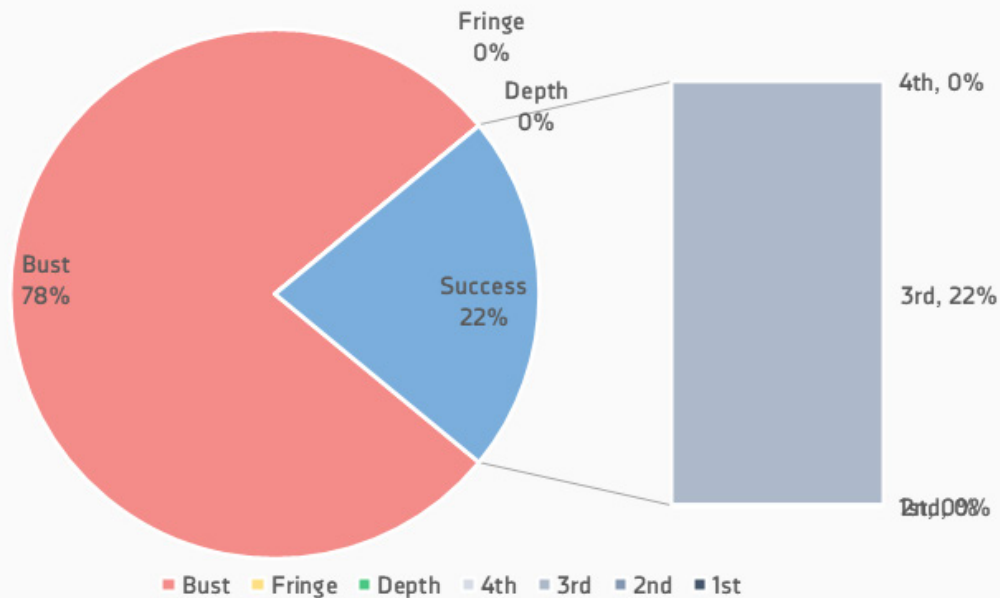
**David St-Louis:** December 27th, 2021

Russia U20 vs. Sweden U20 - WJC-20

Grudinin's skills only shows up in flashes, when he feels he has the right to make a play and not to just dump the puck up to forwards. He has timing in his passing and deception, too. His defence was generally a strong point for a smaller, younger defenceman in this tournament. He tried to limit the time and space of the opposition as much as he could.

## Vladimir Grudinin 2021-22 MHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



He had a bit of trouble receiving passes, however, and that killed some offensive plays for him. His skating is still his greatest asset: he's agile and can reposition in an instant.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 27th, 2021

HK Riga vs. Krasnaya Armiya Moskva - MHL

Grudinin is a trip with every viewing. He is a master manipulator, forcing the F1 to commit and then taking the puck around him with nice hands and feet. Certainly not afraid to join the rush, with most of his controlled breakouts being via carries. However, he falls victim to something a lot of young defenseman do, which is constantly pushing the puck forward and looking off safer and more effective options. Grudinin would rather try to pass through a group of three clumped up Riga players than make a d-to-d pass that would exploit the space that has been made available. There's clearly promise that he can scan the ice for passing options under pressure, which he showed this game, using his footwork to give himself more time for a lane to open, but that patience isn't something that shows up in his game enough.

The big question with Grudinin is how will adding size affect his manipulation skills. His agility is crucial in being able to jump around the F1 and quickly build up pace to accelerate through the center lane. At 5'11, 160lbs, he can succeed with ease, but he needs to add size to be able to play physically and not get knocked down as easily as he does.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 17th, 2021

CSKA Moskva vs. Dynamo Moskva - KHL

The size concerns continue to grow for Grudinin. He's constantly getting knocked off balance and making every play with the puck that much more difficult. His breakouts were really messy, trying hopelessly to chop the puck out while being quickly closed down by a forechecker who is much stronger than he. Grudinin did have one good breakout pass, but it was a unicorn in this game, because the rest were brutal. Defensively, he was competent enough, but not a standout player. Again, the lack of size is not to his advantage and he gets beat easily in board battles, but in open ice, he positioned himself well and got his stick involved to keep away most dangerous chances.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 13th, 2021

Sweden vs. Russia - Karjala Cup

Grudinin made his debut for the Russian national team and saw nearly 14 minutes of ice time. Clearly the physicality of the competition was an issue for him, spending most of the game off balance or on the ice. He was able to sneak into some board battles to engage there, but any other physical play was bad news for him. He defended very high up, leaving a lot of space open in dangerous areas and he relied on Nikishin to fill it all up for him. He was on the ice for two Swedish goals, and he was pushed up high on both. First one was really bad on his part, Nikishin had to try to stop both Swedish forwards that were in the crease from getting to a rebound, but obviously couldn't. The second was after a bad line change from the Russian forwards, so Grudinin pinched high on a 4-on-2 to try to stop the progression, but he got beat and it ended in a 3-on-1 and a goal. He cleaned

up his game as it progressed, drawing in forecheckers, like he has been doing in league play, and then beating them with skill and pace. Tried to get some individual transitions going to varying success. Overall, he was definitely in over his head here, had some major hiccups, but showed confidence and skill.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 5th, 2021

Vityaz Podolsk vs. CSKA Moskva - KHL

In his first game for the big club, Grudin in saw the ice for just under two and a half minutes. Not given a lot of time to really show himself, but he did do some good and not so good things. Physicality is the clear limiting factor here. He was getting, quite literally, tossed around and losing races to the puck because of it. There was a play where he was able to position his body and brace for contact along the boards to retrieve the puck, but other than that, he was getting crushed. His elusiveness and quick reads made it easy to break away from the forecheck (most of the time, at least) and his body positioning while defending the rush was effective to cut off lanes and he blocked a couple of shots because of it.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 10th, 2021

Zvezda Moskva vs. Khimik Voskresensk - VHL

Grudin in clearly impressed the VHL club in his start to the MHL season, getting second pair minutes at 5v5, plus time on the power play and penalty kill in his debut. He adapted to the change in competition with ease and was a forecheck killer on the ice. Really patient with the puck to draw the forechecker right onto him, then used his craftiness to get past and find a passing option. Transition game was sloppy at times, so as the game progressed, he played with more control rather than trying ambitious passes and it resulted in more success. Controlled the blueline with deceptive footwork. Defensive game was surprisingly translatable to the next level, good gap control, active stick to block off passing lanes, and stepped up physically to throw his body around despite his small frame. Doesn't have breakaway speed, but certainly isn't getting outpaced often.

**J.D. Burke:** October 1st, 2021

HC Loko Yaroslavl vs. Krasnaya Armiya Moskva - MHL

Kind of a mixed bag performance for Grudin in, even

though he managed to pick up a goal and an assist in about 20 minutes of high-leverage, all situations hockey. The shot was a really great display of off-the-puck pace, reading his teammate skating up the board and then darting past him in the opposite direction for the pass, and sniping one past the Yaroslavl netminder. The assist was a nice display of dexterity, as Grudin in jumped into the rush, took the puck in the middle of the ice on a 3-on-2, and hooked it to his teammate who deposited the puck into the empty net. Even so, I left this game with more questions about his offensive projection at the next level than answers. Grudin in has a really nasty habit of handling his way into trouble, often missing passing plays in the process (tried a poorly conceived manoeuvre against a well-gapped defender on one such occasion and missed an opportunity for an easy drop pass to set up a 2-on-1 in the process). His pace in the offensive zone isn't where it needs to be. Found myself admiring his use of the mohawk at the point to create passing opportunities, but I didn't see many plays come of it. Grudin in is a decisive defender, but could stand to use a little more discretion at times. Has a nasty tendency of committing his feet far too early in space, and it's something that will get exposed at higher levels. The lack of breakaway speed is concerning given his stature. Looks like a mid-round pick to me.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 17th, 2021

Krasnaya Armiya Moskva vs. MHK Dynamo Moskva - MHL

Really strong outing from Grudin in. Invites pressure onto him and never gives the puck away. Uses a combination of skating and puck handling to evade the forechecker and attacks the space with his passing. He jumped up in the rush a lot, which will need to be toned down when playing in a men's league, but it never resulted in any negative plays. His offensive toolset is intriguing because of how well he reads and anticipates play. Picks his spots to attack well in the offensive zone, attacking the inside lane and driving to the net. Despite his offensive minded game, his defense is nothing to gloss over. Controls gaps well, forces play out wide, and, like on offensive, picks his spots wisely. Strong retrievals. I've really liked what I've seen from Grudin in. There's some things in his game that will need tweaking at the next level, but his awareness, passing, and skating combination all should translate nicely. Could easily see him as a first round pick.



32

32  
Rank

B  
Grade

5.5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

6  
Passing

6  
Puckhandling

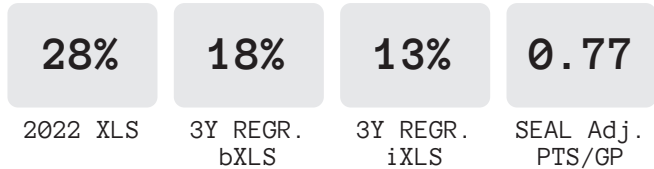
4.5  
Hockey Sense

7  
Physical

# SAM RINZEL

D | WATERLOO BLACK HAWKS

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. JUN. 25, 2004  
WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
UMHSEHL	18	4	12	16
USHS-MN	27	9	29	38
USHL	21	2	8	10

> Committed to Univ. of Minnesota

## Scouting Report

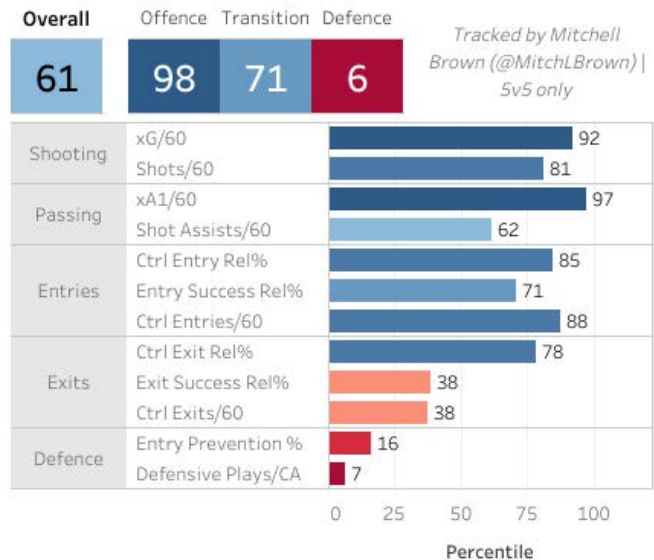
A monster 6-foot-4, right-shot blueliner for Chaska High School, Sam Rinzel presented a tricky projection for our staff out of the Minnesotan United States high school circuit. Even so, make no mistake: Rinzel is a surefire candidate for best tools from a defender in this draft.

“When Rinzel pushes sustained pressure in the offensive zone, he is overpowering at the high-school level,” Elite Prospects crossover scout Daniel Gee wrote in December. “Patience, manipulation, and constant motion allow him to dominate. Inside-oriented, Rinzel constantly moves pucks from the boards into the middle, facilitating the puck out to the open wings as he draws defenders in.”

A projectable, top-arm flared release, combined with synced weight-transfer and an immense amount of downforce, Rinzel has all the mechanics to be a shooting force on the blue line. Combine that with angle-changing inward drags, high placements, and a penchant to eat up available space, all while pushing free range activations, the dominance that permeated across his game created significant intrigue across the Elite Prospects scouting team.

A talented puck-mover, Rinzel baits F1’s, implements stop-ups to mess with forechecker’s momentum, and separates through his crossover use. While he does attack into pressure too often, often looking for hero-plays, he does have significant handling skill, occasionally popping the puck into his hip-pocket to protect, and all while incorporating body manipulations, and arms-away-from-body handles to beat defenders 1-on-1.

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 116.1



After an initial November audition in the USHL with the Waterloo Black Hawks, Rinzel’s projection was seemingly limitless -- adaptability issues were chalked up to him making adjustments. This changed after a state tournament loss to Prior Lake at the high school level. Rinzel returned to the Black Hawks, and drew very negative results from cross-checking scouts,

“Defensively, he was awful. Not only was he beaten regularly, he didn’t even try to recover,” Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown explained in an April report. “He lets players escape and become someone else’s problem, but never returns the favour. Reactionary, and even worse, he’s unwilling to engage. He gets close enough to

pretend he's doing something, but never disrupts anything.”

While Rinzel's utilization of his range and frame need major improvement, he also has to become a better defensive skater. He is currently limited in transition due to a lack of heel-pushes, making him extra-conservative protecting the middle lane, unable to play attackers as aggressively as you would wish for someone with his physical profile.

His glowing offensive game also lost significant shine when outside the high school level. Imagine Rinzel as a superhero who just obtained their powers. He has the tools to be great, but he doesn't really know how to use them against better foes. Warped offensive habits from playing above his skill level has seriously affected his effectiveness at the USHL-level.

Taking too long to manipulate, trying high-risk plays with pressure -- he adapted little, expecting USHL defenders to bend the knee.

Rinzel has every physical tool to be an extremely valuable player in the NHL. At only 180 pounds, he has significant weight to add to his frame, and if he can adapt out of his high school habits, he has immense potential. The uncertainty of his hockey sense remains the biggest limiter to his projection.

If he figures out how to utilize his skill set and size, a top-four projection isn't out of the question. If not, he will still probably play NHL games, but as more of a high risk bottom pairing defender who can specialize on the power play. He is committed to the University of Minnesota in 2023.

## Game Reports

**Daniel Gee:** April 30th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

Rinzel made some adjustments in this game that gave me more hope. I was expecting to see more errors based off of pushing highschool habits, and while they were still present to a degree, they weren't as prominent or debilitating as my most recent viewing, the tools and better decision-making making more of an impact.

Rinzel started this game off with massive hit off an aggressive shift to the near boards . His habits in transition were just so much better in this viewing. He was scanning backdoor more, jumping into the neutral zone to leverage his mobility/size/reach and he was killing rushes with his gap. In the third, Rinzel activated aggressively on the far boards, guided his man to the outside, knocked the puck away, and steamrolled the puck carrier. He was a better supporter, taking off-puck threats and switching off in chaos. The defensive skating still plagues him in maintaining proper spacing. In the third, he struggled with an inside cut, unable to heel push to combat the rush-pattern change. On another sequence he misjudged an opponent's outside speed, was slow on the pivot and allowed the inside pass. Still warts here but I could see the tools dominant like they did at the USHS-level. Even in sustained defensive pressure, Rinzel was better than previous USHL viewings. He was particularly mean on the net front, activating out of the crease to pin and harass cycle threats, just to return to bully a screen out of the way. On one shift he did this, following up with a perimeter seal off, allowing him to intercept a ring.

Offensively, particularly in sustained pressure, Rinzel is a bit predictable. In the first, he took a puck on the right-hand point, walked into space, dragged, and shot leading to a glove save -- a similar sequence that he pushed in Chaska that still lacks some quickness. His best sequence was actually in the second. Rinzel faked a d-to-d pass, jumped past a defender

on the far-boards, tried a drag shot, and was stripped of the puck— sound familiar? The difference is that after a teammate puck recovery, Rinzel pulled off a really nice body manipulation deking a defender with an inside-outside move, getting a shot through the now open lane -- he's learning to adapt a bit. Rinzel wasn't a major transition factor. He joined numerous rushes as a trailer and made some passes into space while on-puck. Rinzel was on a 2-on-0, wide open and didn't get a pass. Missed some obvious scans and passed the puck to no one. Changed his route on a second period rush, he entered the centre lane and passed off to a right-wing driver — great sequence. Overall, this viewing helped alleviate some of my concerns. His adaptability may be a bigger work in progress, but if he can push some improvements to his stride and defensive skating, he will at the very least be a very toolsy defender with some sense issues.

**Daniel Gee:** April 26th, 2022

Lincoln Stars vs Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Rinzel's adaptation to the USHL has been a struggle to say the least. Numerous plays that worked at the high school level are failing -- rightfully so. The shocking factor here is that Rinzel has done essentially nothing about it during his minutes. The tools should overcome warped habits, but in this case I just don't see adjustments. An example of this is a second period powerplay shift. Rinzel walked downhill loaded up for a shot, shuffled laterally with a defender gapped, having the puck poked away momentarily, he then pulled the puck high attempting to walk through high pressure to move to the middle of the blueline, ultimately losing the puck to another pokecheck. Just poor decision-making and a misuse of available teammates. In high school, the shuffle manipulation play would have frozen the defender, and the blueline walk almost always worked -- I saw carbon copy plays that worked in Chaska. Regardless of this, Rinzel still



has flashes of brilliance. On one first period shift, Rinzel took a pass ahead of the play, popped the puck into his hip pocket on the entry, and delayed into a drop-off. On another shift He showed off his delay game again, holding and handling past a defender, drawing a penalty on a cut into the slot. He even was beating defenders by handling through their triangles on end-to-end rushes. The high school habits are just so immense at times though. Rinzel took so many inefficient and contested shots in this one, unable to leverage his on-puck movement into anything. He honestly plays like he's the only offensive option at times.

On the defensive end of the puck he agan looks very similar to my HS viewings. He is passive, only really protecting the inside lane, not activating his stick or frame to bury opponents with his size advantages. His defensive skating is still rough -- no heel-pushes, just inefficient shuffles. Strong secondary threat identification though, especially on threats driving the net. Didn't clamp down or halt many cycled sequences in this one either. I still believe Rinzel is a top-32 player because of his tools, but he needs the right development team to really unlock the potential here.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Omaha Lancers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Rinzel showed more in this game. He was looking to create from the point through activation and handling. Hesitation moves, head fakes, pivot turns into dekes, and heel-to-heel handling are some of the ways he combines movement and handling skill. Best moves are the ones when he keeps the puck in his hip pocket, waits for the defender's reaction, and then makes his move. Too often, he attacks too early and loses the puck as a result. If faced with heavy pressure (i.e., pressure from more than one direction), the decisions worsen. He forces plays up the boards and misidentifies space. Even when he completes the play, it's often barely. A tight off-puck gap led to a steal at the red line. That wasn't a constant theme in this game. His pivots aren't loaded at all -- once he's beat, he's done. He commits to the outside too early sometimes. The other times, he doesn't commit at all.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Rinzel's hardly looked like a top-50 pick, let alone a first-rounder in my fast few viewings. The tools are still first-round-calibre. In one sequence, he cutback to escape pressure to the inside, then waited for a second before passing up the middle for a clean breakout. Some handling sequences from the blueline led to opportunities. Used space before shooting. Overall, his game is low-paced and reac-

tionary. That impacts his skating (where he never explodes through his manoeuvres), breakouts (where he defaults to simple plays up the boards if not faced with an immediate positive play), rush defence (where he backs up too early), defensive zone coverage (where he chases, but rarely engages unless it's along the boards), and offence. I don't really care that he's mistake-prone, but the nature of these mistakes is completely different than Buium or Morrow. Both players showed significantly more advanced ideas in all three zones than Rinzel, where that was Buium's give-and-go, inside lane breakouts or Morrow's planning and manipulation from the point. Rinzel's far from both. No idea what to think anymore.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Sioux Falls is the second-worst team in the USHL. Rinzel should've been good. He was bad. With the puck, Rinzel did nothing good. He sometimes has positive ideas, like spinning away from pressure before attacking space. And then he throws the puck away. Dumped the puck several times, three of which were avoidable with a shoulder-check and a pass to the middle. From the point, he didn't bother beyond a couple of sequences. He tried a curl-and-drag pass that was way off, then turned the puck over on a poorly timed deke. Establishing body positioning with the puck consistently will be key for him. He does it without the puck (and when he's winning battles), but if he's pursued by a forechecker/defender, he doesn't bother -- it led to two turnovers. Defensively, he was awful. Not only was he beat regularly, he didn't even try to recover. He lets players escape and become someone else's problem, but never returns the favour. Reactionary, and even worse, he's unwilling to engage. He gets close enough to pretend he's doing something, but never disrupts anything. Honestly, this is one of the most concerning performances I've seen from a top prospect in years. No willingness to make plays, tons of mistakes, and zero desire to correct mistakes.

**David St-Louis:** April 9th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

I continue to have some pretty serious hockey sense doubts with Rinzel. He makes it up as he goes and he's not particularly good at it either. The defensive engagement is baffling: gives up on check, loose pursuit, pinches without even looking, limited awareness overall. He did defend a couple of 2-on-1s decently. I rarely see players not try to recover their mistakes, but he's one of them. He's not actively trying to create any offensive advantages either. If there isn't available space, he throws pucks away. He's at his best when reacting one-on-one to the move of the opposition,

when he has no time to think. The tools are above-average projections across the board for me. That's where the potential is.. If the hockey sense can get to an average grade (optimistic considering the lack of care in his game), I can see a bottom-pairing defenceman in the NHL.

**David St-Louis:** April 8th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Uneventful performance. The only times Rinzel created anything was on the half-wall on the powerplay. Otherwise, he was shy about making plays, which doesn't fit what I heard of him. You see his agility and the potential in his skating; one time he spinned on a forechecker to beat him, but it was only to make a D-to-D pass. Clearly has some manipulation abilities, but didn't see them all that much. I'm not sure about the decision-making. He has tunnel vision. I liked his rush defence.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Rinzel has tools, but his execution was awful in this game. He spun away from pressure, then made a simple pass up the boards or threw the puck away. Completely avoids using the middle or making cross-lane passes. He's singularly focused on making plays along the boards. It's a bad look, especially given someone who has such massive tool advantages over his peers. Even if he's not passing up the middle, he needs to threaten it to create space up the ice. Right now, he's making breakouts harder for his team by making simple plays. Activated a couple of times; usually proactive in his dashes up the ice. Didn't create much other than a scoring chance. Passive, reactive defending. Tools mean he's a second-round-er, but even that seemed rich based on this performance.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

Rinzel had a couple of Seider-esque end board sequences. On the first one, he spun away from pressure, immediately cut into their route to establish positioning, then started the breakout. Second, he turned into the puck carrier, faked the cutback to put the forechecker on his back, then slipped out the direction he first showed. Elite plays. Showed handling skill on several sequences, along with creativity and confidence to attack the inside. The rest of his game was far worse. Failed a bunch of his exits, either throwing the puck away with options or making a simple play (too often, he makes plays up or down the boards instead of using his teammates on the middle). Weirdly, he looks better on the end boards than in open-ice on breakouts. Joined the rush

a bunch, but he overskated passing lanes. Defensively, he's rough. He steps up too early and gets beat up the middle. Loses threats off-puck, even when he's scanning. Doesn't close space on time. Physical along the boards and unlike other players of similar profile (Buium and Morrow), he actually has an understanding of how to make up distance on attackers. Think this area improves a lot with time. The decisions with the puck will be the key for his NHL odds.

**J.D. Burke:** March 4th, 2022

Lincoln Stars vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Just a tough night for Rinzel, who finished the game with a 2-5 all-situations goal differential in his nearly 23 minutes of action. Nonetheless, there were some interesting qualities to his game that shone through. You love the skating for someone with his 6-foot-4 build and the way he can deploy the mohawk or the weight shift to shimmy around opposition defenders and forecheckers. Couple that with solid skating habits – movement through passes, shot, receptions, etc. – and you're looking at an unreasonably mobile defender. Likes to draw in the first forechecker on the breakout, and isn't afraid to use the middle of the ice. Picked up a scoring chance in the third period with a well-timed activation into the slot for a catch-and-release wrist shot chance. Played a tight gap through the neutral zone without over-committing. Frankly, even with that grim goal differential, I don't think Rinzel played especially poor defensive hockey. If anything, the way that he closed on opponents through puck movement to intervene before threats developed stood out as a distinct positive for me in this game. This performance wasn't as bad as it looked on paper, but I'm not sure I saw the sort of performance I want from a potential first-round pick either.

**Daniel Gee:** December 21st, 2021

Chaska High vs Shakopee High - USHS-MN

Rinzel is huge at 6-foot-4, mobile with room to grow, all while possessing some projectable individual tools. He was an absolute monster for Chaska High in this viewing.

Right-shot playing on the left-side, Rinzel transported the puck incredibly well, always moving in motion as he releases, manipulating F1's momentum on his carries, and counter-attacking off of aggressive step up plays. What's impressive in this viewing is how sophisticated his breakouts were; he often would delay to open up new lanes or carry to open up a higher percentage pass, all while snapping hard accurate passes at distances. There's skill here, Rinzel often slipping pucks through defenders' triangles while in pressure. In the first he used weight-transfer crossovers to slip by an aggressive defender, gaining speed along the near boards, cutting

back in pressure to set up a D-to-D pass. He has the available edge work to shake off pressure; in the third he executed a double cutback to buy time. Great stuff. Some evidence of scanning on his retrievals but it wasn't always consistent.

When Rinzel pushes sustained pressure in the offensive zone, he is overpowering at the high-school level. Patience, manipulation, and constant motion allow him to dominate. Inside-oriented, Rinzel constantly moves pucks from the boards into the middle, facilitating the puck out to the open wings as he draws defenders in. In the second, after manipulating a high defender with some handles, he passed off to the right-circle, exploited a Shakopee overload and walked down mainstreet and scored. Shot mechanics are translatable -- arm flared out from body, one-leg release, down-force applied to bottom hand creating a tonne of flex, and synced weight-transfer between upper and lower body. Placement was excellent too -- planning going on. He had several notable shifts, but none more than one sequence in the second. First, Rinzel beat a defender with an inside-outside move on the near boards, wheeled high to the point while on-puck, used a stop-up to gain inside body advantage, and backpassed to a teammate while drawing in attention, opening a free lane up the slot. The defending was awful but it showed how much pre-planning and blending of skill and sense he has in the offensive zone. On top of all this he has more positive habits; he shoots around and through defenders, changing angles dynamically. Rinzel was also a great activator off-puck, particularly on the weak side -- he's given free reign to move all around, and his open hips allow for a lot of lateral mobility.

In terms of defending, Rinzel is aggressive transitionally; it often backfires, but he is super mobile, especially through his c-cuts and crossovers, and consistently steadies his feet. He rejected multiple chip-and-chase pucks just because his gap and size combination left his opponents with little options. Active stick that overwhelms bad puck-protectors. Conceded the line on one shift in the second -- really odd passive play that he killed deeper on the end boards. Rinzel didn't spend much time defending sustained pressure in this viewing. He lacks a scanning element much of the time, which makes him somewhat reactive. I worry that some of his habits formed from just being physically and tool dominant might affect his ability to process at higher levels. His stride in general seems more lazy than mechanically flawed. Base is interesting, and this was an overwhelming game from him.

**Daniel Gee:** November 26th, 2021

Chaska High vs St Thomas Academy -USHS-MN

Rinzel looked like an offence-focused defender who has yet

to develop a lot of proper defensive zone habits, struggling to find use of his imposing frame in this viewing.

Much of Rinzel's defending in transition fell on opposite sides of the aggressive/passive pendulum. It creates some question marks as it stands. One one shift he concedes the line winginly, extending with an outreached and exploitable posture, on another, he is using his above-average hand-eye and positioning near his blue-line to step-up and reject entries. Regardless, he was late on a couple odd-man rushes, getting almost no forward support when he activated offensively. His best defending sequence was on a 2-on-1 -- Rinzel timed the opponent's pass, dropped down on one knee and stopped the cross-crease feed. On another shift, he was late reading a breaking away St. Thomas player, but was able to catch up, and execute a small clap on the forwards stick as he released. He doesn't really extend out of his recoveries, limiting the power on his forward stride Rinzel's scanning was more consistent in this viewing -- made apparent in his sustained defending sequences. Retrievals were more successful because he gained that extra information. The habit isn't fully formed, however. In the third, with the puck in the near corner (Rinzel covering the crease), he missed a scan to the middle, had a reactionary swing as the centering pass arrived, essentially allowing a free slot shot and goal against. Makes very weird decisions at times; random pivots giving up body positioning, overextensions that vacate high danger areas. In general, Rinzel fails to truly capitalise on his size advantage in this game -- he chases for pins on the end-boards and relies on positioning to translate stops into quick-outs. His stride looks clunky in defensive sequences, not fully engaged -- probably conditioning and strength related.

The good thing is that he is such a slick transporter of the puck. Multiple two and three line carries, blending handling, protection, and weight-shifted crossovers to create speed. On one shift he faked a backpass, got the F1 to bite, and then handled to his forehand and took off -- wonderful manipulation. While he often implemented stop-ups to create sustained pressure through his on-puck carries, he attacked into pressure more than what I have seen -- to varying success. In one sequence he was able to power wide, and just missed short-side (inches). His outlet passes were really strong; in-motion, using the dotted-lines, finding teammates in the dotted-lines. I even say a couple of eye-line manipulations. Rinzel can also simplify underpressure, or manoeuvre out of danger. Accurate board banks, spin offs, one-arm hold offs, the habits here are immense.

This was another strong game in the offensive zone for Rinzel. He constantly moves the puck into the slot and eats up the available space to get deeper, higher-danger shots.

He implemented a bunch of stutter-step and lateral moves to manipulate the high-man. He gets stationary at times off-puck, but will randomly start rotating and moving to open lanes. Pinches successfully, often keeping plays alive -- will support the battles lower too. Shot is above-average -- down-force is ridiculous, and he usually gets his arm flared before he activates through his release.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 20th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Rinzel has top-20, if not top-15 skill in this draft class. Above-average shooter, handler, and passer. It's visible in his hand positioning (pushed in front of hip, adaptable), hand speed, and the quickness through which he transitions into his shot. He'll go from a nondescript glide to blistering inside leg wrister with no time at all. Beats defenders through look offs, fakes, and moving the puck to the inside lane. Clearly an NHL-calibre manipulator. The pace will be an issue, but the mechanical strengths should ensure that he'll up the pace a level or two without much issue. Consistently activates at the right times -- and he could be even more aggressive. Set-up a scoring chance with a slick pass to the inside after a pinch. Mistake-prone defensively, but these seem more like a lack of pace than desire. He needs to work on engaging without overextending, building backwards momentum through heel pushes, and shoulder-checking, but he's a strong play-killer at times. Either way, it probably won't be a strength in the NHL. Skating development will be key, too. He lacks depth. When gaining the OZ himself, he doesn't manipulate in the same way as he does when taking pucks off the end-boards or from the point. Very inside edge-dependent when moving with speed. He's a first-rounder. The execution needs work, but he understands advantage creation and has the tools to do it at the next level.

**David St-Louis:** November 20th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

An interesting game from Rinzel. His activations were on point all game: good timing overall (doesn't jump too early or late). Is it because he was reading the play or because the reads were obvious? I still don't like his manipulation. He misses occasions to beat defenders one-on-one. There is no planning at all in his game. It's all improvisation and I doubt he has the awareness and the processing speed to really pull off creative moves in the NHL. The hockey sense is average for me. I see him as a bottom-pairing, risky offensive specialist in the NHL. He really needs more urgency in his defensive game to get there, however, as right now he's just loose in his zone.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Similar performance to yesterday. Rinzel has significant defensive shortcomings at this level, but I see more as the consequence of a lack of pace and check ID rather than energy. Once he figures out what to do, he closes out with authority. Flashes some play-killing instincts off the rush with a timed check, but he's mostly unsure. The aforementioned lack of pace caused him to concede a breakaway against. With the puck, he's better but still has limitations. Tried to deke flat-footed in his own zone for some reason and got stripped. He missed a couple of high-value passing opportunities for a mediocre deke and a shot, and he takes too long to pass after identifying his target (so late that his targets were covered by the time the puck left his stick) -- I wonder if these will continue when he returns to the USHL in the spring. But the skills are clearly first-round-worthy. He manipulates pressure like crazy, combining body positioning, puck positioning, and eye deception to keep the opposition guessing. Rarely connects with tricky passes through layers to teammates on the inside. An advanced shooter and understands how to activate into space, the rush, and step in with the puck to use it. Quite consistent about using the shot threat to draw the defender wide and then pass inside. One sequence saw him threaten the D-to-D with his eyes before going inside under a stick for a chance. He's raw, but I see too much to like: playmaking, manipulation, handling, some defensive instincts with a clear path to improvement. Looks like a first-rounder.

**Cam Robinson:** November 12th, 2021

Waterloo vs. Tri-City - USHL

Really strong performance in this one from Rinzel. Tons of transition jumps where he was effective in supporting the forwards and filling lanes. Stepped up and buried a goal on the PP. Showed his long fluid stride throughout. You can see his offensive game is already there at the USHL level even though it's still a little raw. The defensive aspects were not as glowing. Slow to commit to some pokes and checks, not pre-scanning on retrievals and ending up pinched out but not having enough control of his body and the awareness to find space.

The upside looks huge. You just need to get him a ton more reps at the higher levels to clean up the hiccups in the dzone and on the backpeddle.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

The good from Rinzel in this game was probably top-15-worthy. He faked out pressure, joined the rush, adapted his route to become short support, and then hit a cross-slot backhand pass for what should've been a goal. Drew pressure towards himself, looked up the boards, and then passed to a teammate on the inside lane for a 2-on-1 – he manipulated multiple players with that combination of move against the grain and look away. Consistently joined the play and picked the right route, the right speed, and the right play once getting the puck. Scored on the 5v3 with a step-in wrister – quality space management and a closed blade to set it up. Defensively, he has a lot of work to do. He's late on just about every check in every situation: rush, coverage, off-puck, and cycle. He closes well enough at the blue line but then immediately concedes ground. Lacks foresight; committing on a player way too early without awareness of incoming support. Lacks body positioning on retrievals and with the puck; a simple skate-through would save him so much hassle with the puck and upgrade the translatability of his game. In general, he lacks pace, mechanically and execution. Still, first USHL game. First-round skills.

**Daniel Gee:** November 12th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

A very up-and-down effort from Rinzel who pushed some great offensive zone habits manning the blueline, but made some costly mistakes, instantly punished by Tri-City.

Rinzel remains a really tough read defensively. He's strong, fights through pressure behind the goal-line, manipulates on his retrievals, and has some ability to clog lanes. At the same time, he sometimes lacks structure, makes questionable decisions, struggles with faster passing sequences, and misses routine scans. For instance, in the first of this viewing, he made a wonderful pokecheck from behind his net, fought through a double team, and escaped the pressure with a nice handle play on the inside to start a breakout. He went on to take the puck down the LW, cut into the dotted-lines, and send a high-danger pass into crease chaos. His game really deteriorated in the third, however. Rinzel missed a stick tie-up, allowed his man to loop the net, and didn't prevent the pass, leading to a goal. He looked equally lost on subsequent shift, looking very stationary and reactive. Whether he is adjusting to the speed of the USHL or not, it was a fairly

inconsistent effort. He was fairly heroic on a 5-on-3, reading and blocking a shot of the left-hand circle, then shifting to the other side of the ice to drill a puck carrier to the ice. Hard to see a pattern here other than some sense issues. Transitionally, Rinzel had some issues with gapping against USHL competition. A real lack of guiding and physicality, with some odd decision-making. He made an egregious aggression play as the last man back. He rushed the puck carrier, ignoring two opposing players in his peripheral, essentially giving them a 2-on-0. Regardless of this one aggression play, he was far too stationary, cautious, and exploitable.

Transitionally, Rinzel looked like a difference maker at this level. Along with the aforementioned crease-chaos play, he had a wonderful stop-up reverse edge manoeuvre leading to a slip pass transitionally and an assist. He was caught off guard by some of the forechecking pressure he faced -- specifically when he delayed to open lanes. He passed in motion through this viewing, preserved possession on his carries, and used the boards well. In the first he carried the puck in, weaved-wide, and shot across his body, leading to a blocker save. He was fairly dominant on the powerplay -- stutter-steps causing high defenders to bite, inside focused again. In the third he scored high-glove; distance shot, back-foot flat, arm unlocked, power created through his downforce. Started that shift with a one-touch play.

Looks like a worthwhile project with ridiculous potential. NCAA will help him make the next step defensively.

**David St-Louis:** November 7th, 2021

Pittsburgh Pens 18U vs. Minnesota League - Red U18 - USHL

Not a fan of Rinzel. He's all over the place, but not in a good, creative way. He just doesn't know what he's doing. Some of the feits are fun, but they lack timing and reason. He makes them too early or late and they're mostly stationary. He doesn't use his skating ability inside them. His vision inside moves is also pretty limited. He's just going through scripts, without caring much about the outcome. Total lack of defensive engagement and I was pretty surprised to see him get rid of the puck on retrievals when he has the ability to beat the forecheck and even all five opposing players himself at this level. Tools give him a lot of potential, but his whole game needs intensive work. I like the confidence and the offensive attitude; sometimes that is enough to build better patterns.





33  
Rank

B  
Grade

6  
Skating

6  
Shooting

5  
Passing

6  
Puckhandling

4.5  
Hockey Sense

6.5  
Physical

# IVAN MIROSHNICHENKO

LW | OMSKIE KRYLIA

HEIGHT 6'1"  
WEIGHT 185

D.O.B. FEB. 4, 2004  
SHOOTS RIGHT

"Pretty good size, good drive, a nose for the net, and a really good shot... He's still the best Russian still in Russia for me." - Eastern Conference Executive in May 2022

SHADES OF: Vladimir Tarasenko

0%	23%	18%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
VHL	31	10	6	16

## Scouting Report

On pure talent alone, we've probably placed Ivan Miroschnichenko a solid 10-plus spots lower on our board than he belongs. The Russian factor, more complicated than ever this year, and a Hodgkin's Lymphoma diagnosis have made his evaluation incredibly fraught, though.

The good news, as of this writing, is that Miroschnichenko is believed to have cleared treatment and is already training in preparation for next season. Here's hoping that holds true and that the Omsk product can continue his playing career and live a healthy, fulfilling life free from the grips of this malady. Ultimately, his health comes first.

Getting back to the hockey side of things, Miroschnichenko is one of this draft's more obviously physically gifted players. All of his tools check out as an average-to-above-average projection if not better, and his release is among the best in this class. He's one of the draft's credible finishers from a range, a sniper with an evident separating skill around which he can build an NHL identity.

Everything you look for to project an elite finisher to the NHL level is there in Miroschnichenko's game: shot volume, the variety of releases, and the use of screens and traffic to increase the odds. His one-timer is a legitimate cannon, one that made him the centrepiece of Omskie Krylia's power play

in the VHL last season.

"On the power play, he shows more patience, more foresight, waiting for lanes to open, keeping himself deceptive until teammates get in position," Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis wrote in an early-season game report. "He didn't score in this game, but I liked his shot mechanics. Good knee-bend and follow through. The releases looked hard and well-aimed. He looks like a one-timer threat."

Read between the lines, and you may notice how careful we are to qualify his best off-puck work as occurring on the power play. That's not by accident. Miroschnichenko's play at even strength consistently left our team wanting, particularly early in the year.

"Really bad movement off the puck and was constantly trailing the rush," Elite Prospects regional scout Dylan Griffing wrote of Miroschnichenko in an October game report. "[He] took himself completely out of the play by sitting on his team's blue line while his two linemates were on their way into the offensive zone. Shot selection was weak, just started shooting from anywhere and everywhere in the late stages of the game."

His off-puck diligence improved as the season wore on, to the point where it almost rated as a strength for our staff in

later viewings. So, credit where it's due on that front, even if getting there took far more time than it should have for a player with his reputation and pedigree.

There's more to Miroshnichenko than just his shot, though. He's a naturally skilled puckhandler, and his forward stride rates as above average even if the mechanical form isn't exactly what you'd call textbook. When his motor is running at top gear (not always a given), there's also a physical side to his game that bears mentioning; he punched way above his stocky 6-foot-1, 185-pound frame against men in the VHL last season.

The central conceit of Miroshnichenko's game is that he's

a hammer and that he views everything and everyone on the ice as a nail -- pucks and opponents alike. It's also the reason that we've been a bit cool on his game relative to many of our peers in the scouting community. He's more than just a shot, but not that much more, and it's not like we consistently saw the off-puck savvy from Miroshnichenko that's baked into the game of every one of the NHL's best finishers.

It's not impossible to imagine a scenario where Miroshnichenko rounds out his game and develops into a top-line sniper at the NHL level, but we envision a more modest future for the Russian winger a bit further down the lineup.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

### 1 Bogdan Yakimov

YEAR: 2013

SIMILARITY 73%

different teammate a few seconds later. That first shift really describes how his last two seasons have been, not scanning the ice, not reading lanes, and certainly not giving himself or his teammates space. He wasn't bad in this game, per se, but he didn't look like a top-10, or really even a top-20 player in this class. He had eight shots on goal in his seventeen minutes of ice time, and continued to just be a hammer. No scanning pre-shot, no looking for betting options, just head down and hope for the best. He was really reliant on his strength and skill, tunnel-visioning and skating into the corner just so he could try to fight his way out of it. Behind the net was the only place where he really looked somewhat dominant, but even then, he struggled to corral the puck in tight areas and ended up turning it over quite a few times. Passing was poor, especially on breakouts.

### Dylan Griffing: November 14th, 2021

Sweden U20 vs. Russia U20 - Four Nations

Another bad game from Miroshnichenko. He had two points, with his one goal coming from both Swedish defenders going for a puck battle in the corner, leaving Ivan wide open in the slot to receive the inevitable pass from Tyutnev. Slow reactions, zero awareness, and bad scanning sealed his fate in this game. He was just gifting the Swedes space in the defensive zone early in this game despite how bad they were playing in their own right, late to every loose puck and planting himself in areas of the ice that weren't doing anything positive. His transition game was awful for most of this game. Had his head down far too often which led to him skating or passing directly into bunched up Swedish players, rather than attacking the open ice they were leaving

## Game Reports

### David St-Louis: February 17th, 2022

Omskie Krylia vs. SKA-Neva St. Petersburg - VHL

Miroshnichenko has it pretty easy in the VHL. He attacks the open neutral-zone, one-touches the puck to teammates, the puck gets dumped in the offensive zone, and then he relocates to the slot to wait for an opportunity. He's quite physical, can cut defenders at the hands to win pucks, but he needs to learn better angling defensively. He has some good passing ideas, rapid ID of teammates. His NHL game will likely be pretty straight forward. I don't see much value in Miroshnichenko. Depends if you want to draft a pressure forward high in the draft. I wouldn't.

### David St-Louis: February 17th, 2022

Omskie Krylia vs. Khimik - VHL

Expectations tint the perception of a prospect. As I saw Miroshnichenko as a potential top-5 candidate in my first viewings of his game, I was severely disappointed by the performances I watched in the first half of the year, to the point of dropping him far down my list -- maybe a bit too far. Honestly, there is an interesting package there. The speed (I underrated his skating), the independence of hands and feet, a decent off-puck offensive game, and a finishing talent. Miroshnichenko can also play physical. He has many of the ingredients of a middle-six, powerplay threat. He's probably a top-15, 20 picks based on tools. I didn't get many chances to evaluate his hockey sense in this game. He barely gets the puck. It's all broken plays at this level. He missed a couple of passes, but I need to see him make decisions when he has actual good options not just in impossible situations.

### Dylan Griffing: November 23rd, 2021

Omskie Yastreby vs. MHK Molot Perm - MHL

Ivan Miroshnichenko just does not think on the ice. First shift into this game, he nearly ran into one teammate who had the puck and then proceeded to actually run into a

for him. Just about every touch he had in the first period ended in a turnover, so as the game went on, he started to cheat for offense; leaving the defensive zone super early and hoping to get a spring pass. He did get two breakways from it, neither getting him a shot on goal. His strength wasn't even a strength in this game. He was getting knocked down and bumped off the puck with relative ease. Just a really disappointing outing.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 12th, 2021

Russia U20 vs. Finland U20 - Four Nations

Real nothing burger of a game. He had some nice physical plays along the boards and a huge hit in open ice, but struggled to generate any space for himself. Defensive awareness is a major problem. Needs to be able to read when to switch and move into lanes, but instead he floated around and provided no positive value. Didn't make himself an available passing option because his head was always down or he was just skating directly into trouble. His passes were bad, clearly not scanning well and just hoped for the best on most of them. All of his offense came from leaving the defensive zone early and cherry picking or from just being completely ignored by the Finns and getting open looks in the slot. Still, not much happening offensively at 5v5 besides earning himself a penalty shot.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 29th, 2021

Omskie Krylya vs. Bars Kazan - VHL

That was a really underwhelming performance from Miroshnichenko. I recall one good sequence from the entire game, where he exploded after a DZ faceoff, took the puck and manipulated the defender's feet with crossovers to gain the zone and get a decent scoring chance. His only other offensive contributions were a couple of one-timers from the left half wall on the power play. Those shots had a ton of pop behind them. Failed to adjust his positioning to make himself an option on rushes. Looked really disinterested off the puck, often drifting towards the boards while playing weak side in DZ, opening up his man for cross-ice passes to the point. Other times he floated deep to the end boards, but it didn't look like he had any purpose behind those moves. Scanned very little in the defensive zone overall. When he received the puck in NZ, he was too close to the opposing defenders to create entries, often being just pinched to the boards and turning the puck over. I don't know how much it's the fault of the system, but Miroshnichenko didn't look like a top-round pick aside from that one sequence.

**David St-Louis:** October 29th, 2021

Dizel vs Omskie Krylia - VHL

Miroshnichenko's skating is a problem; his high-stance limits his agility, his ability to protect the puck in tight spaces, and even his shooting and handling freedom. His stick looks short, too. High-stance and short-stick makes for some awkward moments. I liked a few of his passes and he scored off a one-timer on the powerplay, but I expected way more out of a projected top-10 pick. His awareness in small-areas was limited.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 14th, 2021

Omskie Krylya vs. Gorniyak-UGMK - VHL

Miroshnichenko was invisible for almost the entirety of this game. Just completely unable to string together multiple good shifts and really didn't do anything at even strength until late into the second period. The one main thing going his way is that he is a tank on the ice even against men, inviting physical pressure so he could take the hit while moving the puck into open ice. His hold-off play was good, controlling the puck with a man breathing down his neck. Really bad movement off the puck and was constantly trailing the rush. Took himself completely out of play by sitting on his team's blue line while his two linemates were on their way into the offensive zone. Shot selection was weak, just starting shooting from anywhere and everywhere in the late stages of the game. One bad turnover in the third, retrieved the puck in the defensive zone, tried to shake the forechecker, almost succeeded but lost his handle and was slow to get it back and the opposition got a big scoring opportunity because of it. Needs to improve his reading of the ice to make smarter plays and force less.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 30th, 2021

Omskie Krylya vs. SKA-Neva - VHL

Another game for Miroshnichenko where not much was going right. It's becoming a common theme of him lacking period-to-period consistency and this was no exception. What came in flashes was promising, his strength and deception along the boards to spin his defender off and give himself plenty of time to scan the ice and make his next move. However, for most of the game that just wasn't working and he was being separated from the puck by a defender and his impact was severely minimized because of that. He switched from shoot first to pass first as the game progressed and that did help his cause, generating offense by finding streaking teammates moving towards the goalmouth. Off the puck, he looked disinterested and SKA-Neva took advantage by passing around him. Right now, he doesn't look like a VHL player.

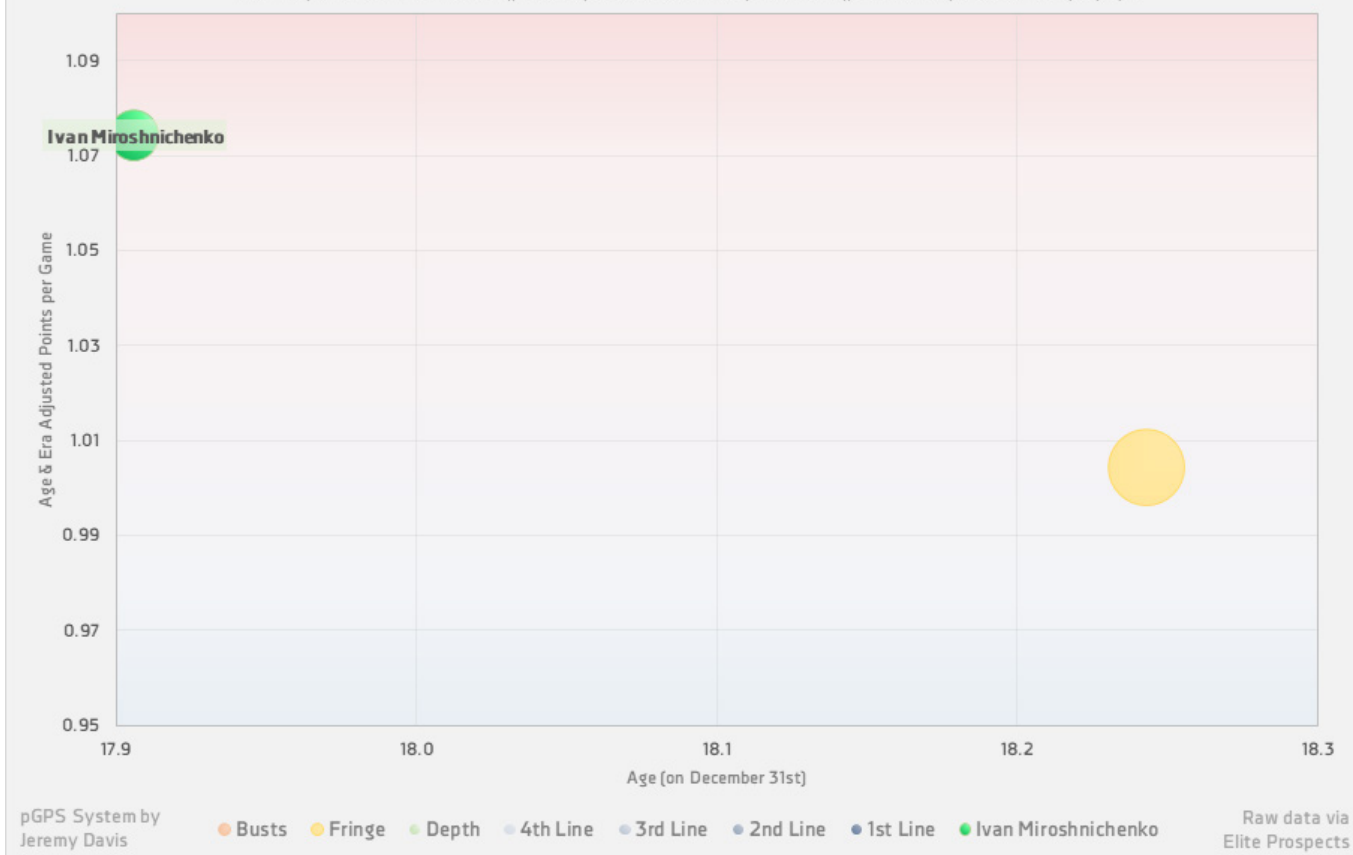


## Ivan Miroshnichenko 2021-22 VHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 1 || Base XLS: 0% || Impact XLS: 0% || XPR: 0 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**Dylan Griffing:** September 23rd, 2021

Omskie Krylya vs. Izhstal Izhevsk - VHL

Not much going on in this game. He had 17 minutes of ice time, but nothing was really happening at 5v5. He had some quick turns with the puck to evade pressure and generate space, but just no end product. Rush patterns were inconsistent, mostly putting himself in situations where he had no chance to receive a pass. Shot the puck a fair few times, killer release and a lot of power behind it, but couldn't find the back of the net.

**David St-Louis:** September 16th, 2021

Omskie Krylya vs. Neftyanik - VHL

Miroshnichenko barely gets the puck in this league, it seems. Hard to truly evaluate him. But I partly understand why his teammates are reluctant to feed him passes, as it's not guaranteed they are getting the disc back. Miroshnichenko forced dangles and missed passes in this game due to bad judgement of gaps and rotations. He can make some skill plays look easy -- his tools looked above-average, even his skating in this game -- but he is just making it up as he attacks, not planning sequences, not understanding how to create advantages on the ice. On the power play, he shows more patience, more foresight, waiting out for lanes to open,

keeping himself deceptive until teammates get in position. He didn't score in this game, but I liked his shot mechanics. Good knee-bend and follow through. The releases looked hard and well-aimed. He looks like a one-timer threat.

**J.D. Burke:** September 7th, 2021

Ryuben Tyumen vs. Omskie Krylya - VHL

Every Miroshnichenko viewing feels the same at this point. You see the tools on full display. The shot, the powerful skating stride in spite of its mechanical hitches, the flashes of off-puck intelligence... it's always there. Whether Miroshnichenko puts it together is another matter entirely. He was a complete non-factor for the vast majority of this hockey game, turning the puck over, not making decisions with the puck fast enough, and lingering on the perimeter of the offensive zone. Of course, the thing about Miroshnichenko is that it doesn't take much for him to find the scoresheet. He collected a difficult pass in the neutral zone, skated into the high slot, and just sniped it right past the Ryuben netminder. He made a great defensive read in the first frame to disrupt a scoring chance in the slot, and then he blew coverage in the second frame for a goal against, straight-legged, seemingly totally disinterested in the play. Becoming less and less fond of Miroshnichenko's game with each viewing.

**J.D. Burke:** August 7th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

It's increasingly difficult to imagine a scenario where Mirosnichenko can drive a line at the NHL level. His low work rate, high skating stride with a heel kick to the heavens, and slow off-the-puck pace mean that he's never going to be first on the puck. He's never going to create chances for himself. Picked up a pair of goals just by being in the right place at the right time, which, full disclosure, is a skill unto itself. I just don't think they revealed much in the way of high-end, projectable qualities for the NHL. All I see at present is a singular threat scorer. A shot, and one who needs his linemates to get him the puck for it to pose any real threat to the opposition.

**David St-Louis:** August 7th, 2021

Russia U18 vs Slovakia U18 - Hlinka Gretzky Cup

Mirosnichenko's skating is flawed, but he still generates speed, probably due to an innate explosiveness and strength. He looks like he is running on the ice. I don't think I've ever seen feet kick this high in a recovery. He is decently quick, but he lacks the agility and the low stance to really protect pucks effectively. This game, he showed two qualities: his scoring instinct and his physicality. Opponents shouldn't let him catch up on the boards as they will get rammed and they will get stripped of the puck. Mirosnichenko is a bully on the ice, with some surprising soft skills in his handling and shooting. He battles and then sneaks away from the play to find scoring space. He was left wide open a couple of times in this game. Easy goals.

**J.D. Burke:** August 4th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Czech Republic U18

Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

This was one of the better Mirosnichenko viewings I've had to date. Showed some sense off the puck, finding soft-ice where he can let that A-grade shot of his rip. Showed some deception on the puck to create space for himself, including one play where he sold the defender on a move up the boards, then cut inside and dangled his way to the net-front for a chance. Picked up a one-time goal on a 3-on-2 rush. Work rate was the highest I've seen from Mirosnichenko in some time. Skating remains kind of wonky. Those heel kicks really are something. But he still manages to cover a tonne of ground anyway.

**Dylan Griffing:** August 3rd, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Switzerland U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

While this Swiss team is... not good, Mirosnichenko was

the strongest, fastest, and smartest player on the ice every time he was out there. One-touch passes were just too much for them to handle, and he had two that split open the defense and created two big chances, including a goal. It's incredibly difficult to get the puck off of Vanya's stick when he has it. He easily beats opponents one-on-one and then is off to the races. Off-the-puck pressure is a key aspect of his game, as well, constantly taking advantage of mistakes made to turn play the opposite direction. Controlled the pace of play, elusive body movement to toy with the Swiss cheese defense.

**Dylan Griffing:** August 2nd, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Finland U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Mirosnichenko just could not buy any space for most of this game. His forechecking pressure was good and he took advantage of errors made by the Finnish blueliners, but outside of that he really struggled to get on the puck at even strength. Off the puck movement was not deceptive enough to escape his man and he didn't use his physicality enough to push off from those positions to attempt to get open. Positively, his skating improved marginally over last season, very fluid movement, pace control, and edgework. Towards the end of the game, he started to find his stride after a few power play shifts. He shot a lot on the powerplay, though, and was getting visibly frustrated that his shots weren't finding the back of the net. Shot mechanics weren't the issue, but rather the location. He shifts his weight well, gets the puck off his stick in an instant, just needs to add discipline and use his skating ability to find better shooting areas. He did correct this after two third period power plays of no scoring and played a couple dangerous passes, which applied more pressure to the PK unit than his individual efforts.

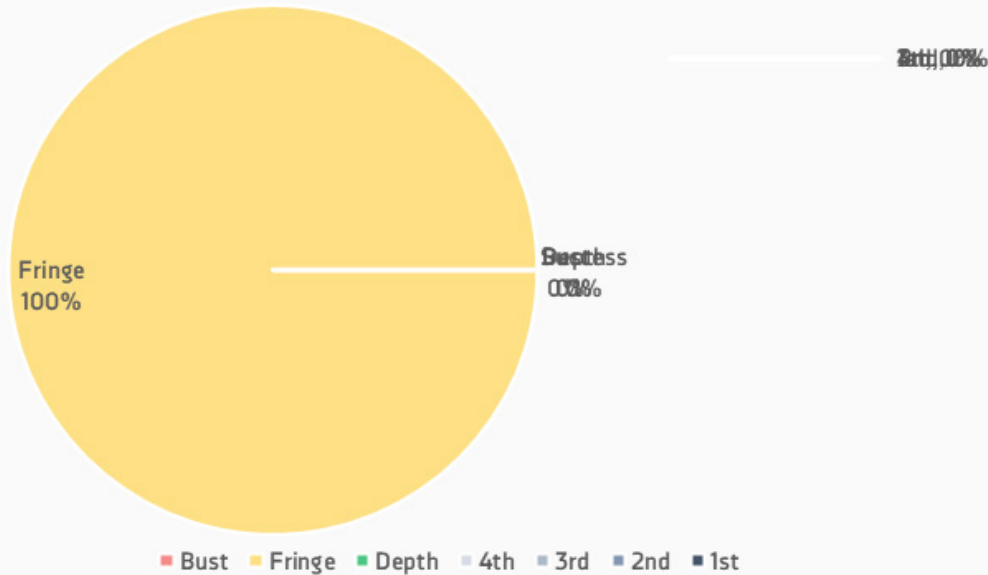
**J.D. Burke:** August 2nd, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Finland U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

This was a pretty dreadful performance from Mirosnichenko. Looked out of shape, disinterested, and lacking in the sort of sense necessary to one day play productive minutes at the NHL level. Lack of restraint in his forward stride has him kicking his heels as he explodes up ice. Perhaps my Vancouver is showing, but his skating form reminded me a fair bit of Vasili Podkolzin in that way. Space management was an issue. Crowded his teammates on rush plays and couldn't get open or anywhere near soft-ice during sustained in-zone sequences to save his life.

## Ivan Miroshnichenko 2021-22 VHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**David St-Louis:** May 6th, 2021

Finland U18 vs Russia U18 - MHL

Miroshnichenko scored on a partial breakaway. He found himself in front of the net with a teammate to his right, faked a pass, and went to his backhand to beat the goalie top-shelf. He has some manipulative skills and some creativity in his game, but he is mostly a passenger on his line and on the powerplay, a bit static and unsure of how to move the play next. He is a hammer -- he has the big shot and the finish -- but his game lacks the mental finesse. A lot of his puck decisions were questionable. He is not aware of his own space and loses the puck to backcheckers. I liked his intensity around the net, his search for rebounds; he got multiple scoring chances by posting himself near the blue-paint. His skating and handling both looked above-average.

**David St-Louis:** May 5th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Belarus U18 - MHL

Miroshnichenko hits and shoots. His skating stance is high, but when he does want to get going, you see him bring his center of gravity down and his stride looks much better. There are a bunch of repeated patterns in his game, especially in his shooting. I really like the outside leg wrist-shot, the way he gets on the outside edge of his lead foot and fires with

the puck close to his skates: precision and power. He does it over and over again, always trying to fire between the skates of defenders. He showed some awareness in transition, but there were a ton of forced plays so not sure overall about the hockey sense.

**David St-Louis:** January 28th, 2021

HC Omskye Yastreby vs HC Sarmaty - MHL

Miroshnichenko's game was a mix of projectable and bad habits. His skating is probably a 5 long-term or NHL average, but his stance is high at this point. He needs to add depth, more flexion; this will help the rest of his game, especially his puck protection and agility. His top-hand is stuck at his hip and it limits his handling range, but he still made some interesting passes this game, spin and backhands to teammates in the slot. He know his target prior to the play and didn't force it, but waited for the lane to open. In highly predictable situations, like cycles, Miroshnichenko made some good no-look passes, too, showing an understanding of typical rotations. His pace and engagement in the game could be better away from the puck, but this is pretty typical for a 16-year-old MHLer. Not sure I see a top-end prospect, though. The shot is intriguing.



**34**  
Rank

**5**  
Skating

**6**  
Shooting

**6**  
Passing

**B**  
Grade

**6.5**  
Puckhandling

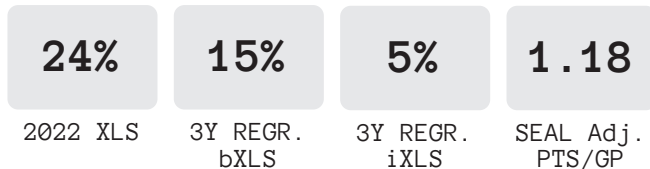
**6**  
Hockey Sense

**5**  
Physical

# HUNTER HAIGHT

C | BARRIE COLTS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. APR. 4, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	63	22	19	41

## Scouting Report

You wouldn't guess it with a quick glance at Hunter Haight's Elite Prospects player page, but this is one of the 2022 NHL Draft's more skilled forwards, his sub-point per game output in the OHL last season be damned.

We're banking on a course correction to Haight's bottom-line as soon as next season and that our ranking of the Barrie Colts centre just outside the first round will seem tame, if anything, when we revisit this class. He's too talented for that not to happen.

Every one of Haight's tools earned an above-average grade on our 1-to-9 linear scale, and the average mark of 5.85 placed him in the 95th percentile among the skaters accounted for in the Elite Prospects scouting database for this class.

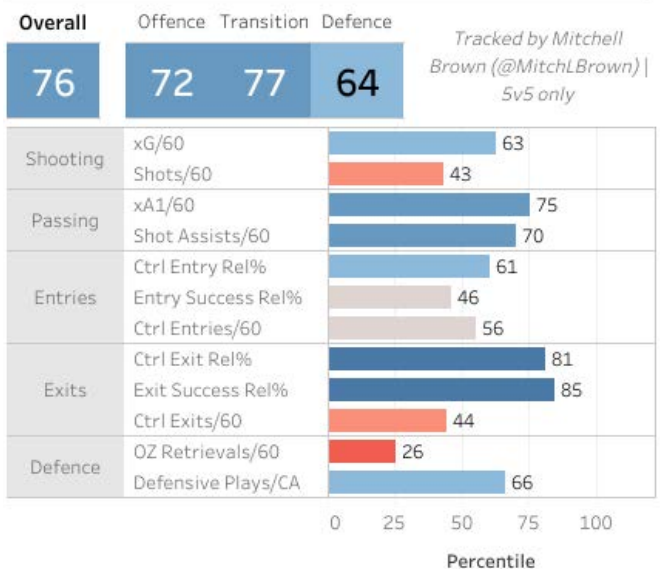
The clear-cut best of the lot is Haight's puck skills. You'll often see him use that handling ability in unexpected, creative ways to get around opponents, outmanoeuvring them with deception at points and pure talent in others. An advanced give-and-go game allows him to work past well-positioned defenders, repositioning himself to collect the return pass and continue his approach.

And once Haight gets past the first layer of the defence, there's more than enough shooting and passing skill at his disposal to press his advantage to productive ends.

The question, then, is what exactly went wrong for Haight last season? Why weren't the points there in bunches for a player so obviously skilled?

Some of that is due to a lack of refinement. Like many first-time draft-eligible OHLers, Haight seemed to suffer

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 132.9



significantly from the lost 2020-21 season - his sense of timing and play selection especially so. It wasn't uncommon for Haight to pass to linemates in poorer positions than himself or settle for a low percentage shot with a teammate open and within reach.

Elite Prospects OHL scout Lauren Kelly often lamented Haight's inability to properly calibrate his pace according to the situation last season.

"Another conflicting viewing with Haight," Kelly shared in a February report. "His pace is... confusing to understand at best. He's passive on some shifts and then ramps up the intensity on other shifts. He would win a puck battle in his own end, skate up the ice with possession before harmlessly

dumping the puck in instead of trying to create with it. Then he lost a puck battle and turned it over, which led to a shot against."

The bet that we're placing is that Haight's comfort with the puck and play selection will become more consistent next season and that the points will follow. There's a foundation of skills in place that should be the envy of most of his first-

time draft-eligible peers, and some two-way diligence that speaks to an advanced level of maturity in his game, too.

We don't anticipate many in the league to hold this same opinion -- at least, not with the same level of confidence as our staff --, so don't be surprised to see him go a fair bit later than where we've ranked Haight.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Lucas Lessio YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 96%	2 Corey Locke YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 96%	3 John Hecimovic YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 96%	4 John Dunphy YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 96%	5 Alan Quine YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 95%
6 Dan Collins YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 95%	7 B.J. Crombeen YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 95%	8 Nathan Pancel YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 95%	9 Ryan Oulahan YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 95%	10 Jay McClement YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 95%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Impressive game from Haight, especially in terms of showing his skill. I liked his first-touches, quick and smart in general. He sees multiple plays and can pick the best one, even in ways that I didn't expect. Some creativity. High processing speed, too. He has rush patterns, east-west movements, cutting in front and behind teammates, and some wall skills, like establishing body positioning. A lot to like in his game, but the production and the low-frequency creation can't be ignored.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2022

London Knights vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Haight's clearly one of the most exciting prospects in this OHL group. The puck skills and creativity are high. He tries to manipulate defenders. He has creative solutions to problems, such as a backhand spin pass against the grain for a chance or a turning a tricky pass into a spinning look off pass cross-slot for a tap-in. In that play, he cut his momentum just as he exited the spin to ensure he didn't overshoot the passing lane. Killed a play by forcing a pass that wasn't there - the time between his last scan and the pass was too long. Too upright in his stance, but the stride gets close to a projectable depth when off-puck. Several strong supporting reads, but he didn't get the puck a ton in this game. Lots to like about his game: handling, shooting, passing, off-puck acumen. Could be a late-first.

**David St-Louis:** March 27th, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Haight doesn't get many pucks back from his line-mates

or passes in favourable areas. Three times in this game, he arrived inside space in the offensive zone after the rush and never got a pass. The tools look potentially above-average, the handling and skating, and he has defensive abilities, too. Haight looks like a player who could double his production next season playing with talented line-mates. Maybe he's a third-line projection, but it's hard to say as there isn't a lot to go on in his games overall: flashes of playmaking, of rush patterns, of powerplay quarterbacking...Maybe they become consistent.

**David St-Louis:** March 26th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Haight continues to flash playmaking skills. He has some great manipulation sequences where he shows borderline foresight, anticipates the movement of the defence, leverages an option to open a better one, and already seems to know where passing lanes are. He can read when a play is closed, doesn't force them, good decision-making overall. He has passing skills (capable of using his backhand, of slipping pucks..) and I like his supporting game, the way he reads pockets of space and uses the movement of his teammates off the rush to create bigger gaps for himself to receive the puck. The skating is a bit problematic. Maybe it's a 5. He seems more limited mechanically than many other top prospects in this draft, but the hockey sense flashes are interesting. Not sure he should be ahead of players like Gaucher, who we already know what he will be in the NHL. Haight might not be worth that kind of gamble.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 6th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

The breakout has begun. Haight has top-nine, if not top-six tools and he's using them now. Two examples from the exact same location: working up the boards for a return pass, then cutting to the middle inside the pass reception. First, he went catch-and-release wrister for a chance. For the second, he faked the shot, read the stick/feet of the incoming defender, deked around him, and pass for a chance. Set up a goal with a look-off cross-slot pass with backpressure – that's a top-six play. Stayed active after passing, getting open for return passes – his pace is way up as a result. Creative, adaptable, and one of the few prospects in the class who might actually have dual-threat upside with the way that he uses the threat of his shot to pass and vice-versa. His stance is generally too straight-legged, it hampers his stride, turns, and shot. But with a player who is already this mechanically-sound and skilled (handling form, hand placement, shooting form, passing skill), technical improvements seem inevitable. There's a late-first, early-second argument for him.

**David St-Louis:** March 5th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Haight has more playmaking chops than I saw in the previous game. He recognizes seams, open spaces, open teammates, vulnerable defenders and he uses those to his advantage -- to an extent. He remains quite limited mechanically, due to his skating (again, one block, limited weight shift ability, limited ankle flexion), but his decisions are generally good, productive; he's adaptable. He engages opponents physically, cuts them at the hands, battles, plays around the net.

**David St-Louis:** February 25th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Uneventful performance from Haight. He scored twice around the net showing anticipation and shielding abilities to jump on the puck and spring it past the goalie. What stood out mostly, as he didn't get that many touches, is his skating. No ankle flexion and a bit of a rounded form. He moves and turns in one block, no upper and lower separation. I think it projects as below-average. He was used on the penalty kill and put together a good defensive performance.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 24th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

This was my best viewing of Haight all season. He was dominant to start this game and it paid off with the opening goal, a beautiful toe drag snipe. He was laying out to block shots, engaging in puck battles, and his positioning was strong.

Had good pressure on the penalty kill before getting the puck out, was finding teammates with drop passes to generate scoring chances, and showed good hustle with the puck as he fended off backcheckers before passing off. It felt like he had a lot more dangerous scoring chances in this one, and his confidence seemed a lot higher than it had in previous viewings. His intensity was consistently high in this one and I'm hoping he's finally turned a corner.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 3rd, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Another conflicting viewing with Haight. His pace is... confusing to understand at best. He's passive on some shifts and then ramps up the intensity on other shifts. He would win a puck battle in his own end, skate up the ice with possession before harmlessly dumping the puck in instead of trying to create with it. Then he lost a puck battle and turned it over, which led to a shot against. He wasn't winning puck battles successfully in this one and when he did win them, he would tend to lose possession of it almost immediately. Then there was a nice display of stickhandling to work himself into space in the slot, but passing off to a teammate down in the corner instead of taking the shot. He came to a complete standstill in the offensive zone at one point, but the puck found him in the slot and he fired it off. When he went after the rebound, he got shoved off the puck easily. On the other hand, there was smart play where he pressured and stripped a Kingston player of the puck without taking a penalty. Both his points in this game came in the final ten minutes, tipping the puck in the slot after getting himself open, and then a nice pass across the slot on the power play. I just don't know why it takes him so long to get going - the first 50 minutes were a dud, and then he turned around a first-rounder-worthy performance in the final half of the third period. He has the tools, but he has trouble putting it all together and I would've expected there to be some level of improvement to his pace at this point in the season. I still believe there's something there, but he's likely not going higher than the second round at this point.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 20th, 2021

Owen Sound Attack vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

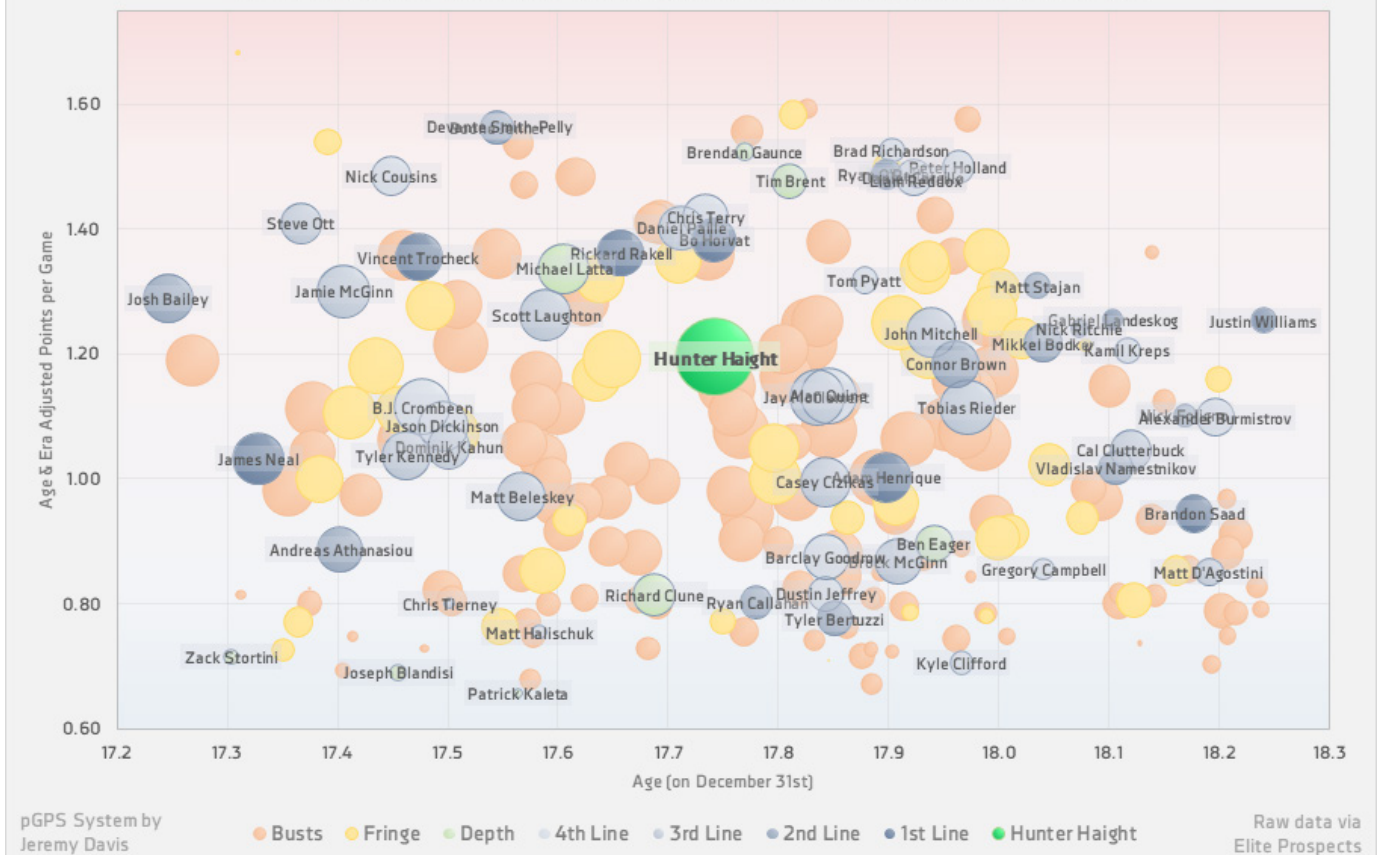
Haight's strong mechanically, but limited by his execution. The skating's likely the weakest part, but his shot, handling, and passing are all above-average NHL tools by mechanical proficiency alone. He keeps his hands in front during the shot – little wind-up or drag back – and he generates distance between his feet quickly. Hand in front of his hip while handling. Connects with slip passes, sets more complex reads

## Hunter Haight 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 229 || Base XLS: 24% || Impact XLS: 8% || XPR: 36.4 || Drafted Pct: 63%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



with deception, easily hits moving targets off the backhand – just a lot to work with here. But he struggles to sequence the tools at a macro level (i.e., turning defence into offence) and at a micro level (i.e., drawing in pressure, deking, then passing through the next layer). He enters a glide to deke, then dekes again, and then again until he runs out of space. Doesn't adapt when a variable changes – if he's decided on passing, he passes, even if the shooting lane suddenly opened. I wonder how different his game looks if he had a 16-year-old season build pace, enhance decision-making, and drill the finer points of creating offence in the OHL. He definitely has destroy-the-OHL tools. Could be a worthwhile gamble in the second or third round.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 19th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

I don't think Haight touched the puck for more than a minute in the entire game. He would pass pucks off quickly when he had the option to take it up the ice, didn't get it much in the offensive zone, and didn't win too many puck battles. There was one pass he made to Olausson below his own blueline before taking off. Olausson couldn't control the pass and was stopped, but Haight made a tremendous effort to get back and actually steal the puck back. That was

about the only positive play from him in this game. The rest of his shifts were more of the same, where he showed uncertain tendencies in the offensive zone. Yes, he didn't get the puck much, but he didn't do much with it when he had full possession of it either. His defensive positioning was strong and he made good reads defending to disrupt passes and cover open players. The tools are there, but the execution was non-existent in this one.

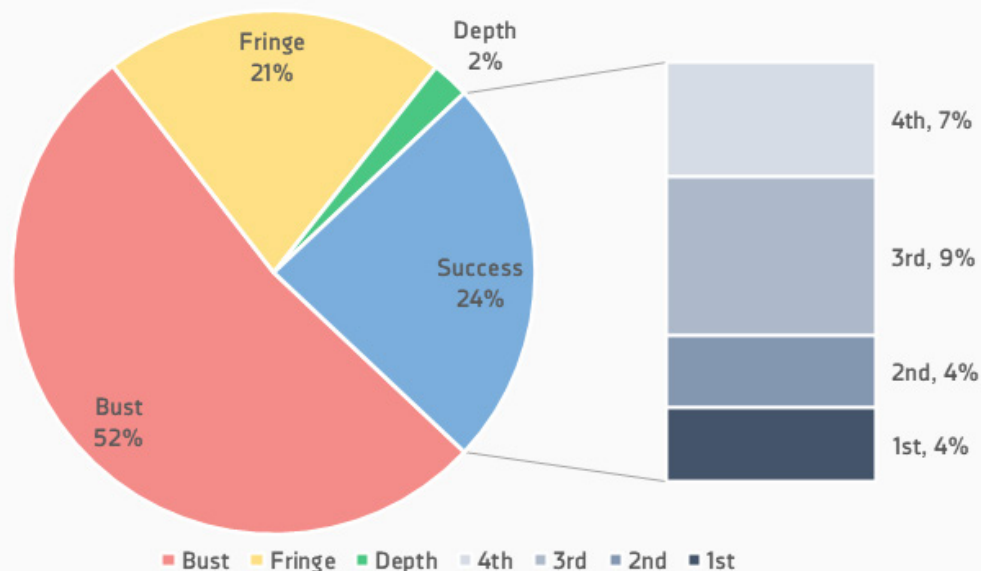
**Lauren Kelly:** November 13th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

There just doesn't seem to be much urgency to Haight's game. It's the same pace the entire time, even when he's trying to battle for the puck. He's usually the first forward back to his own end. Follows the play up and down the ice, but isn't really doing much with the puck. If he has it, he'll pass off, even if he has a cleaner route up the ice. There's a lot of hesitation with the way he carries the puck up the ice. He just doesn't look confident with it, and it's almost like he's overthinking every play. His instinctive and reactionary plays work out a lot better the less time he has to think about what to do. Just really confusing to watch on the ice, because he's not necessarily doing anything wrong. He's coming back to support the defense and making quick passes under pressure

## Hunter Haight 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



to get the puck over the blueline. Good rush with the puck on the one instance where he maintained possession coming over the offensive blueline, but he went wide and then just to the boards with it when he wasn't being challenged by anyone and the play died after that. He calls for the puck but looks uncertain of what to do with it when he gets it. He recognizes when he needs to get back to help cover odd-man rushes and is fast enough to close on them. His defensive game is solid and he's got good flashes of offense, but they're so few and far between that it's hard to draw any conclusions. I'm not sure if this is who he is as a player or if he's still adjusting to the OHL (losing a year of development didn't help). It's too early to make that call right now, but he doesn't look like a first rounder to me just yet.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Haight didn't do much through 40. Had a scoring chance that he botched with a poor pass reception, but he's reasonably consistent with his reads and timing to get space. It should become a bigger part of his game through the season as he becomes more comfortable with the OHL's pace. The goal: kicked the puck too far ahead of himself, but turned the reach out into a toe-drag around the defender. Shifted onto the outside edge of his outside leg while pulling the puck across with his top arm elbow parallel to his shoulder, loading the shot. To create space, he pulled the puck back and shot basically with the back of his blade against his toe cap. A bit of a lucky finish but an incredible display of problem-solving, handling, and shooting. Showed off the handling in a couple

of other sequences, dangling through pressure upon receiving the puck. The rest of his puck game fell flat in this one. Lots of plays to no one in particular. He plays relatively safe and risk-averse for the most part. It's

when he's put in those reactionary positions where he shines the most. If those skills get translated to other parts of his game, he's possibly a first-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

Haight gets minutes with high QoT, and refuses to do much of anything with them. There's odd reactionary sequence where he makes something happen with his hands and gets inside. He ran a dude over in the NZ who didn't have the puck. Took a tricky pass, pulled it in, and fired off a mechanically advanced wrister into shinguards -- still a nice shot. His off-puck movement in OZP suggests he understands lane and space, but lacks the timing to truly excel. He has some difficulty getting the puck back in transition because of his choice of routes. But really, I think he's just too simple with the puck. He keeps everything short and simple, when he's likely a highly skilled player. I don't know where to rank him. Definitely not a first round pick at this stage, but the shots and hands suggest he can get there.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 29th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

I almost felt like I was watching two different Hights tonight - the Haight that was passive, puck-watching, and on the perimeters for most of the game, and the Haight that took



over the game after he scored. At times I was wondering about his urgency, a lack of which was reflected in his leisurely skates up and down the ice. But when he had control of the puck, he protected it well and showed his strength by driving towards the net and maintaining it at his top speed. Haight's intensity ramped up significantly after he scored to get the Colts on the board - a shot that went five-hole on the power play - he forced offensive zone turnovers and was physically engaged, throwing hits to separate players from the puck, and was backchecking much harder than he was earlier in the match. I need to see a lot more consistency from him at both ends of the ice, because if he can continue to play at the level he was at in the latter half of this one, he is definitely a worthy first round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 28th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

I'm not even really sure how to evaluate this performance, but Haight definitely showed NHL tools. Intelligent handler with that top hand moving across his body for an expanded range of motion. Doesn't overhandle, purposefully bringing the puck into spaces, waiting for the reaction, and then pulling it away. Used that escape a puck battle, before setting up a teammate. Lacks the next layer of deception of setups, but he times his plays well. After passing, he immediately turns to face the puck carrier. Strategic mohawk use to present an option and always be ready to make the next play. Lots of movement off-puck, showing some timing skills around the slot, but he missed a chance from failing to escape body positioning first. Skating lacks power and refinement, largely from his hips not falling into his stride. Lots of room to grow here, but I want to see more shift-to-shift consistency. It's early.

**J.D. Burke:** October 9th, 2021

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Really strong performance from Haight in this contest, in

which he played nearly 30 minutes in all situations. Picked up a goal by jamming a Beau Jelsma shot that was trickling through the goaltender across the goal line. Made a great read on his assist, picking off a pass high in the offensive zone, faking a shot to freeze the defender opposite him, then hitting the trailer with a pass in space, who sniped it past the Bulldogs goaltender. His off-the-puck pace was off the charts in this hockey game; Haight was always involved in the play offensively. Showed some dexterity as a shooter, adjusting his body angle and his release to get shots off in tight quarters. Handles the puck with his head up and showed some real adaptability when pressured in this contest. Played through contact, wasn't afraid to get inside, and his work rate was high from start to finish. Haight looked the part of a late first-round pick in this one.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 7th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

This was a solid showing overall for Haight, who was playing in his first ever OHL game. He didn't really make that much of an impact offensively; I got the sense he preferred to let linemates Olausson and Frasca do most of the legwork as far as generating offense went - he was typically the last of the three into the offensive zone and rarely did he carry the puck up the ice himself. What did stand out was his defensive play - he was effective on the penalty kill, using his stick to break up passes, and rarely drifted out of position. For a smaller player, Haight was pretty good at boxing out players in the slot and using his body to force players off pucks or protect the puck himself. His puckhandling skills left a little to be desired; he didn't get the puck all that much in this one and when he did, sometimes he'd bobble it when receiving passes. I also think his skating needs a bit of work - he's got good edges and moves around the ice well enough, but lacks a little acceleration that would help him get to areas of the ice faster to help contribute more offensively.





35  
Rank

B  
Grade

6.5  
Skating

6  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Shooting

5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Passing

7  
Physical

3rd

Best Four-Way  
Mobility

5th

Best Neutral Zone  
Defender

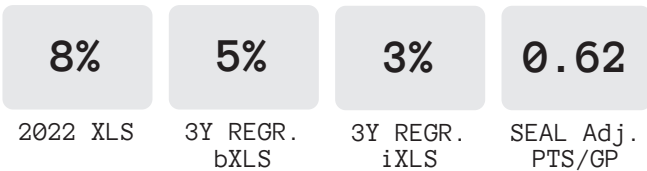
4th

Best Defensive  
Defenceman

# ISAIAH GEORGE

D | LONDON KNIGHTS

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. FEB. 15, 2004  
WEIGHT 194 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	67	6	17	23

## Scouting Report

Don't let Isaiah George's modest point totals trick you into thinking he's not a worthy target in the first two rounds of this year's draft. He was a player we held in that esteem from about our first viewing to our last one. He was consistently the best defenceman on a London Knights team that finished first in their division and boasted the fifth-best goal differential in the league.

George's game is where high-end measurables and tools align with advanced reads to take over hockey games. At his best, the Knights defenceman is an effortless puck-carrier, darting past forecheckers with agility and power to create exits and entries, often on the same rush. His nearly form-perfect mechanical forward stride is a real asset in this regard.

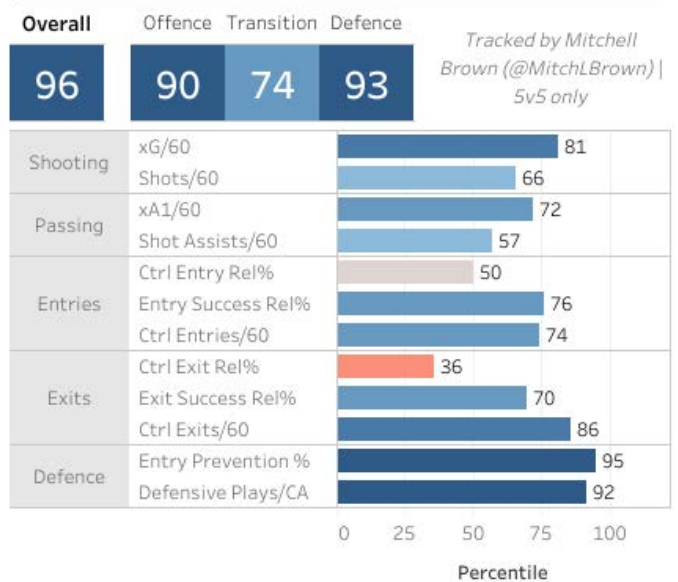
"He's a great, smooth skater with excellent edges and power and strong passing ability," Elite Prospects OHL scout Lauren Kelly remarked in an October game report.

Those same skills translate to neutral zone defensive sequences, where George gaps up early, takes away the middle of the ice with a strong defensive stick, and closes with urgency and force at the right moment to end possession or force an uncontrolled play. We didn't rate George as the fifth-best neutral zone defender in the class for nothing.

Granted, George isn't without his warts between the blue lines either. His transitional playmaking, in particular, is a part of his game that requires a significant overhaul for his puck-moving to scale up to the NHL level.

As currently constructed, the 6-foot-1 blueliner consistently misses options in superior positions, often rushing his pass if

Games Tracked: 11 | Minutes Tracked: 201.6



he's feeling generous enough to make one in the first place and sometimes throwing the puck at seemingly nothing and no one at all. Simply put: George needs to learn how to use his teammates in transition and the offensive zone to create plays in higher levels of competition.

Without considerable growth in that part of his game, George will likely have to settle for a far more unremarkable career as a bottom-of-the-lineup shutdown defenceman.

"George combines pressure, explosiveness, and intelligence better than all but a couple of defenders in this draft class," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a Scout's Notebook article on EP Rinkside. "Not only does he look to establish gap his gap early, he beats

attackers to the inside with a series of powerful crossovers, forcing attackers to the perimeter. Then, he pivots and erases the puck carrier along the boards, but never crosses his feet needlessly. He aggressively eliminates space on the cycle, guiding players away from the net before ripping away possession."

There's a fair bit of risk with this prospect, especially

where we have him ranked. It's one part of our board that has drawn considerable scrutiny from those within the game, many of which only see the shutdown potential in George, if that. A team that matches our appreciation for the Knights defender's tools and has the development staff to bring out the best in them could make out like a bandit with this player on Day 2, though.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Mitch Gaulton YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 97%	2 Mike Vlajkov YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 96%	3 Robyn Sertic YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 96%	4 Trevor Murphy YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 95%	5 Nathan Martine YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 95%
6 Nathan Chiarlitti YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 95%	7 Jiri Drtina YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 95%	8 Jonathan Sciacca YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 95%	9 Frank Rediker YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 95%	10 Bryan Rodney YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 94%

## Game Reports

**Daniel Gee:** April 16th, 2022

London Knights vs Saginaw Spirit - OHL

George is supremely calm and that skating ability is really an asset, especially in transition. He makes retrievals look easy, corralling pucks, shaking off forecheckers with manipulations and stringing clears/outlets. He can mirror skating; on one shift in the third, he was able to slip a puck away on the entry matching an opponent stride-for-stride. Even when he misjudged speed, George is able to recover his gab and force attackers to the outside. He had a really interesting penalty killing sequence in the second. He pushed a very aggressive poke, missed and was caught out of position. He was able to snap onto a secondary threat, but the pointman still scored. Going the other way, George pushed a bunch of head-up carryouts. Showed some escapability below the goalline, subtle handle plays. In-motion passing patterned throughout. On a second period powerplay he weaved and cut into a backhand -- completed the end-to-end carry before being taken out on the near boards -- not sure about the level of planning past the NZ. Some evidence of give-and-go attempts in transition. Stretched out a couple passes as well -- one was a long saucer through layers. When he was able to set up in the OZ he has some positive habits. George moves pucks into the middle for the most part. Can one-touch passes off the point. Some downhill activations as well. Picked some smart timings for pinch plays. Only shot a couple times in this viewing -- one was off a heel-to-heel stance limiting his downforce.

In his own zone, George's processing is fairly polished. He read a left-point pass to the left-hand circle, reaching in and poking away the puck. He launches shoulder first into perimeter holds. Scans often but drops into blocking posture

too early at times. In the second he was spun around a bit and dropped to block the cross crease pass. Because he was on the ice, he was unable to help stop a wrap-around -- in his defence he had practically no support. Overall, George is awesome; new-age defensive defender who flexes mobility and sense.

**David St-Louis:** April 13th, 2022

London Knights vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

The more I watch George, the more I think that's maybe just a shutdown defenceman who will make the evident offensive plays. He has the skills to complete those offensive plays, but if he continues not challenging himself at the OHL level, not trying to beat the forecheck or to create advantages for his team. His rush defence remains excellent: aggressive, tight gap, controlled footwork, on checks as they receive the puck...And in-zone, he's generally aware and on top of the play, too. The tools are above-average. A bottom-three shutdown defenceman for me.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 10th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

George is such a great defender. Suffocating gap control, whether he's on or off-puck. Got stops it both situations. Times his engagements, manages distance (laterally and vertically), and angles threats without any projectability concerns. Explodes from one check to the next. Angles the cycle to bait the cutback, then slams the player into the boards. He remains a baffling player with the puck, but the upside is clear. He baits incoming pressure, turns his back, and then sprints into space. He doesn't consistently read the feet of defenders, leading to turnovers. He also falls into the

script – he beats one, then rushes up the ice for a dump-in instead of hitting a teammate on the inside. There are clearly decision-making issues, but I wonder how much of them are coaching, considering everyone on London does the same stuff. In the offensive end, he pinches at the right moments and he shows projectable playmaking skill. Looks inside, connects with teammates. It's not constant, but frequent enough to believe he'll naturally build on it. Some skating refinement will be required in his posture and turning habits (often lifts in his inside leg, despite clearly having outside edge skill). Picking George is still a bet on tools. But I'm taking that high in this class. Likely top-45.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 8th, 2022

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

There's just so many positives about George's game in this one. Lots of activations off the point (but at the right times), heads up plays with the puck, showcased a couple of excellent breakouts and closed space effectively on incoming rushes. London spent a lot of time in the offensive game early on in this game and he was active constantly, slipping into space (though his teammates opted not to send the puck to him) but sliding back once he realized the puck wasn't coming to him. Scanned on retrievals and when Owen Sound was cycling on the forecheck. Maybe not quite the dynamic first rounder I thought he could be at the beginning of the season, but I don't see why he can't be a second rounder. Already a lot more consistent and reliable at both ends of the ice than a lot of his draft-eligible OHL blueline peers.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2022

London Knights vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Activation seems natural to George. He jumps into space, fills the right lane, and adapts on the fly. It directly led to his goal. Didn't make any high-end plays, but he made positive, play-building ones. Sometimes, he goes for a skate on the breakout. Others, he uses his handling skill (top hand moving across the body, limiting over-the-top motion) to evade pressure. Combining those skills and using them regularly will be key for his development going forward. Right now, he creates the advantage and then throws the puck away, like every other London Knight. There are definitely some coaching effects here, but it's concerning that he struggles making the next play. Defensively, he's highly projectable. Tight gap, very aggressive, risk-mitigating footwork with explosiveness, and he times his engagements with the pass or stickhandle. Sometimes reactive, but mostly scanning in athletic posture. Decisive space closer.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

George's breakouts are frustrating but it's easy to see the potential. He scans frequently, makes cross-lane passes, and has the tools to problem-solve NHL forechecks. Some of his breakout plays are awful; we're talking no-thought dump outs with multiple open options. In one sequence, he killed a rush, cutback (instead of forcing a play up the boards), dangled two forecheckers in quick succession, and then completed the breakout – a clear example of advantage creation, even if it didn't work out perfectly. He's also an avid give-and-go user, playing off his teammates to further his rushes. Late in the game, he used a give-and-go to get up the ice, deked around a defender, then connected with a spin pass for a chance. His form is sound: top hand free, moving his elbow with his hand, keeping the puck in his hip pocket, and underhandling inside his movements. Combines the underhandling with proactive stick work to prevent reacharounds. And he's an explosive, instinctual defender with both proactiveness and corrective tools. Early-second, banking on the tools and moments of advanced plays.

**David St-Louis:** April 1st, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

George is scanning a lot defensively and on retrievals and when supporting teammates, but he doesn't hit the best next play. Is it a processing issue? A system issue? Does London ask their Ds that they make this many uncontrolled plays? Mitch is telling me his issues could be part systemic. There is just a lack of care for actually setting up teammates, making the best passes at the best time. He's just getting rid of the puck in their direction most of the time. His defensive range is massive and he could course-correct a couple of times off the rush to stop attackers, but he got beat on the read; he was late on his gap. The tools are the best part of his game for me. One play that suggested hockey sense: the way he delayed his shot to wait for a teammate to get in front of the goalie on the powerplay, leading to a goal.

**David St-Louis:** March 30th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

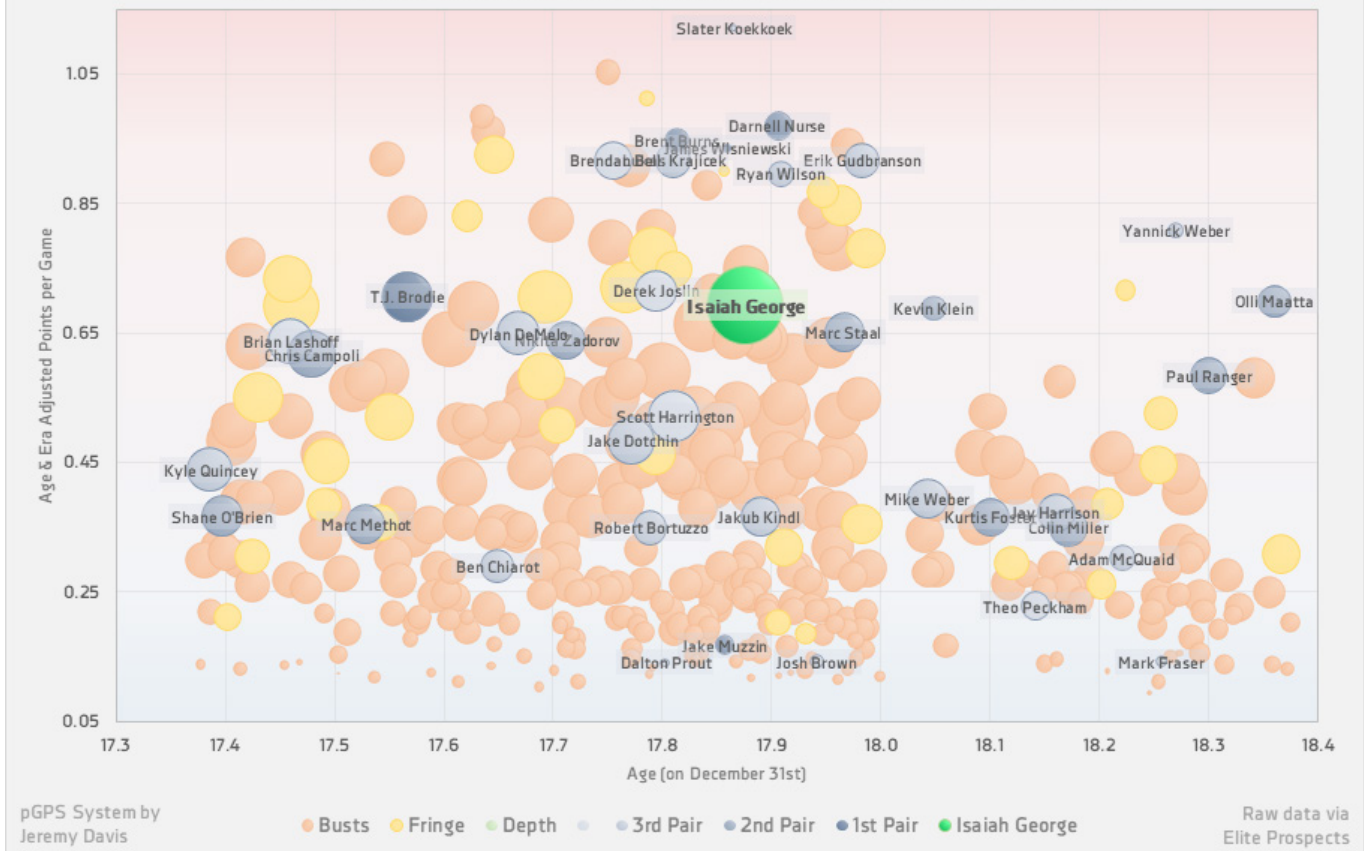
A better performance from George. He's still a bit late on most rotational reads and his breakouts aren't fantastic, but you see more paths to improvements in his game. His tools alone will make escaping the forecheck and finding passing lanes at higher levels a lot easier for him and he's scanning a lot and he can protect pucks with his body and he's engaged in the play and trying to stay ahead of it. I can see him becoming a much better defender next season

## Isaiah George 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 367 || Base XLS: 8% || Impact XLS: 4% || XPR: 23.1 || Drafted Pct: 34%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



for London with usage and reps. I project him as a bottom-pairing D, but the tools would get me excited if I was in a development department inside an organisation. He's probably a top-60 guy. The skating habits are interesting, too: he takes available space on reception and those receptions are always in movement.

**David St-Louis:** March 18th, 2022

London Knights vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

George was willing to activate in his game and made some plays on offence. I appreciate his poise vs the forecheck and his handling skills. The tools are extremely impressive, all significantly above-average, and capable of improving even more. On defence, he's physical, very hard to move around the net, makes good use of his stick (due to his awareness of lane), but overall I have some play-reading issues: he misses teammates in breakouts and is late on rotations. The reads weren't great.

**David St-Louis:** March 16th, 2022

London Knights vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

George is more defensively inclined, but forced in a spot where he has to dangle to get out, he can do it. The handling skills really shine. He seems to not want to use the middle

in breakouts, but it looks systemic. The rush defence is very projectable and the close-outs, too, the way he encircles attackers with a free-hand and his stick. He's aggressive defensively, surfing in the neutral-zone, and jumping on vulnerable opponents on the boards. The offence requires a lot of projection, but I'm relatively confident it could come with more liberty.

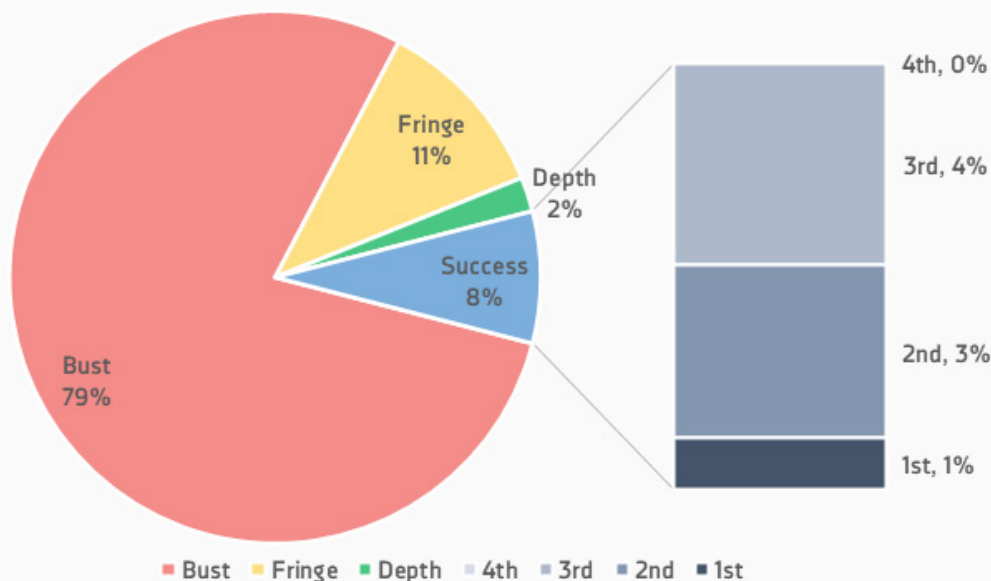
**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

George has a lot of work to do. The tools are obvious and the ideas are often advanced. He steps inside, passes to the outside inside crossovers, then sprints up the ice to become a return pass option. He uses bank passes and area passes to lead teammates into space. When grabbing retrievals, he scans, establishes positioning, and deceives the positioning of his feet. Defensively, he angles, times his engagements perfectly, and mirrors footwork without overcommitting (that often, anyway). From the point, he works laterally and passes against the grain to the space he just cleared. The pieces are here. Too often, he defaults to rims, up-the-boards passes, and point shots. The longer this goes on, the harder it becomes to develop the obvious tools and smarts. Of course, his transition decisions often don't seem like

## Isaiah George 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



his own. Everyone on this blue line makes the exact same mistakes – it’s coaching. And George is a frequent scanner with the tools to do more. Tough projection. I still like him as an early-second, especially given the lack of toolsy players in that range.

**David St-Louis:** March 6th, 2022

Windsor Spitfires vs. London Knights - OHL

George’s breakouts are still...a work in progress, but I’m getting told that London prefers chips than controlled plays, so maybe that’s the issue with him. On the other hand, I’m not sure how well he will develop playing that style. The defence is still on-point: perfect shadowing of opponents, aggressive closing-out on boards, close gap on rush defence... There are some offensive flashes: pucks slid around sticks and carried around the offensive zone while the head is up; he’s looking for plays. He’s very interesting as a prospect and development project.

**J.D. Burke:** February 25th, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. London Knights - OHL

Just an okay game from George, who managed to show some really strong flashes as a puck-carrier in transition, but left me wanting a fair bit as a neutral zone defender. Let’s start with the good. George is clearly an exceptionally strong puck handler and skater from a mechanical perspective. More overwhelmingly skilled than manipulative, George regularly sprinted around Greyhound forecheckers with relative ease. On one such play, he took the puck from behind his own net all the way into the Soo zone and sent an east-west pass into

the slot to set his teammate up for a Grade-A scoring chance. Was far too committing as a neutral zone defender and got burnt badly twice in this game; the first such occasion more of a bad read and the second one just plain bad footwork. Some solid stuff as an in-zone defender though. George is a proactive defender who closes on threats before they have a chance to develop, and he never misses an opportunity to play the body. Looked like a low-end B-grade prospect in this one.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 11th, 2022

London Knights vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

This was a strong viewing for George. He was consistently one of the Knights’ most reliable defenders, cutting off outlet passes before shifting gears to take the puck up the ice, activating from the point, protecting the puck to make plays while under pressure, or killing plays as he was defending 1-on-1 rushes. He wasn’t afraid to creep down low into the offensive zone when he saw open areas and showcased some strong passing abilities. He favoured quick, one-touch/timed passes in this one, which always found teammates but maybe they were a bit too quickly sent in their directions, because it seemed to catch them off guard at times. It paid off on the 3-3 goal in this one, where he whipped the puck from the half-wall back to a forward at the point for the eventual goal. Really strong tools, and I think there’s a strong case for him to be an early second rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 9th, 2022

London Knights vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

George, in many instances, seemed to be learning on the

job. The most interesting example started with a rush up the ice. George gained the outside, opened up his hips as if to scan the inside, but then continued down the boards and lost control. Passing just as he entered the heel-to-heel would've resulted in a scoring chance. Later on, he activated, got the puck in the same position, and then immediately made the pass he should've, setting up an opportunity. He got burned while defending the rush by crossing over too early, but tightened things up the rest of the way. In general, his gap control's a strength: off the rush, in DZC, and in OZP when keeping threats above him while taking aggressive positioning. The play-killing potential is near the top of the draft: he's explosive, aware, intelligent, and understands when to engage. His breakouts are absolutely perplexing. One shift, he hammers the puck off the class with options. The next, he makes a high-skill to escape pressure. I think it improves with time, but there's a chance that he struggles to read options with incoming pressure from the front. Think he's pretty clearly a top-40 pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

George isn't scoring much this year, but it doesn't seem like while watching him. He's involved in pretty much everything London does, even if he's a bit too individualistic with the puck. He activates at the right times, then shows the mechanical refinement, change-of-pace game, and deceptive qualities to create. Weight shifts to beat pressure, then uses his handling skill (top hand floating) to bait defenders to reach before sprinting past. He's skating posture's consistently deep, although leading his cutbacks and turns with his upper body will increase his evasiveness. Retrievals are inconsistent – plays a bit too fast with the puck, but he also shows a delay game on occasion. Uses the middle and changes lanes regularly, too. His offence is mostly pinches and individual rushes, but with a give-and-go mindset, he'll easily become a translatable attacker. Then, there's the defence. Drops to a knee too easily (kills his momentum), but he closes space fast, denies entries like crazy, and shows a ton of energy and proactiveness in his DZ coverage. Maybe he's not a first-rounder quite yet, but there's top-four upside here.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

The consistency's lacking, but George has top-four tools: skating, handling, intelligence, physicality, and defensive instincts. The way that he keeps a tight gap off-puck and kills plays early without overextending screams NHL play-killer. Primarily looks to pass when activating into the play, but only

after beating a player with the puck on his stick. A give-and-go game will improve the points. Rush activation directly led to his goal, a quick wrister after activating down the weak side before angling inside between defenders. Transition game requires additional patience and deception, but he has the tools to do it. Looks like a top-40 pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 16th, 2021

Sarnia Sting vs. London Knights - OHL

The standard performance from George. The play-killing potential is surely among the best in the draft class. He's both explosive and intelligent, closing space early, quickly, and without introducing too much risk. He doesn't just mirror footwork, he dictates the space that attackers have available to them. When beaten, it's the result of overaggression and not respecting threats behind him, but those are rare. One crazy retrieval sequence where he feinted one direction and went the other under pressure. Flipped his toe caps with basically no space. Activates regularly, but he needs to start using his teammates more. Lost the puck on his best activation sequence. Didn't space before shooting in one sequence. I don't know how high the upside is, but he's definitely an NHL-calibre defender.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 3rd, 2021

Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

George has the tools and intelligence to become a top-four defenceman. He's explosive, engaged, and tries to be a difference-maker. Beat a few times off the rush, but he recovered to prevent further damage. Well-timed pinches limited the amount of rushes he saw in the first place. Drops a knee too much in DZC instead of closing out and erasing the play, but he's likely being asked to do it. Give-and-gos turn into rush activation, and in one sequence, a scoring chance. Breakouts were a weakness in this game, flinging pucks up the boards without much foresight. Otherwise, George looked like a top-50 pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

George could be a big-time riser. He's intelligent, skilled, and powerful. As his stride deepens and his mechanics tighten, it's easy to see him becoming an above-average NHL skater: he's explosive from stops, changes directions quickly, times his punch turns/cutbacks well, erases huge swaths of ice within two or three steps, and he's an intelligent defensive skater. Consistently forces attacks to the boards and keeps the pressure on. Chases a bit too much, but I see that as the consequence of his (positive) defensive mentality

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## "Don't let Isaiah George's modest point totals trick you into thinking he's not a worthy target in the first two rounds of this year's draft. He was a player we held in that esteem from about our first viewing to our last one."

more than a long-term concern. Missed his check off-puck, leading to a goal against – only happened once. The skating and physicality combine for NHL-calibre retrievals, as he consistently keeps pressure on his back, throws out a bit of deception, and often brings the puck to the inside immediately afterwards. Activates into the rush regularly, showing shooting skill and a playmaking mind. His hands worsen as he approaches top speed, which also impacts his ability to access lanes immediately, but he's aware of options in the offensive zone and flashes the inception manipulation to connect when activating. Really, the biggest issue is that he throws the puck down the ice too quickly. He plays too fast with pucks on the end boards, which leads to poor clearances and turnovers (when he sees the best play). Impressive player overall; could become a first-rounder. Definitely an early second.

**J.D. Burke:** November 19th, 2021

London Knights vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Not what you would call a great performance from George. There are some pro-level concepts already baked into his game. He scans for options and threats alike on puck retrievals, and even layers deception on his first touch. His inability to build on those plays with well-executed breakouts left me a little bit concerned though. For all George's mental mapping of the ice, he can't seem to move the puck quickly enough to make things happen. This cost him on the first

goal against. George turned the puck over in the corner, took a poor lane on the recovery, lost inside body positioning, and watched his opponent beat Brett Brochu to the outside post for the goal. The on-ice goal against that occurred with George on the ice doesn't paint him in a much better light. A neutral zone turnover followed by a pitiful back check later and Sarnia found the back of the net. George was benched for the next five or so minutes of play. I must say, though, that George's ability to handle speedy forwards in space consistently impressed me through this contest. I have serious questions about his processing speed though.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 16th, 2021

London Knights vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

I definitely think George has potential to be a first round pick. Aside from a bit of an errant pass up the middle of the ice that was picked off, George really didn't take too many risks or make too many poor decisions with the puck despite wanting to help contribute on offence. He's a great, smooth skater with excellent edges and power and a strong passing ability. He makes great reads in his own end, keeps up and defends the rush extremely well, and has great puck control and rushing ability. His positioning was solid all game long. I'd like to see what he's more capable of offensively as he didn't shoot the puck much, but I was pleased with what I saw in this one.





36  
Rank

B  
Grade

6.5  
Skating

6.5  
Puckhandling

5  
Shooting

6  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Passing

4  
Physical

3rd

Best Straight Line Skater

3rd

Best Motor

5th

Best Transition Forward

# FILIP MEŠÁR

C/W | HK POPRAD

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JAN. 3, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS RIGHT

"Love his edges and quickness. Really gains a lot of speed through crossovers. And can easily change angles of attack at full speed. Head keeps up with his feet especially at full speed when he shows the ability to read spacing."

- Eastern Conference Executive in December 2021

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
Slovakia	37	8	8	16

## Scouting Report

You've seen a lot of players like Filip Mešár come and go through the NHL Entry Draft if you've been paying attention to it for any amount of time. There's no denying their skill, but serious questions arise about how suited they are to bringing it with them to the NHL.

When you strike the jackpot with players like Mešár, the payoff is immense. You're looking at a top-six scoring winger with the skill to break open a game and be a focal point on a first unit power play. A lot of the time, though, you're left with not much of anything at all; a player whose only trace with your organization is a handful of games before they get lost on waivers or fly overseas.

The reasons for us to believe in the first outcome for Mešár are plenty, but they start with his pace and skating stride. This Slovakian winger just flies out there, weaving through traffic with a crossover-heavy stride, changing lanes and speeds to throw defencemen off balance, and exploding away from contact with forceful weight transfers. He's an absolute force between the blue lines and one of the draft's best transition forwards.

The next item on the list is Mešár's handling skill. The mechanical base is sound, with his hands operating independently of his feet, the puck in his hip pocket, and his

top hand pushed out for the full range of motion. He dekes past opponents with quickness, precision, and agility. Simply put: Mešár's got moves.

Where things get a little ambiguous with the Poprad winger's game is whether or not his playmaking is a high-end skill. Every now and then, you'll see Mešár complete a highly difficult pass through traffic, even into space to set up his linemates for Grade-A scoring chances. Often, though, it's just an aimless hope pass that pans out against all reason; forced plays that have no business resulting in much of anything, save for a turnover.

Of course, the catch with Mešár, and I'm sure you saw this coming, is that he's a slight forward standing at just 5-foot-10 and spends far too much time on the peripheries of the offensive zone for our liking. He doesn't stand up to contact and can't gain the inside with the puck on his stick; even without the puck, it's all too easy for defenders to box him out from the net-front. He's the type of player opponents can dominate physically with a stern look.

The other thing is that Mešár's production more or less plateaued in the Tipos Extraliga last season at a solid-not-great 0.43 point per game clip. It's not like this high-risk, high-reward prospect is lighting the world on fire in the

Slovakian professional circuit; he's third in total points among first-time draft-eligible skaters and second in points per game. Now, the additional context here is that Poprad was a bit of a mess last season -- they cycled through three head coaches by the time their campaign came to a close -- so make of that what you will.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** March 28th, 2022

HK Poprad vs. Nitra - Extraliga

Mešár has a better delay game now, at least we see more signs of it. That kind of delay game will help him create in the NHL, to an extent. He looks for teammates, puts pucks into space for them, and shows good timing in his slot attacks, but he also misses better offensive patterns, like 2-on-1s or drop passes off the rush that he could create -- it's more inconsistent as in other shifts he does it. He has some abilities to manipulate on the walls but he really requires space to set up those manipulations. If his feet stop, he loses the puck as he can't absorb contact. I'm not sure about his overall awareness. Some hockey sense doubts but it still remains above-average in terms of projection for me.

**Marek Novotný:** March 11th, 2022

HK Poprad vs. Slovan Bratislava - Extraliga

Mešár was clearly the best skater on the ice and it wasn't close. He was flying in all three zones with his relentless motor and was constantly trying to be involved in the game. He has the playmaking ability and can feed linemates with nice and precise passes. Mešár had 5 shots on goal and his quick release can definitely do some damage. Puck control at high speed seems good and so does his pace and ability to beat defenders.

**David St-Louis:** February 18th, 2022

HK Poprad vs. Dukla Trencin - Extraliga

Hmmm. Mešár's weaknesses took the forefront in this game. The skill, speed and hands, are still there and he has ways to create off contact by slipping inside the range of defenders and bouncing away...But, I doubt he ever reaches a physical level to be able to create on the inside of the ice and defenders in the NHL. He has trouble creating consistently at his level and his troubles remind me of Lambert's. Mešár just plays a different style of game, a rush-heavy, fast-paced passing game that lacks the necessary support to thrive. Maybe it's an argument in his favor, but it's really hard to project him in this context, especially if it remains his context going forward. I would like him in the CHL. It would help a lot to visualize how he could improve and translate his game to the NHL.

It all comes down to risk tolerance with this player. You could see a team swing for the fences here if they have more than one first-round pick, but the more likely outcome is that Mešár walks the stage at some point early in the proceedings on Day 2.

**Daniel Gee:** February 10th, 2022

HK Poprad vs. Lipovsku Mikulas - Extraliga

Mešár was flying in this viewing, eating up open space like crazy, practically always in-motion. While his rush patterns devolved wide too often, his focus to funnel the pucks inside made a legitimate impact in this game. In all three periods he created through his highly leveraged crossover and weight-shift oriented on-puck drives. In the first he set up a high-danger pass to an open man in the crease after burning up the wing. He followed that up later in the period with a huge crossover weave that ended in a slip pass while in full flight. In the second he knocked down an aerial pass, transitioning into a backhand forehand handle that he tried to tuck past the opposing goaltender. The speed and handle blend was so impressive. At times he fails to pre-scan out of these attacks. On one sequence Mešár burned up the ice, popped the puck into his hip pocket, deked through his legs, and then stopped up to release pressure, but he didn't pre-scan, had no pass targets, and he was enveloped by defenders. That will have to improve to truly unlock the potential of on-puck activations. He over-handled at times when it's not necessary -- in the third period he executed another between-the-legs deke with no conceivable target to beat. He actually ended up moving closer to pressure which led to a rub out.

Stronger off-puck game in this one. Mešár had one chance at the end of the game by first identifying some soft ice in the slot, planting and one-timing a shot; not a high danger though -- placement was awful; right in the crest. Mešár actually got in on the forecheck multiple times, putting pressure on the puck retrieving defenders. In the third he stripped a puck behind the net, centred a pass into the slot to a tied up teammate (scanning issue), and then proceeded to win the puck back, shovelling the puck on the net. Had two one-time opportunities from the left-point in the third; contacted the puck too far back in his stance to create a dangerous shot. Really lacked any semblance of finishing throughout this game, despite getting open for shooting opportunities off-puck so often. I still quite like his game, but probably not on the top-end of the board.

**Marek Novotný:** February 8th, 2022

HK Poprad vs. HKM Zvolen - Extraliga

Mešár was again all over the ice with his relentless motor and tried to fight for the puck in all three zones. He was successful at pokechecking and forechecking opponents. He was also actively shooting, but there was a lack of force in that. Mešár was part of the PP unit and tried to play a role of a playmaker by feeding his linemates with firm passes. His pace is just great and his off-puck presence is impactful.

**David St-Louis:** January 25th, 2022

HK Nitra vs. HK Dulka Trenčín - Extraliga

Mesar's game isn't getting any better. He still can't handle contact and he forces teammates to make plays through defenders to reach him as he's always on the outside. The off-puck game is still a strength, a pretty important one, but it's not enough, especially because he defers so much in transition now. He lacks the confidence to create entries by himself and I'm not sure he truly knows how. So, you have a softer skilled, mostly off-puck presence with a bit of a playmaking touch, but only when lanes are open and teammates are in position. I wonder how he would look like against Junior competitions where the difference in physical skills wouldn't be as big. But he's too risky of a projection to be a top-15 pick for me, maybe not even an A prospect at this point.

**David St-Louis:** December 27th, 2021

Slovakia vs Sweden - WJ20

Mesar can't outmaneuver anyone easily at this tournament, but he keeps trying to. First, because it's what he knows; he beats defenders with his skill, with his quick skating cuts and handling, but also because he never has any good immediate options. His teammates are always behind the play and Mesar mostly supports plays on the outside. His perception of gaps, of what's open seems flawed at this speed and on this smaller rink. It's not uncommon for a player his age. His powerplay decisions were quite poor, too, shooting when he should pass and distribute and shooting off balance, too, with poor mechanics. It annoyed Slafkovsky... I like Mesar's engagement, his desire to battle and make plays, overall, but he is a bit outmatched against the stronger formations at this tournament. I want to see him pop off against some of Slovakia's next matchup. His off-puck support remains a strength in general; he had some nice timed movements to the slot.

**David St-Louis:** December 26th, 2021

Slovakia vs USA - WJ20

Filip Mesar had a quiet first half of the game, limited puck touches, but then he showed some abilities in the second

half. He had a nice spin pass shot-assist to Slafkovsky after a zone entry and showed pretty effective timing to attack the net and fire on two occasions. He showed he could find space even at this level of play, but had trouble really getting ahead of the opposition, so did everyone else on team Slovakia.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 23rd, 2021

HKM Zvolen vs. HK Poprad - Extraliga

Off-puck, Mešár puts himself in position to receive the puck on the inside. His off-puck reads are advanced, timing his movements into the slot, building speed underneath the puck, and some terrific rolling speed (lateral to vertical) sequences. With the puck, he avoids the inside unless he has an advantage (that he usually doesn't create himself). Once he gets pushed outside in transition, he doesn't change pace or use his superior handling and skating to cut around defenders and gain the middle -- this directly led to an awful passing decision where he could've cut inside instead. He has the tools to create along the periphery (skating speed and posture, puck protection mechanics, handling skill, some physicality), but he won't make the most of his skillset without being able to take a puck from the outside lane to the middle under pressure. I also don't see a particularly deceptive or thoughtful playmaker. He lacks timing, chooses the wrong pass, and doesn't look for his teammates regularly. He doesn't even play off the threat of a pass to set up shots. A lack of a delay game hurts, too -- and directly influences his inability to take pucks from the outside to the middle (as well as his overreliance on low percentage shots and hope plays into the crease). He's a top prospect given his tools and pace, but I don't feel particularly strongly about his game.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 16th, 2021

HK Poprad vs. HC Nove Zamky - Extraliga

Based on previous viewings and reports, this was probably one of Mesar's weaker games, though he still managed to have a few impressive moments. From a technical and tool standpoint, there's a lot to like. Mesar's skating stride is clean and rather powerful and he's got a good amount of explosiveness. His handling looked also clearly above-average and his comfortable range was really large. How he used those tools wasn't always optimal. He drove a lot into pressure and instead of passing the puck, he was often trying to handle his way through the defenders, which didn't work that well here. He executed some solid passes throughout the game and I've definitely seen way worse over-handlers in this class, but it's something that resulted in a few possessions lost. I was also hoping he would have been more assertive off-the-puck. There was tons of reaching going on. He's clearly a very good skater, why not just take the extra stride to engage properly.

**Cam Robinson:** November 5th, 2021

HK Poprad vs HC Grotto Presov - Extraliga

This is the type of outing that gets you noticed as a legitimate top prospect. Despite missing the scoresheet, Mesar was everywhere in this one. He boasts some of the best transitional habits in the class. He drove the midline with crossover heavy strides, blended perfectly with his creative handling. He is quite clearly unafraid to take and make difficult routes and has the confidence that he can beat defenders with his speed and shifty style. He reminds me a lot of Nik Ehlers with his transitions - exploding into pockets while keeping his hands loose enough to make quick puck moves to elude. He can manipulate his body position to keep the poke out of reach despite the slight stature.

He has that gravitational pull and the wherewithal to patiently draw in the opposition before distributing through the newly created lane or fold. He has pace for days, but the instincts to know when to slow it down and pause before moving it.

Mesar has a strong skating technique - his stride length can be a bit short but it looks more like he's rushing to get the next stride off to always be accelerating more than anything. Defensively, he was supporting well and saw time on the PK, something that should not be overlooked for a kid in a pro league. He forced a turnover that led to a 2-on-1 that he eventually joined. He pre-scans well and has his head up and swivelling throughout.

On the downside, he got absolutely torched in the dot, but realistically, it doesn't matter. Everyone and their dog knows this kid needs a bushel of strength added and that is 99% of faceoff wins. That added weight and strength will allow his style to really pop.

I have this theory that this is a top 5 prospect that people just haven't peeled back the onion layers to see yet.

**Daniel Gee:** November 5th, 2021

HK Poprad vs HC Grotto Presov - Extraliga

Incredible game for Mešár, who was a force of projectable tools, skill-blend, and off-puck habits. Probably one of the more high-event performances I have seen out of a draft eligible in a professional league.

Mešár's impressive performance was built upon proactive decision-making and the ability to execute. This was ever-so apparent in transitional sequences. Mešár achieves a very positive handling and skating blend that involves clean forward stride and crossover transitions, top-left-arm unlocked, full-range handles, and scanning, allowing him to identify inside-oriented attack routes and load manipulations against opponents. While Mešár at times can look off simpler pass options to try something more complicated, some of his best opportunities in this game were born by taking a

more creative approach. On one third period shift, he looked off a pass option with incoming pressure, activating into a hip-pocket handle to his backhand, wheeling and upping his pace through the neutral zone, and finally scanning and executing a weight-shift to beat a defender, using their poor body positioning to attack into the offensive zone. The ability to manipulate through well-timed weight-shifts and handling was present all game practically. He constantly tried to split HC Grotto's defenders to varying success, attacking through the dotted-lines, magnetizing, and passing to the open wings. Mešár created counter-attacks out of great defensive plays as well. On the penalty kill in the first, Mešár supported his aggressive defender and poked a transitioning puck towards the boards, leading to a turnover. He then read a potential break, filed in on a 2-on-1, missing a one-timer badly. Shot mechanics looked good- top-arm-unlocked, synced weight transfer, using downforce and stick flex to create power.

Off-puck timing in the sustained offensive pressure was a habit across Mešár's shifts. He is constantly supporting the pass, timing slot activations. On one shift he transitioned a puck out of his zone, completed a layered in-motion neutral zone pass to the left wing, and activated into the slot as his teammate drove around the net. When the pass didn't come, Mešár supported behind the net, worked the puck up the near boards, and read a tip-in, sending the puck into the crease for a high danger chance. Honestly so much of his game is positive. He can shoot around defenders, fast on retrievals, and can dangle in small-areas. In the third he was facing pressure in the far-corner; Mešár forked a puck forward and slipped his body past a check. He then scanned and attacked the net from below the goal-line, executing a weight shift (break-ankles) handle to the front -- just lost control. Well handling physical pressure isn't a strong suit, he had some success in this game. Thoroughly impressed.

**David St-Louis:** October 24th, 2021

HK Poprad vs. Dukla Michalovce - Extraliga

Mesar made few plays in this game, but it's mostly because he didn't have many puck touches, many chances to create. I like his pace and overall skill-level. He can beat defenders at speed with skating and handling moves and work these two tools together. They both look significantly above-average and his elusiveness will be able to compensate for his size. Mešár seems to understand playmaking concepts too, like attracting defenders to create space for teammates.

**David St-Louis:** October 21th, 2021

HC Slovan Bratislava vs. HK Poprad - Extraliga

Mešár combines fast processing of the play, of lanes, of spaces, of what he has to do to move the puck with a high-

skill level, above-average skating and handling and passing, with a high overall pace of play. Those things alone make him a first-rounder. Now, the decision-making is good and bad depending on the play. Mešár needs to learn when offloading the puck quickly and not turning back and trying to elude forecheckers one-on-one is the best play and he has to work on his physicality in small-areas. That said, he understands angles, changes of speed...some advanced offensive ideas. It's a hard context to evaluate him. His team doesn't look all that coordinated and it's hard for him to connect plays.

**David St-Louis:** October 21th, 2021

HC Nitra vs. HK Poprad - Extraliga

Mešár's off puck game was on full display in this game. Playing center, he connected all of his team's transition plays, attacking space at the right time, at the right speed, using teammates, and then repositioning between checks. This is a great strength of his, even in the offensive zone. He uses quiet ice to hide, to sneak away, and then comes back in the slot to tip shots or fire on net. He doesn't necessarily stop at the net, but knows this wouldn't be a productive play for him anyway, and so he slashes in and out of the slot, often with perfect timing. He battles on the boards, managing to hold inside positioning on the puck even against much bigger players by angling his skates not toward the boards, but at an angle, and he moves the puck productively in those small areas, toward teammates in support. He scored in this game from a timed slot movement, a great catch and release. His shot lacks strength but he can get it off quick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 19th, 2021

HC Dukla Trencin vs. HK Poprad - Extraliga

Mešár's off-puck skating is really something. His stick's always open while in motion, ready to collect the puck and accelerate into space. The situation doesn't matter: he consistently chooses the best route and finishes it. And he links together different ideas. He'll move from supporting battles to passing to sprinting to the slot for a deflection. Movements into the slot are timed with the play, as his sprints, delays, and regroupings in transition. A highly advanced player at getting the puck back. With the puck, things are bit more mixed. The skating and handling are 6-to-7 grade tools. The hands are quick and accurate with underhandling and out-the-back handling motion. His off-puck skating gets him in the puck on the inside, but he defaults to the perimeter unless he already has a pre-established advantage. And there, he cuts back, looking for the trailer, and shows patience -- when he's not shoved off the puck immediately, which happened a few times in this game. He understands how to protect the puck, establishing body positioning, cutting off the hands, cutting back away from pressure, but a gust of

wind can knock him over. The shot's interesting. His hands are fine, but he tilts his weight backwards instead of powering through his shot. It's same on one-timers. Overall, I don't really have a bearing on just how good he is offensively. Tools, off-puck movement, defence are all there, a possible worthy of a top-10 pick.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 17th, 2021

HC Nitra vs. HK Poprad - Extraliga

Mesar scored HK Poprad's opening goal of the game, coming straight from the bench towards the slot, receiving a pass and catch-and-releasing it to the back of the net. Overall, it was a pretty strong performance from Mesar. He was strong in transitions, often being the one tasked to transport the puck up the ice and doing it so with good consistency, utilizing his very good skating and handling abilities. He was doing really well at escaping pressure, once beating all three opposing forwards with a quick change of direction. Mesar's bread and butter in this game was crossing the neutral zone through the middle, dishing the puck to either of his wingers and driving the net. His offensive off-puck game was rather good and he was trying to offer support near the center. Some of his defensive routes were pretty weird sometimes, but there were also some good physical play along the boards. Flashing very good playmaking ability, too, running the power play from the left half wall. There's a lot to like with Mesar.

**David St-Louis:** October 15th, 2021

HKM Slovan vs. HK Poprad - Extraliga

Uneventful game for Mešár. He still looks like a bit of a periphery player, but it's always a bit unfair to say this of an undersized speedster playing against much older opponents. A periphery game is normal unless you're dealing with one of those prospects who like goals more than they like their own safety. Mešár can handle opponents along the boards -- this is a good sign for the development of his inside game. He makes contact, tries to establish body positioning, and holds on to the puck against back pressure, showing some effective puck protection mechanics and elusiveness. Mešár's skating rates as a 6.5 or 7 for me. He will add even more speed and he knows how to rush the puck in: where to attack and how to beat opponents one-on-one; it's just that, again, he tends to default to the outside lane. His processing speed is high and so are his handling skills. Shot needs work.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 10th, 2021

HC Kosice vs. HK Poprad - Extraliga

A pretty quiet outing with the puck by Mešár. He took some poor shots, either letting himself get pushed to the perimeter from the middle and firing, or taking low-percentage shots

with teammates in the slot. Still, I found myself impressed with his game. His off-puck skating routes are so advanced. He clearly reads Greg Revak's Hockey IQ Newsletter, particularly the one on puck acquisition. He builds speed underneath the puck, takes it motion, and tries to push for the inside (easily pushed to the outside, however). His lateral movement really stands out, covering huge swaths of distance with his knees-over-toes, hips-engaged stride to shrink the distance to the puck carrier and become an option. I like how flares wide to an accessible weak-side option, too. Major difficulty handling contact in this game, but his touches were too infrequent to diagnose puck skills overall.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 8th, 2021

Dukla Trencin vs. HK Poprad - Extraliga

Mešár is an incredibly smart player stuck on a, frankly, brutal team. He controlled the pace of play through his passing, anticipating lanes opening and attacking them, but there's not much help coming from his linemates. Good skill to dangle guys in close and switch sides to open up a lane. Very high motor player, just shows up everywhere on the ice to make an impact. His reading of lanes offensively really helps him on defense, as well, as he can spot what the puck carrier is going to do and close it off, or position himself in areas to eliminate the most effective options. Skating ability is great, really fluid movements in every direction and has a good amount of explosiveness.

**Cam Robinson:** October 3rd, 2021

HK Poprad vs. Nove Zamky - Extraliga

For a kid who gets tagged as playing too much on the perimeter, I sure see him drive the middle an awful lot. Sure, he has difficulty handling contact in those high danger areas, but he is unafraid to attack with speed and elusiveness - the butter of any effective driver. His ability to shift his weight, use his edges, and protect the puck in-flight is highly advanced for his age.

The goal he scored showed a little bit of everything. He broke out of the zone while being hampered by a defender. He shook him off and exploded into the open ice. Received the puck, quick crossover cut back and threw the final defender onto his hip and extended the inside arm to protect the puck. He then had the smarts to wait for the goaltender to make the first move before expertly chipping the backhand up and over.

His speed was simply too much to handle on many attempts in this one. He drove the middle off-puck on chances, hustle back and supported defensively, was shifty and elusive along the wall to set up breakouts and continued offensive zone possession. When this kid gets some more strength, watch out.

**David St-Louis:** October 3rd, 2021

HK Poprad vs. Nove Zamke - Extraliga

Mešár put on a clinic of elusiveness in this game. He manipulated defenders along the boards by presenting them the puck, forcing them to reach for it, and imbalancing them, allowing him to gain a step on them. He faked a movement one way and cutback the other way and then drove inside. He can't yet use his body against professional defenders, but as we saw him do it versus his peers at the Hlinka, I think he will develop those skills. Even at his size, due to his way above-average skating ability, flexion, and balance, he should be able to absorb, resist, and elude contact in the NHL -- to an extent. His slighter frame might remain a disadvantage. Mešár did the most damage off the rush in the game, breaking through neutral-zone formations with pure speed and quick skate cuts. He scored that way once. My favorite play of his, however, was an off-puck rush attack. His teammate skated the puck in the offensive zone in the wide lane. Mešár drove through the middle. He scanned behind him for his other line-mate, received a pass, and then fed a backhand pass to the middle of the slot, that unfortunately deflected on a stick. Rare are prospects who bother to scan when attacking at high speed like this, but Mešár continues to show he can make productive decisions even at the ridiculous pace he plays at. This is still a work in progress, however, as Mešár isn't as clean in all his sequences. Some plays are forced or just not optimal. I would also like him to use more changes of speed. Slowing down at times would allow him to involve his teammates more inside his plays and it would prevent him from turning too quickly inside traffic at times when pressured.

**Cam Robinson:** October 1st, 2021

HK Poprad vs HK Spisska Nova Ves - Extraliga

Transitionally, Mesar got locked up along the wall a few times and failed to handle the physical pressure to break it out quickly. However, once in flight and hit with a pass, he was as exciting as ever - driving with speed highlighted by a heavy crossover laden approach. Off the puck, he's very aware of lanes and spaces to fill to compliment his mates. On the PP, he was the roving high slot man, and made himself available as an option with fluid, intelligent movement. Set himself up for HD chances multiple times that way.

After helping to pressure download, he picked up the puck on his backhand coming from around the net, curled and appeared to be cutting back to his forehand as a nice fake before committing to the backhand and scored a smartly placed high glove goal.

I love the routes he takes both with and without the puck. Physically, he can't handle some of them, but he takes them anyway. He knows when to fall back and aid defensively; not

chasing behind the net but cutting in front and covering for the pinching defender. His head is constantly up.

Skating is clearly the most dynamic portion of his game - it should rank out near a 7 for our purposes. Great acceleration and edge work. He can maintain his gaining speed with possession and his hands can keep up.

**David St-Louis:** August 7th, 2021

Russia U18 vs Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Mešár is a high-skill, dynamic attacker. His pace comes not only from his above-average skating ability, but also from his constant scanning of the ice, and his ability to chain reception into his next play seamlessly, and that, even if the puck comes at him off-target. He adapts, spins on himself, changes his grip... There is creativity in his game and the processing speed to match his pace. His feet are always moving and he times himself well away from the puck to become an interesting passing option. Lots to like there. The main question to answer about Mešár this season will be his inside play: does he default to the periphery against professionals considering his size and his outside speed, or does he use his tools to break inside the formation, with and without the puck? If he becomes an inside player, Mešár will be in our top-10.

**J.D. Burke:** August 7th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Would the Slovaks have stood a chance in this game if their second-most talented forward showed up for the first period and a half? Perhaps, but we'll never know. Mešár was a complete no-show until Slafkovsky set him up with a cross-ice rush feed for a tap-in goal to get Slovakia on the board. That seemed to shake the cobwebs a bit. Mešár's skating and puck-handling skill stood out on a few occasions from that point onward. Struggled mightily to get to the inside of the offensive zone, though.

**J.D. Burke:** August 4th, 2021

Slovakia U18 vs. Sweden U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Man, what a shot. Mešár's wrist shot probably could've netted him at least two goals in this contest if not for the post. That release is ridiculously fast. Liked his off-the-puck pace to create shooting opportunities for himself. Some great displays of skill as a handler and shiftiness as a skater when confronted by numbers. Spent a lot more time on the inside in this contest than I'm accustomed to seeing from Mešár, so that was neat.

**David St-Louis:** August 2nd, 2021

Slovakia U18 vs. USA U18 - Hlinka Gretzky Cup

Mešár plays at two times the pace of everyone else on the ice. He challenges defenders to open space for teammates, moves around them at high-speed with the usage of fake weight-shifts, fake changes of direction, and connects some fun passing plays. He even showed some great puck protection mechanics, a deep, deep stance that allows him to extend limbs, keep his balance, create a hip wall and shield and above-average handling abilities. High processing speed, high-skill, and desire to create. A prospect to keep an eye on.

**J.D. Burke:** August 2nd, 2021

Slovakia U18 vs. USA U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

I really need to see Mešár spend more time on the inside to have any confidence about him as a top-10 pick. It's not even that the opposition is keeping him to the perimeter with relative ease; it's that Mešár isn't even making the effort to take the puck to high-danger parts of the offensive zone in the first place. Now, granted, his off-puck pace, understanding of spacing and routes, etc. allows him to create the odd opportunity for himself between the hash marks, including one early in the first period in this contest, but those flashes are few and far between. Made a soft play on the puck in the neutral zone in this game that kind of left a sour taste in my mouth, too.

The skill is obviously unreal, though, and bears mentioning. Mešár isn't shy about attacking defenders in space, getting their feet moving one way, and then cutting across them with a weight shift that's more cutting than it is explosive, keeping him at top speed as he manoeuvres past opponents. Some nice displays of small area skill in this contest, too.

**David St-Louis** - February 12th, 2021

Slovakia U18 vs Czech Republic U18 - Friendly

Mesar's rushing ability was on full display in this game. He changed speed on defenders, challenged them head-on to create room for teammates to skate around. He had his head up and used faked and puck protection moves on the fly to gain the zone and made some slick passes. He seemed to understand the receiving conditions of teammates, too, as he held the puck under pressure for an extra beat or two to allow them to get in better positions. Mesar showed processing speed and adaptability in this game. His hockey sense looks to be above-average and so are most of his skills.



37  
Rank

6.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

B  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

6.5  
Physical

# JULIAN LUTZ

F | EHC MÜNCHEN

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. FEB. 29, 2004  
WEIGHT 190 SHOOTS LEFT

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
DEL	14	1	2	3
WJC-18	4	2	2	4

## Scouting Report

Julian Lutz spent the majority of the season on the sideline due to an injury, only coming back to play in the DEL in February. Because of that extended recovery period, Lutz was a late-comer on our board, but he experienced quite a meteoric rise after our crossover scouting confirmed what Marek Novotný, Elite Prospects Czechia and Slovakia regional scout, clamoured:

“Lutz is a likely NHLer and a deserving top-40 pick.”

The adjustment to professional hockey didn't look like that large of a challenge for Lutz, who instantly started imposing himself physically over much older opponents. Lutz's speed made breaking through the neutral zone hard for opposing attackers. It also facilitated his team's own attack.

It's his awareness under heavy pressure that impressed our scouts the most.

“Working in tight spaces doesn't look difficult for him and his ability to find passing lanes under pressure in tight

spaces is great,” Elite Prospects Czechia/Slovakia scout Marek Novotný wrote in a March game report. “Again, he showed a strong cut to the middle of the crease followed by an accurate pass.”

On retrievals, Lutz's talent for instantly locating teammates and passing lanes, combined with his puck protection, and close to NHL-caliber defensive ability should make him an effective bottom-six forward in a couple of years.

His flashes of playmaking also give him more upside. Off the rush, Lutz understands how to create favourable gaps for himself and his teammates by cutting alongside the width of the ice and manipulating the defensive line. He can hold the puck to let plays develop in the offensive zone and rapidly hit teammates in scoring position with both facets of his blade.

If Lutz can build on these abilities with more playing time next year, a role on a second-line could be possible for him.

## Game Reports

David St-Louis: April 24th, 2022

Germany vs Canada - WC18

High intensity play from Lutz all game long, pace and physicality. Lutz engages opponents in every single retrieval. The mechanics aren't perfect yet, but there is no reason to think they won't be in a couple of years; he already tries to slip to inside positioning and drive his knee and shoulder through the hands of opponents. The defensive presence was

great in the first period but then was scaled back in favour of more offence as his team fell behind, which is fine. He can help teammates defensively, he backchecks hard, and boxes players out. The off-puck game, offensively, wasn't really there. Lutz was focused on running routes, on charging the line of defence to create space for teammates and allow back plays. In terms of playmaking, Lutz is a take-what-is-there player, but an effective one. He knows the positioning



of most teammates on the ice and the quickest release from pressure and he uses them. He rarely holds the puck too long, if ever. He can make quick plays inside from the wall due to his constant pre-scanning; he created a scoring chance that way. He can read lanes and generally processes the game fast. He's not a high-end playmaker, and while he can pull off some dangles, the handling is closer to average for me. The interesting patterns in his game suggest to me that he might be an above-average thinker of the game, however, even if it's just slightly.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Germany U18 vs. Czechia U18 - U18 Worlds

Lutz pace and skating continue to stand out. Mechanically, his stride is close to perfect: a lot of flexion at the knee and ankles. He's quick and speedy and he can engage physically from the outside (pins) and inside (puck protection). He's relentless in battles, too, with his stick and body to win the puck back, and as he's aware of outlets, he can move that puck quickly to safety after winning it back. He scored off a faceoff by jumping on a puck, establishing body positioning, and firing. The goalie got surprised. His handling skills looked a bit above-average in this game, in terms of projection. He supports plays decently, but played with more of an offensive focus in this one; I didn't see the usual defensive engagement.

**Marek Novotný:** April 23rd, 2022

Germany U18 vs. Czechia U18 - U18 Worlds

Pretty good game from Lutz. Lutz is a versatile forward whose style could be described as: aggressive in the offensive zone and poised in the defensive zone. As far as his offensive game goes, Lutz is active especially when it comes to playing around the crease. There he is aggressive, fights for loose pucks and uses his size to score goals. He's also been a quality forechecker with an active stick. The German forward has good puckhandling skills that allow him to dance around opponents. It also helps him in the defensive zone, where he brings composure, especially when it comes to zone exits. However, he lacks situational awareness especially on defense. He was also part of the power play and picked up one assist in the game. He also recorded 2 hits. His puck protection wasn't as good as before, but he's very good in the neutral zone where he's not afraid to make difficult maneuvers.

**David St-Louis:** April 1st, 2022

Dusseldorfer vs. EHC München - DEL

Strong positional play from Lutz again, but his team was mostly on the offence. He understands rush patters, to an extent, skating down the width of the ice to find entries but also to create routes for teammates to support the play. He's combative along the boards in the sense that he lacks the

finer puck protection mechanics but doesn't give up in battles to win the puck back. He's willing to absorb hits to make plays and to attack the net. He spots teammates quickly and moves the puck quickly. There is pace in his game.

**Marek Novotný:** March 30th, 2022

EHC München vs. Nürnberg Ice Tigers - DEL

There wasn't much to see. Lutz played his classic style of game, but with pretty low ice time. At first it looked like he wasn't going to get much action either, as he didn't have much puck on his stick and frankly looked pretty tired. He was strong in the crease using his big body. Lutz is strong with a sharp feel in the middle and changes of direction. I didn't like him defensively as he was just skating with the player he was defending, but didn't show much activity to take the puck away from him.

**Marek Novotný:** March 27th, 2022

EHC München vs. ERC Ingolstadt - DEL

Wow, that was a great game. Lutz had moments where he looked like a first-round pick. He's got soft hands, no problem getting behind his opponents. Zone entries are easier for him because of his puck control. He has no problem with bouncing pucks, his coordination is great. Working in tight spaces doesn't look difficult for him and his ability to find passing lanes under pressure in tight spaces is great. Again, he showed a strong cut to the middle of the crease followed by an accurate pass. Lutz can also send the pass in a way that sends his teammates into odd-man rushes. He also scored a goal with his work in front of the net. He attempted the Michigan move with incredible speed, which just demonstrated his skilled hands. His movement and puck protection in the offensive zone was also quality and his team benefited from it. In addition, he was an effective forechecker and was active with his stick when a couple of pokechecks went his way. The only thing that puzzled me was that he lost his balance and fell a few times.

**David St-Louis:** March 23rd, 2022

EHC München vs. Ice Tigers Nurnberg - DEL

Not as skillful of a performance from Lutz. He makes the right plays most of the ice, showing adaptability and quickness in his passing, and even an ability to attract the opposition on himself before moving the puck. Sometimes, his awareness of back pressure is not there, leading to turnovers or almost turnovers on breakouts. The handling skills look about average. The skating is fluid; the agility is there. He almost sits back too much on his skates, which can limit his propulsion from a stop -- probably a body proportion thing. The passing and the system play and the skating makes him think he could be a second-rounder. He didn't play a lot this

season; maybe there's an extra level there that we haven't seen.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 20th, 2022

Grizzlys Wolfsburg vs. EHC München - DEL

Lutz has many notable qualities: skating, puck control, pace, and defence. In transition, he doesn't make the most obvious play. He cuts inside or resets before passing. He's an aware defender, supporting plays across the zone, sprinting for loose pucks, and throwing hits. Wins body positioning along the boards, leaping in front then bring his body across to cut off the hands. Off-puck offence clearly has structure and anticipation, but he missed opportunities to gain inside positioning and make the best read. Not a ton of skill on display in this game, but he still looked like a second-rounder.

**Marek Novotný:** March 20th, 2022 - Grizzlys Wolfsburg vs. EHC München - DEL

He brings a lot of composure to the team when passing the puck or exiting the defensive zone. That's mostly due to his skilled hands. Lutz is a versatile forward who strives to be effective in all facets. He also uses his hockey IQ and his speed. Lutz has great potential especially if he starts to be more aggressive to win puck battles, even more playing physical hockey. He's also been great working along the boards. Lutz looks like a great second-round pick. He may be the biggest steal of the draft.

**David St-Louis:** March 18th, 2022

Kolner Haie vs. EHC München - DEL

Pro-caliber performance that contained about everything you want to see out of a young forward playing limited minutes against men. Lutz took his chances to create, trying instant dangles on reception through the other team, and managing an assist for a teammate by knocking the puck to him in a scoring area. He pre-scanned before getting the puck and generally managed it well. His defensive game was generally on point, too, rotating preemptively and helping teammates. He processes fast and his aware and he can make plays from the boards. He's 6'2", an above-average skater, too.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 15th, 2022

ERC Ingolstadt vs. EHC München - DEL

Some not great stuff: Lutz kept trying to dangle through and around players without much success, and there was rarely an achievable play on the other side. Still, this was an impressive performance. He's clearly an intelligent off-puck player, highlighted by his anticipation (all three zones), supporting positions, off-puck instincts and timing around the

net, and give-and-go game. In one sequence, he even delayed, then cut inside and found the trailer. Set-up a chance by staying inside space, then passing under the defender's stick from a fake shot. He's always facing the play, turning to face the play and present his stick constantly. Sneaky physical and he's always involved in pursuit. A poor first touch has me questioning his handling ability, but he's an intelligent, skilled player with standout skating (knees pushed far past his toes, chest up, maintains depth through crossovers, turns, and cuts). He looked like a top-45 pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Schwenninger Wild Wings vs. EHC München - DEL

Lutz is fluid, agility, and has skating skills. He uses well-timed cutbacks, one-foot stops, and heel-to-heels to separate. Maintains depth through strides, crossovers, and his turns. Lots of off-puck details in this game, from how he gets open to always presenting his stick to his teammate. He doesn't just get to the right space, he gets to them at the right times. Sometimes, he gets positioning. Others, he sneaks away then dashes inwards. Few effective plays with the puck in this game, but he delayed, tried to cut inside, and escape the boards in multiple ways (reading back pressure to cut inside and making a backhand pass off the boards). Physical game (body positioning, board play) looked like a strength, and he was looking for blood late in the game. In this game, he looked like a top-45 pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 9th, 2022

EHC München vs. Augsburger Panther - DEL

Lutz's off-puck game had moments where it looked advanced: timing, presenting his stick, and occupying the right spaces. He also ended up in space too early, too late, and planted his feet. With the puck, he skates into pressure without an escape plan. Lacks of awareness. He's also fighting the puck at times. But he's a legitimately skilled player. Fired a nearly perfect inside leg wrister off the pass, receiving the puck with his top hand already in position before leaping on inside leg for the release. First-touch escape along the boards before nearly connecting with a look-off slip pass. Showed some playmaking and patience across the ice, even if most plays didn't work out. And plenty of physical play in this game, throwing hits, winning battles, and getting inside positioning. Skating's there, even if it doesn't meet the mechanical standards: knees past toes, hips engaged, chest up, and he maintains depth through crossovers, cuts, and turns. All-in-all, a toolsy player with flashes of instincts and playmaking.



38  
Rank

6.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

B  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

6.5  
Physical

# ADAM SÝKORA

RW/LW | HK NITRA

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. SEP. 7, 2004  
WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS ;EFT

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
Slovakia	46	10	7	17

## Scouting Report

Adam Sýkora will play in the NHL. That much looks like a foregone conclusion. What's left to be determined is just how high in the lineup.

The Slovak forward has enough interesting tools and poise with the puck that it's possible to envision him becoming a better playmaker and scorer from afar at some point in his development. His speed, especially, will create opportunities for him. Even in the NHL, opponents will have to watch out for him – he could turn an interception or a stick-lift into an odd-man rush the other way on a moment's notice.

Even if Sýkora never adds an extra layer of skill or if he only becomes a better version of himself, coaches will find a place for him in their lineup. They will jump at the opportunity to have him in on their depth chart.

Few players match Sýkora's intensity on the ice. He's all-in, every shift. He bounces from opponent to opponent, barely giving them any time to handle the puck, blocks shots like he's immune to pain, and attacks loose pucks like the fate of the world depends on his ability to catch them. On the backcheck, he pursues escaping opponents and completely neutralizes them.

"He was willing to block shots, fight, hit, or go to the dirty areas," wrote Marek Novotný, Elite Prospects Czechia and

Slovakia regional scout in a May 5th game report. "He even showed some puck skills when he danced past a couple of defenders."

Sýkora may be undersized, but defenders will have a hard time containing him along the walls and near the net, as he absorbs shoves and hits without losing sight of his goal: getting the puck. His ability to instantly recover his balance makes him look almost elastic at times.

Sýkora's rebounding ability is probably his most projectable NHL scoring tool right now. He creates chaos around the crease by screening goalies and by getting his stick on flying, incoming pucks.

"Another great game by Adam Sýkora," wrote Marek Novotný on March 27th, 2022. "You can see that the playoffs are perfect for him. His engine is always running at full speed, he's always trying to help the team with his presence on the ice. He's exactly the type of player that sparks the team when needed and he does it very well at such a young age."

Sýkora's high pace of play, speed, developed physical skills and balance, and perpetual defensive engagement will likely make him a late Day 1 or early Day 2 pick at the NHL draft. It's even possible that a team, afraid to lose him to a rival, will reach for him much higher than anticipated.

**Marek Novotný:** May 5th, 2022

Slovakia vs. Norway - Exhibition game

Adam Sýkora tried to fight for a nomination to the World Championship in Finland in the friendly game against Norway. He played a quality game where he showed all his strengths. Sýkora is a supportive forward who is constantly forechecking, and delivering hits. Sýkora is not afraid to go to the dirty areas and therefore is often found around the net, where he tries to create pressure on the opposing team. He also scored a very nice wrist shot goal. His pressure in the neutral zone forced the Norwegian player back into the defensive zone, and Sykora is very effective in this one. He's playing physical hockey, in one situation he was outmuscled and Slovakia lost important puck possession in the offensive zone. He also showed solid speed, especially his first two quick steps.

**Marek Novotný:** May 5th, 2022

Nitra vs. HC Slovan Bratislava - Extraliga Playoff

He showed composure and puck-handling ability under pressure. His quality edges and crossovers put pressure on the opponent and constantly forechecked defenders. He was willing to block shots, fight, hit, or go to the dirty areas. He even showed some puck skills when he danced past a couple of defenders but eventually lost the puck. Sykora is constantly waiting for opportunities, whether it's to pass to a teammate, support the cycle game with his puck protection or just attack quickly. Sýkora creates very dangerous chances and his presence on the ice is noticeable. He's just very annoying for opponents and hard to deal with.

**Marek Novotný:** April 5th, 2022

Nitra vs. Poprad - Extraliga

This was a big game for Sykora. Game #7 of the 1st round of the playoffs and the Slovakian forward wasn't bad at all. He served the same role as he did in the previous games of this series. He was active on the forecheck, active with his stick, wasn't afraid to block shots, recorded 2 hits and 2 shots as well. He caused one turnover at the end of the third period, which could have been fatal, but the opponent didn't score. I saw signs of good hockey sense in his game, he can be in places where the puck is going to be and that makes him very valuable to the team. His straight line speed is awesome. His motor was unstoppable again. He was also part of the PK unit, defensively again he performed at 100 percent and didn't look out of position.

**Marek Novotný:** March 27th, 2022

Nitra vs. Poprad - Extraliga

Another great game by Adam Sýkora. You can see that the playoffs are perfect for him. His engine is always running at

full speed, he's always trying to help the team with his presence on the ice. He's exactly the type of player that sparks the team when needed and he does it very well at such a young age. He was part of the PK unit again. In the defensive zone, he always scans the opponent and always knows where to stand. I finally got to see his hands in action. He was able to squeeze between a couple of players and get a shot off. He put himself in interesting shooting positions and was also able to find linemates with passes. He also recorded a secondary assist. His sense, eagerness and engagement make him an interesting prospect.

**Marek Novotný:** March 24th, 2022

Nitra vs. Poprad - Extraliga

Adam Sýkora played a great playoff game. He opened the scoring after just 54 seconds with a smart tip. Again, he routinely screened the goalie and waited for a possible deflection. He made one very dangerous deflection in particular where the puck bounced off the ice and the goalie had to make a save. His constant attacking/creating pressure is effective. He's also responsible defensively. He doesn't have that much range, but his active stick causes problems for opponents. He was robbed in a big scoring chance - again in front of the net. He can handle a physical game. I like his effort, his backchecking. He tried hard to prevent his opponent from scoring. Beautifully disrupted a crossing pass in the defensive zone during the PK. There was also a nice moment where he tried to get back into the defensive zone quickly and nudged his teammate in front of him with his stick to get there faster.

**David St-Louis:** February 15th, 2022

Nitra vs Dukla Michalovce

Sýkora has some bouncy ball qualities that could make him a fierce board and net-front player in the NHL. He can just contort himself and still absorb shocks and stay on his feet, Brendan Gallagher-like. The offensive instincts didn't stand out, but the skating (above-average projection), the pace (very high motor), and the physical skills did. He looks like an NHL player, but a bottom-six one. The passing ideas were good but a bit slow. His puck plays didn't have the same pace as his skating and were mostly evident. No creativity shown here. Defensively, he had his stick in lanes and applied constant, unrelenting pressure to opponents on the penalty kill.

**David St-Louis:** January 28th, 2022

Spisska Voa Ves vs. Nitra - Extraliga

Great puck support in general from Sykora. He drives ahead to create space and slows down (less frequently) to connect some plays, getting a couple of scoring chances out of those space-reads and a goal. His timing away from the puck is decent. He finds options in the offensive zone and

in the neutral-zone and helps on defence. The pace is very high and the physical engagement, too.

**David St-Louis:** February 15th, 2022

Nitra vs Dukla Michalovce - Extraliga

Sykora is all pace, but effective pace. He scans before getting the puck, locates space, and the next teammate. He moves the puck into those spaces and attacks them with his speed. I really like his puck protection game: uses knee to shield and free-arm, feet parallel to the boards, skate fakes, extend the puck away from opposing sticks...A lot of advanced habits and mechanics in this speedy package. He crashes the net and blocks shots. A coach's dream. The skill should develop further; he's young and not getting top-minutes opportunities, too.


**Marek Novotný:** December 28th, 2021

Slovakia vs. Sweden - WJC-20

Sýkora looked much better. He was part of both the PP and PK units and played exactly what the team expects from a fourth line forward. He was constantly putting pressure on

**Marek Novotný:** December 26th, 2021

Slovakia vs. USA - WJC-20

With very limited ice time, Adam Sýkora didn't show much against the talented Americans. He was part of the PK unit, but struggled overall, unable to get the puck out of the defensive zone and seemed lost against fast opponents. 

"Sýkora's high pace of play, speed, developed physical skills and balance, and perpetual defensive engagement will likely make him a late Day 1 or early Day 2 pick at the NHL draft. It's even possible that a team, afraid to lose him to a rival, will reach for him much higher than anticipated."

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39

39  
Rank

B  
Grade

5  
Skating

6  
Shooting

6  
Passing

5.5  
Puckhandling

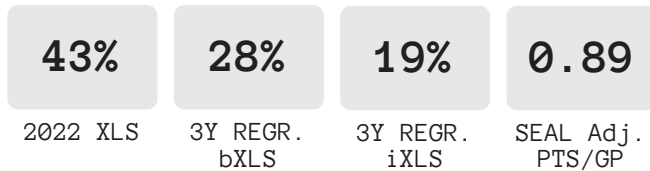
6  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# CHRISTIAN KYROU

D | ERIE OTTERS

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. FEB. 15, 2004  
WEIGHT 194 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	18	42	60

## Scouting Report

You want high-octane offensive potential from the blue line? Look no further than Christian Kyrou. He's your guy if you're looking for a high-upside, swing for the fences-type pick in the middle of the draft.

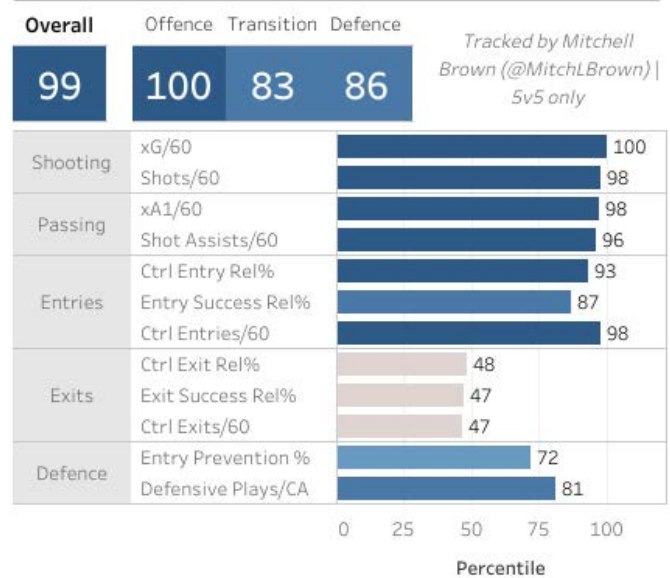
The name of the game is manipulation with Kyrou. He'll bait defenders one way and then slide right past them in the opposite direction untouched, leaving them behind the play and hopeless to recover. All the usual suspects are there -- side steps, look-offs, shoulder feints, etc. -- and the Otters defender has mastered them in the pursuit of clean zone exits and better looks in the offensive zone.

"Kyrou uses his teammates in transition with passes to the inside and then playing off them, but he prefers to use his handling skill to beat defenders himself," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a February report. "While his top hand positioning enables superior control and he's undoubtedly a skilled skater, he straightens his legs and glides before making his moves."

That cunning with the puck extends beyond his moves to gain separation, though. Kyrou is a patient puckhandler, adaptable to any situation and willing to change his approach to let lanes and opportunities develop. It's an advanced understanding of how to drive play that's uncommon in players this age.

Mostly, the 5-foot-10 blueliner uses that tool to create shooting opportunities. Kyrou is far more of a finisher than a distributor, though he's flashed sufficient playmaking skill in many of our viewings. And with a 6-grade shot that can

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 143.7



threaten from range, why not? You may as well put that weapon to use.

The end result was a rating in the 100th percentile as an offensive driver in Brown's manually tracked data set from the 2021-22 CHL and USHL seasons -- that number is for every skater in the pool, not just first-time draft-eligible skaters.

You likely would've read about Kyrou several pages earlier if we didn't have serious concerns about his defensive profile and some questions about certain parts of his offensive projection. The absence of a high-end skating stride could limit his effectiveness at the next level, as could his penchant for the low percentage shot.

Frankly, the defensive part of his game is a bit of a mess,

too; Kyrour regularly looks lost in his zone, unengaged and out of the play. The high-level reads that make him such a force in transition and the offensive zone seem to escape him as an off-the-puck defender. And his work rate just isn't where it needs to be.

"His defensive play left a bit to be desired in this one," Elite Prospects OHL scout Lauren Kelly noted in a February report. "He mishandled the puck at the opposing blueline and gave it away, but he did chase the puck carrier back to the Erie end and pressure him long enough to allow a teammate to steal the puck back. His gap control could use a little work as well, I found that on certain occasions his timing was a

bit off and he played 1-on-1 rushes a bit too passive, which led to him getting beat a couple of times."

You also have to take Kyrour's relatively advanced age into consideration when looking at his solid offensive output last season. If he had been born just a day earlier, he would've been eligible for last year's draft. That context matters a lot at this stage in a player's development.

Even so, there's no denying Kyrour's pure offensive upside as one of the few defencemen in this class who could one day quarterback an NHL power play. That makes the risk well worth the reward for us.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Slater Koekoek YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 96%	2 Matt Finn YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 94%	3 Ryan Wilson YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 93%	4 Ryan Rorabeck YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 91%	5 Lukas Krajicek YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 91%
6 Patrick McNeill YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 91%	7 Tom Mannino YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 91%	8 Bryan Rodney YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 91%	9 Ryan O'Connor YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 91%	10 Michael Del Zotto YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 91%

## Game Reports

**Lauren Kelly:** April 17th, 2022

Erie Otters vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Kyrour's offensive instincts are off-the-charts good. He reads opposing players, strips them at the point, and then walks into space before passing off for a teammate. I'd like to see him take the shot himself more often when he's that wide-open in the slot, though. The handling and protection skills are excellent. No-look passes to teammates, joins the rush at the right times, but maybe he's not quite as offensively dynamic as a defender like Mintyukov. His skating isn't perfect and he can lack the necessary acceleration to help him kill plays effectively in his own end at times. Good retrievals and breakout passes. Picked up a primary assist on the powerplay. Likely a second-rounder at this point, but he needs to build consistency next season.

**David St-Louis:** April 15th, 2022

Erie Otters vs Windsor Spitfires - OHL

Kyrour's offensive game is still focused on shooting more than playmaking, a bit like Mattias Hävelid in Sweden, but he doesn't have the same physicality on defence and he's even more risk-prone. He opens lanes for shots, manipulates high defenders, slips pucks to teammates even while under pressure; the puck skills are very interesting, but it's the positioning and the level of care about the rest of the game that is the question.

**David St-Louis:** April 4th, 2022

Erie Otters vs Kitchener Rangers - OHL

The defensive issues are still there. It's harder for Kyrour to win battles, but he was a lot more engaged in this game, trying to establish body positioning, flying toward the boards (literally) to win retrievals, and his rush defence, in general, was a strong point in terms of posture, backward skating, no overreaching. Kyrour is an asset on the breakout: quick puck-moving toward open players and an ability to feint forechecker. It's offensively that you see his hockey sense the most: problem-solving, adaptability (picking the best option), his patience to let lanes develop, his ability to open them with movement and fakes, and his supporting ability. He tends to overcomplicate some plays, however. His realistic upside is a bottom-pairing, maybe number 4, powerplay number #1 for me, a kind of specialist. I'm not sure how much his defence will improve, especially due to his size and skating.

**David St-Louis:** March 27th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. Erie Otters - OHL

This was a much worse performance from Kyrour. A lot of failed plays, a lack of awareness, and plenty of bad judgments of risk. He tried to carry the puck, but the speed was limited and he got caught by the backcheck a couple of times. He made plays harder for his teammates all game long, by not supporting them adequately, by missing activations, and failed some manipulations. The skating has good weight

transfers, but it's wide, inside-edge focused; there's a lack of ankle flexibility, but I still think he has the potential to be more dynamic. He was just as loose defensively as usual in this game. I like the ideas, but the execution was generally poor in this game.

**David St-Louis:** March 24th, 2022

Niagara Icedogs vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Kyrou is one of the best playmakers in the draft. That's for sure. He can fake defenders, dangle around them, and most of all, he looks for the best play he can make and he has the processing speed to find it quickly or hold the puck until it appears. He attracts defenders on himself to create space for others and can create lanes. He supports offensive plays, especially backdoor attempts. The skating is problematic, a total lack of ankle flexion brings his torso over the ice. The defence is overly committing. He needs to use his stick better and improve his pivots and backward strides.

**David St-Louis:** March 19th, 2022

Erie Otters vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

A looser performance from Kyrou, especially in his transition game. My expectations for him in that facets are very high and they have to be: if he makes the NHL, it will be as a transition/offensive defenceman. He can't be missing easier plays in the OHL. In general, his retrievals are high-level, especially in the way he picks up pucks off the wall: instantly, with smooth skating moves to separate from the opposition, and continue his course without really slowing down. He has a great feel for pressure, for defenders approaching him, even if he's not necessarily scanning for them; he anticipates their course and knows how to make them commit and beat them. The skating speed and acceleration is problematic, but he's agile. Defensively, he's not moving ahead of the play, but had some good angling and even managed to box out a couple of opponents. Decent rush defence, but only when he doesn't have to skate backward for a while (when he has support and can gap up early). Offensively: a lot of creativity, including a weird between the legs move that was dangerous and not effective, but that proved so confusing that the defender lost his coverage. There is planning to his offensive moves; some of them serve a purpose: a fake to open up a passing lane, for example. A lot of improvisation, too, and he's pretty good at figuring it out as he goes. The shot is dangerous, but not necessarily on its own; it's because he improves his location constantly by beating defenders and attacking space.

**David St-Louis:** March 14th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Kyrou's defensive game needs serious work, both in his awareness and close-outs. When he's first on the puck, he can establish body positioning and win them somewhat, but when the offensive presence of the other team extends, he loses track of his coverage, double-covers the wrong player, or just lacks energy. This lack of defensively ability is a serious limiter of his projection. The offensive game, the manipulation is still very interesting, especially because it happens so quickly due to great habits (hip pocket fakes) and processing speed (IDs teammates and the next defender quickly). I'm not sure what to make of him overall right now. The hockey sense goes from a 5 grade to a 7-8 grade depending on the sequence and this makes me think that Kyrou has just honed certain patterns in his game. I'm not sure he's all that adaptable.

**David St-Louis:** March 18th, 2022

Kitchener Rangers vs. Erie Otters - OHL

A lot of wow moments from Kyrou in this game. The manipulation has perfect timing more often than not; the feints are completed; and the step arounds move, too. He reads plays in a fraction of a second and has good awareness habits, too. The hockey sense ranks very high for me. The skating is an issue. What happens when opponents aren't coming at him in straight lines anymore? Still the retrieval game should continue to be a strength in the pros and the point quarterbacking, too. He has no defensive recovery ability. He has to learn to make precise reads and move ahead of the play, but we see some defensive techniques in his game that look to be refining: cutting at the hands, angling, stick lifting, scanning... He's a very interesting project.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 26th, 2022

Erie Otters vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Another game, another standout performance from Kyrou. The offence is still his best element. He chooses the right times to activate, especially on the weak side. A constant shooting threat because of his movement, and he's a skilled shooter off the pass. Looks like a 6-grade shooter, minimum. Lots of NHL qualities including the quickness of his weight shift, pass receptions that put the puck directly in his shooting pocket, and the timing of his release. Best sequence: killed a play in the NZ, raced ahead, took pass and fired it off the post. In general, he consistently linked defensive to offensive ideas. Still commits to the outside a bit too early when defending the rush (and he reaches), but he times his engagements. Switches off checks proactively and gets

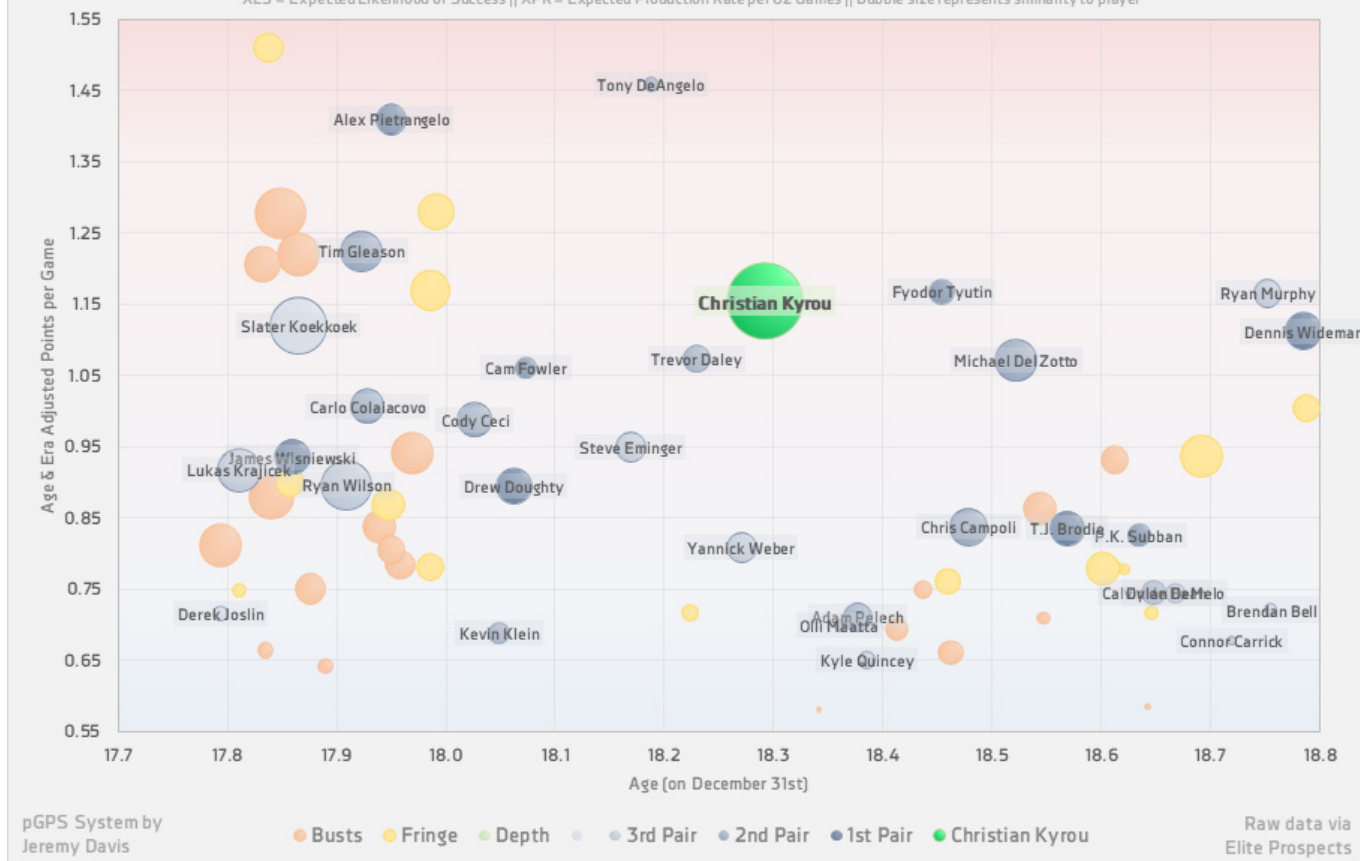


## Christian Kyrour 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 65 || Base XLS: 43% || Impact XLS: 30% || XPR: 30.2 || Drafted Pct: 82%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



diffuses complex situations. Breakout are a bit messy: he panics with forecheckers charging towards him and misses options on the inside. But he also shows a bit of adaptability and plenty of passing skill. His cross-ice passes consistently lead the target into space, and he hit a long-range breakaway pass off a set play. The skating will require work – better ankle flexion, hip engagement, and tightening up the stride mechanics – but he looks like a potential No. 4 or 5 with PP ability. High second in this class.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 16th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Kyrour picked up three assists in this one, although only one was a primary point. Two of them came off strong outlet passes to teammates. He was activating from the point, jumping up into the rush, exploiting open areas in the defensive coverage, and stickhandling with the puck to slow pace down and back players up to create space. He had a lot of puck touches and opportunities to control it early on in the game, but wasn't able to create anything off of them. Had one pretty bad giveaway at the opposing blueline on the powerplay and had to interfere with the player who stole the puck to stop him, though he didn't take a penalty. A lot of his shots were blocked. I thought this was a really

good example of the type of player Kyrour will be at the next level, constantly creating opportunities for offence while not making too many defensive mistakes (though giveaways are likely to be common with him given the style of hockey he plays). I like him in the second round right now.

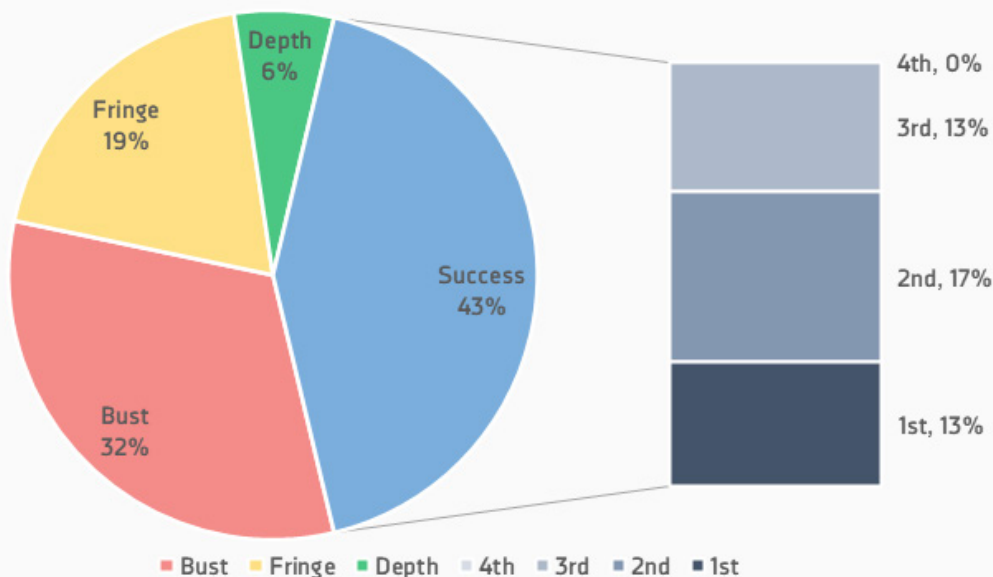
**Mitchell Brown:** February 10th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Erie Otters - OHL

The number of ways that Kyrour creates offence isn't too far behind Mateychuk and Mintyukov. I question how the handling skill will translate the next level given that he always slows down and straightens his legs, but it's has both the creativity and reaction speed to beat players inside pass receptions and occasionally beat them from the point. Draws incoming pressure to the outside, then cuts towards the middle as they turn their feet toward the boards. Grabbed a trio of points, two of them by activation sequences. He doesn't sprint past his check, instead taking a slower pace approach. He'll arrive to the OZ late, which his teammates anticipate. DZC becomes activation if he's above his forwards, which often happens. Shooting's his preferred play, owning a 6-or-higher shot. A curl-and-drag wrister resulted in his goal, completing the drag before turning his toes inside to slow down (creating distance between him and the defender),

## Christian Kyrou 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



then firing. A better set-up would've avoided that problem entirely, but it was still a clever play. Misses the odd opportunity to set up teammates, particularly when he's activating to shoot, but he also created a pair of chances in this game. Breakouts: uses the middle, looks cross-ice/lane for options, occasionally deceives, and makes decisions fast. Adding a delay game will be the next layer here. The usual stuff defensively: he's inconsistent, with his peaks being positive and his lows being far from crippling. Tightening up his gap control, DZC (he chases), and pivots (doesn't load up his pivots and times them poorly) are the key areas for growth. A second round pick with No. 4 or 5 upside.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 10th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Kyrou had three points in this one, though two were secondary assists. His first point, he wasn't directly involved in the goal, but his second saw him send a breakout pass up the ice. On his goal, he was the only one in the OZ and stole the puck, stickhandling before scoring from the high slot. His activations off the point are well-timed and among the strongest that I've seen out of this OHL draft class so far. Good player in transition but again his passive tendencies in defending the rush were evident in this one. Decision-making for the most part is good, and he definitely doesn't seem tentative or uncertain when he has possession, though he could benefit from delaying his plays slightly instead of getting the puck off his stick quickly (whether through shooting or passing off). His recent uptick in production is bound to turn some heads if it hasn't already. I like him as a second rounder.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 9th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Erie Otters - OHL

I love Kyrou's offensive instincts. He's a great skater and for the most part, kept incoming rushers to the boards before winning 1-on-1 battles and turning play up the other way. He had two goals in this one, the first where he activated off the point to open ice and fired a shot in the slot. His second goal came off him starting the rush, passed off and created an odd-man rush with his speed, then kept his stick on the ice to bury a backdoor pass. His defensive plays left a bit to be desired in this one - he mishandled the puck at the opposing blueline and gave it away, but he did chase the puck carrier back to the Erie end and pressure him long enough to allow a teammate to steal the puck back. His gap control could use a little work as well, I found that on certain occasions his timing was a bit off and he played 1-on-1 rushes a bit too passive, which led to him getting beat a couple of times. Definitely looked like a top-64 pick in this one.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Erie Otters vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

So, Kyrou's very good. At least some of his success can be attributed to his situation and role: he's a shooter who activates regularly, often finding himself in positions that many defenders don't. In a way, he's a bit of a Denton Mateychuk, without the high-level details - the defensive timing, activation routes/instincts, give-and-go game, and playmaking - that make Mateychuk's projection easy despite the average-ish tools. Kyrou uses his teammates in transition with passes to the inside and then playing off them, but he

prefers to use his handling skill to beat defenders himself. While his top hand positioning enables superior control and he's no doubt a skilled skater, he straightens his legs and glides before making his moves. Fixates on shooting, but not crippling so. There was one play where he deked through a defender instead of simply passing for the higher value, less risky play. His engagement after activating – exchanging with teammates, occupying the slot, extending the cycle – suggest there's more value had once he's activating into the play more regularly. Defence: over-extends and has pivoting limitations, but he was on his check early in this game, making the issues more tolerable for projection purposes. Skating lacks depth, especially with the puck on his stick. Punch turns, crossovers, lateral movement are strengths but will require better posture to keep this advantage in the NHL. He's very much a project, but a team that promotes activation will find value in a 6-grade shooter who seeks to improve his positioning on nearly every touch. Probably a second rounder for us.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

Kyrou's activation and transition abilities both stood out in this game. They didn't look significantly above-average, but he looks for teammates up the middle, joins the rush, and shows both playmaking and shooting ability. Missed the best options on a few sequences, even ones that were comparatively easy to hit. Scans but inconsistent pressure management on retrievals, leading to breakout issues. Beat a bunch in transition, primarily from a passive gap control. Didn't look like a draft pick in this game, but this was a tough game for Erie.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 3rd, 2021

Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

Impressive performance from Kyrou, who led both teams in ixG and didn't concede a single zone entry against. His chances ranged from mundane point shots to more advanced rush sequences. Turned a cross-ice breakout pass into two looks: arriving late and stepping into space before firing, and then drawing incoming defender towards the middle, pushing wide, and ripping a shot. Best was a give-and-go where he cut across the front of a defender just at the time of the

pass for a HD look. The shot's at least a 5.5 projection, as he consistently elevates his elbow, keeps his hands in front, and generates significant downforce with a sudden shift as he drives the inside edge of his front leg into the ice. Some crafty playmaking sequences, usually quick passes to the inside. Lots of upside as a puckhandler, combining hand speed with a pushed-in-front top hand for superior control. Move selection and puck positioning (more hip pocket placement) are areas for development. A lot of his transition ideas are sound, like delaying before hitting a teammate building speed under the puck or passing cross-ice, but he doesn't make these passes in motion. A sequence where he skated directly into the next layer with no clear escape route suggests a lack of foresight. Closed space early, getting on his check around the red line and forcing dump-ins and poor decisions. Over-extends. The stride lacks some hip engagement and his average skating posture is relatively poor, even if he's a skilled skater with evasiveness, quickness, and agility. Well-timed mohawk use. Separating upper and lower body inside turns will give him more explosiveness on retrievals and enhance his OZ play (through more explosive lateral movement). Looked like a top-50 prospect in this class, easily. Lots to work with both tools and decision-making.

**J.D. Burke:** November 6th, 2021

Windsor Spitfires vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Just dreadful hockey game from start to finish with very little flow or pace, and as such, an incredibly difficult evaluative environment. Kyrou's puck touches were limited, but there were some interesting moments all the same. He was a confident, decisive puck-mover in this game, not afraid to use the middle of the ice, and connecting with bank passes regularly. Showed some real problem solving ability under the duress of the Spitfires forecheck, too. Made a brutally poor read on a loose puck in space, overcommitting to a puck he couldn't win, and conceding a clean breakaway's worth of space behind him. Luckily, nothing came of it but a scoring chance, but it was a stunning display of poor decision-making meeting poor execution as a defender with time and space – Kyrou effectively created a Spitfires breakaway where one was easily preventable with the appropriate read. Looks like a mid-round project.





40  
Rank

B  
Grade

3.5  
Skating

6  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

5.5  
Puckhandling

6.5  
Hockey Sense

6.5  
Physical

# RUTGER MCGROARTY

C | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. MAR. 30, 2004  
WEIGHT 205 SHOOTS LEFT

91%	72%	58%	1.65
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	60	33	49	82
USHL	27	11	26	37
WJC-18	6	6	5	11

> Committed to Univ. of Michigan

## Scouting Report

Rutger McGroarty's game checks a lot of boxes that you look for in a future NHL forward.

At the top of the list, there are his leadership qualities. The USNTDP rewarded his engagement on and off the ice by anointing him captain this season, a role that suited him perfectly. His teammates could draw inspiration from his style of play, specifically his ability to balance creativity and physicality.

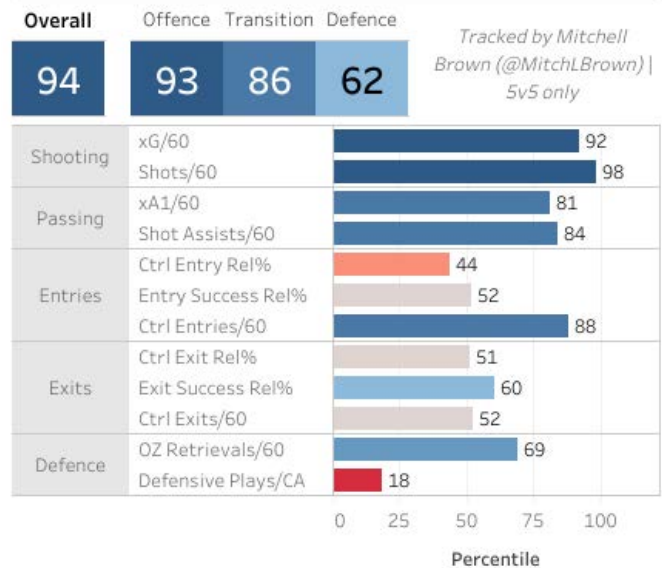
McGroarty is a fierce competitor along the boards. He fights through opposing sticks to win pucks, protect them, and move them to teammates. And he can do the same around the net. A lot of his goals this season came from rushing that area, specifically the far-post, as his teammates cycled the puck around the zone. When they freed themselves from pressure and turned toward the cage, McGroarty was there, ready for a tap-in.

There is a sense of timing and anticipation in McGroarty's net drives.

"McGroarty does a lot of things really well but the most translatable and impressive is simply understanding where the play is going and how to situate himself best to maximize his chances," Elite Prospects Dir. of Film scouting Cam Robinson wrote in an April game report. "He's clearly a highly intelligent player and this game was no different. He sat in coverage and then simply slid out to enter into a pocket when a pass could be made."

His hockey sense also shows up in his playmaking, in his awareness of options all over the ice, and his ability to

Games Tracked: 12 | Minutes Tracked: 174.4



manipulate defenders; McGroarty can feint to open passing lanes and slip, hook, or saucer the puck inside them.

The forward's skating prevented him from joining other well-rounded USNTDP talents, like Logan Cooley and Frank Nazar, at the top of our board.

"McGroarty's skating remains the big question mark," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a March game report. "I'm confident that he has enough skill to overcome it. His physical game remains a strength, even with skating limitations. He can't out-leverage, so he outsmarts. He delays and waits for the pressure to lean on him, then spins away and relies on passing over individual skill in transition."

His hunched-over stride affects every aspect of his game, not only his speed and agility. It limits his ability to lean against opponents to cut toward the net, to dangle them off the rush (as he can't shift his weight smoothly enough to sell defenders on a fake), and to recover the puck after a mistake. McGroarty had no issue matching the pace of USHL opponents this season, but as he rises in level, his strength and motor might not be able to compensate for his

inefficient stride mechanics.

Most of our scouts are confident that, despite the below-average skating, McGroarty will find ways to create plays in the NHL in a middle-six role. His mobility limitations may have had a positive effect already; they forced him to adapt his game, to find workarounds, many of which will still serve him in the top league.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Thomas Vanek

YEAR: 2002

SIMILARITY: 90%

2 Johnny Gaudreau

YEAR: 2011

SIMILARITY: 78%

3 R.J. Umberger

YEAR: 2000

SIMILARITY: 78%

4 Jaden Schwartz

YEAR: 2010

SIMILARITY: 78%

5 Chad Rau

YEAR: 2005

SIMILARITY: 77%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

USA vs Germany - U18s

You saw McGroarty's problematic skating on his next drive. He has trouble with flexibility, rotating his hips, flexing his ankles, keeping his upper-body in a stable position. He can't wall off the puck with his leg as he drives toward the net as he's so hunched over. He's creative, probably just as talented with the puck as a Cooley or Snugerud or Nazar, but the limitations are great, too. He's worth a reasonably high selection, but don't underestimate the impact of skating. Here, it's not just speed, but how it affects everything else.

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Czechia vs USA - U18s

Sometimes, McGroarty attempts to dangle opponents off the rush 1-on-1. He heads straight at them and attempts to shift his weight one way and then explode the other way around them, with pull-push handling move. It doesn't work. He just doesn't have the skating ability to pull it off, and the fact that he doesn't seem to realize this is a bit worrisome. I value self-awareness as it goes hand in hand with risk management. And at higher levels, where turnovers are so costly, that risk management matters. He is a legitimate playmaker here, however, and that can't be ignored. He can delay plays to let them develop and manipulate through deception, not through movement.

**Cam Robinson:** April 24th, 2022

Canada vs. Czechia - U18s

McGroarty does a lot of things really well but the most translatable and impressive is simply understanding where the play is going and how to situate himself best to maximize his chances. He's clearly a highly intelligent player and this game was no different. He sat in coverage and then simply slid out to enter into a pocket when a pass could be made. The

result was two goals and a couple other dangerous attempts. On the first goal, he showed great hustle and anticipation to race to the line and keep an errand pass in the zone. He made a quick pass and then jumped over to space, got his body set up, received the pass and buried it from way out high with a sweeping wrister. It was a great example of how impactful he can be. But we can't talk about McGroarty without talking about the skating. Even at his quickest, the mechanics and posture are flawed to a clear extent. He needs to overhaul it significantly in order to utilize his other skills in the NHL. Here's hoping he can, because there's the makings of a very intriguing power forward here.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

I didn't like this performance from McGroarty as much: more offensive cheating and more predictable patterns. He's fairly adaptable and creative with the puck, but I think he built a specific type of game around his poor skating that won't be all that projectable to next levels. He also has the off-puck reads that Howard possess. Swap them and the results would have been the same.

**David St-Louis:** April 3rd, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Cedar Rapid RoughRiders - USHL

Every game report on McGroarty is about his skating. It has to be. It affects everything else: his handling (all in front), his close out, his speed, his acceleration, his reception, and even his awareness. But he does show an ability to adapt to the poor form. I liked his passing skills in this game, the hook feeds; he knows where teammates are and can anticipate their position, too. He played a lot on the penalty kill this game, not the most interesting facet of the game from a projection standpoint.

**David St-Louis:** April 2th, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

An impressive performance. McGroarty is aware and capable of anticipation, knows where teammates are, shows poise, timing, technique, and manipulation in passing, and also off-puck abilities: timing (not perfect but better than in first half), gap manipulation off the rush, knows which areas to attack to make himself a good scoring option (lots of far-post and high-slot drives)... I like his choices of plays overall. He's physical and defensively engaged. Yes, the skating is still the skating and it even affects his conditioning as it demands so much of him to move around on the ice, but the rest is above-average, everything else.

**David St-Louis:** April 1st, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs USNTDP U18 - USHL

This was another pretty good game from Rutger McGroarty. He found ways around his skating problems, by delaying off the rush and by becoming more of a trailing option away from the puck, but he also attempted plays that he couldn't ever pull off, like weight shift manipulations off the rush. I find him quite predictable in his patterns, too, attacking the same spot at the far-post over and over again. Defensively, he picked up his man, but had trouble catching up to him sometimes. One time, he was forced to hook to stop a scoring chance.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

The skating's bleak, for all the reasons we've written about all season. The rest of his game is exciting. McGroarty has the skills required to play with skating as a weakness. Where most players outrace, he delays with a cutback or simply entering a glide and angling away from backpressure. Those delays house his playmaking, where he's deceptive, precise, and identifying the best play. Scanning doesn't seem to be an issue anymore, but this was a wide-open game. Uses give-and-gos instead of deking, and consistently occupies the space that maximizes his odds of getting the puck back. He's a bull, too. Relentlessly attacks the inside, combining skill and physicality. Skating requires a ton of work, but he'd be a fine early second. This draft doesn't have many more skilled, intelligent players.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

McGroarty's skating remains the big question mark. I'm confident that he has enough skill to overcome it. His physical game remains a strength, even with skating limitations. He can't out-leverage, so he outsmarts. He delays and waits for the pressure to lean on him, then spins away. He's a creative,

deceptive playmaker who waits for the reaction of defenders before making the pass. Combines traditional net-front skills with more modern off-puck movement to get open and free his stick. Seems to understand his limitations or his teammates' strengths, and relies on passing over individual skill in transition. Scanning has increased across the ice. A potential third-line forward that combines retrievals, playmaking, and scoring ability. I like him in the second.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

A return to last season's form for McGroarty. The skating's ugly, but he made it work in this game (he likely won't at the next one). He deceives on retrievals, establishes body positioning early, and looks to drive to the middle. He did that in all three zones in this game. Scored with a sequence that combined in-tight handling skill, creativity, and off-puck movement. PK breakaway goal and an assist of either a wraparound or a deceptive pass to the inside. Delays at the right times, but he doesn't scan before passing. So many turnovers that were easily avoided had he looked first. Takes a bunch of LD shots, but I wonder if that's just a product of his inability to get to his desired space. He's pretty clearly a mid-second in this group. The skating's bad, but he has advanced ideas, deceptiveness, and physical game that mean he doesn't have to hit NHL average to play. He just has to get reasonably close.

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

I agree with Joey. McGroarty has interesting ideas on the ice and a soft touch on his handling and passing but the skating is a big limiter of his execution. I like his physical game, too, the way he tries to slip in front of defenders to attack the net. He can't really do it all that well because of the skating.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

I think McGroarty is probably smarter than I give him credit for, but he just doesn't have the tools to execute what he wants to do on the ice. I mean, the dude is such a poor skater. There's a weird kicking in his stride that looks like he's doing plyometrics on ice and he lacks any kind of explosiveness. The instincts, however, are good. McGroarty loves to drive to the short side post and has the strength to bully defenders with and without the puck. In his own zone, he's strong on the wall and has the awareness to make a good outlet pass on the breakout. The skating and lack of mobility is simply too egregious for any kind of high-round projection.

## Rutger McGroarty 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 5 || Base XLS: 91% || Impact XLS: 91% || XPR: 69.4 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

McGroarty's still fascinating. The skating's a problem, but improve his mechanical consistency, and his puck protection and shot suddenly get a lot better. Already, he knows when to cut back and how to deceive incoming pressure. Shooting game has similar tricks (in-stride wristers). Occasionally opens up a passing lane with a bit of deception. Took a bunch of medium-danger shots in this game when he could've cut inside and created something better. It requires some imagination given how limiting the skating is right now, but I can see a hard skill winger with some playmaking touch. He'd be a fine mid-second.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Does McGroarty do much besides banging and crashing down low? There's not a whole lot of offensive awareness with the puck and his skating technique prevents any sort of explosiveness off the rush, which is what you would hope for from a kid of his strength and size. A few errant passes through this one, a couple nice plays along the wall where he facilitated transition with a chip or short pass. He works his tail off on the forechecker and the threat of getting hit by him is clearly

something that intimidates opposing players. So, that's worth something? Personally, I don't see him as a first rounder.

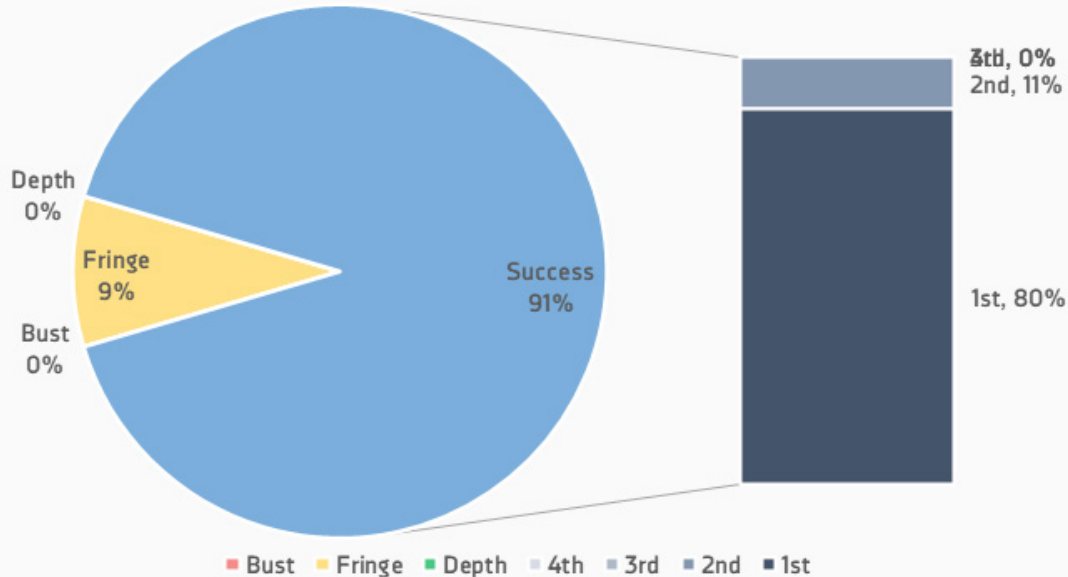
**J.D. Burke:** January 8th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDUP U18s - USHL

The skating is such a serious problem. No real explosiveness whatsoever. He's clumsy. His posture is hunched over. He can't really engage his outside edges or evade pressure in the small-area game. Didn't like his off-the-puck routes either. Crowded teammates on the rush and failed to recognize space and shooting opportunities as plays developed; likewise, didn't make himself available as an outlet. His line got dominated in this one at 5-on-5, spending large chunks of the game in their zone, and getting out-scored 2-0 in that play state. McGroarty was at his best at the net-front on the power play, where he easily wards off pressure with his relatively thick build. Picked up a power play goal on a second rebound opportunity. Some advanced plays on the puck, including a look-off feed from below the goal line to a streaking Isaac Howard down the opposite wing for a Grade-A chance. Pulled off an absolutely brilliant bank pass under pressure on an offensive zone puck retrieval at one point. Full marks for working his ass off in this hockey game. You love to see that motor.

## Rutger McGroarty 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Rutger McGroarty is physical when he can catch up to the play. He has trouble executing outside edge manoeuvres like cutbacks and rapid change of direction. He skates hunched over and has to fight his form to execute most plays. He had one great hook pass in this game on a 2-on-1. He got the puck in the wide-lane, attracted the defender to that side of the ice, waited for support, and slid the puck along his blade to his teammate across the ice. The offensive skills are there with him, but the skating will continue to limit his game and I'm not sure if he is smart enough off-puck to really offset that disadvantage. I see some moments of good space reading abilities from him.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I didn't see the same skating limitations in this game that I've seen previously. Same mechanical issues, but he didn't lack quickness or pace. He primarily used that to gain the zone, pass, then get open for a shot. He lacks the lower body engagement to get the most out of his upper body shooting mechanics. Requires a lengthy dust-off before firing sometimes, which killed one of his better looks. Inefficient passing performance from inconsistent scanning and pressure reading, but he also flashed a delay game and a slip passes. I think McGroarty has more runway than most of the NTDPers. He's clearly an advanced thinker, but often seems to play faster than his feet allow. But his inefficiency might just come from his inconsistent skating posture, which limits his puck control. Tough player to evaluate. Probably more of a second rounder, but I can definitely see his

game becoming worthy a first-round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

McGroarty had two excellent examples of deception without scanning. He tried to fool defenders, but then simply passed to no one. This is really a part of his game, however. He had advanced ideas, but he doesn't look – he just assumes. He had another sequence where he manipulated a defender's stick, but then shot – the whole point of the manipulation was to create the passing lane! He's just running the scripts. Still, that he's trying this stuff is encouraging, even if concerning. He's still a bull with the puck, trying to bring it to the inside immediately. I think that's the core of his game at the next level, unless the skating and scanning really come along. Third-line upside, but a tricky one. Maybe a second or third rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

McGroarty's game is limited by his skating, even at this level. His feet kick wildly and his depth changes between strides. He struggles to consistently win races, separate from pressure, and maintain possession along the boards. Intelligent defenders can run him out of space in the NZ and force a dump-in or poor pass. Otherwise, he's a reasonably crafty attacker. He identifies passing options quickly, often connecting with the best one. Threatening shooter from medium-danger areas, and he shows the inception of off-puck timing. Breakaway goal after dislodging a puck in the DZ, and firing short-side after setting up for the far-side look. Crafty. But that's all I saw from



him in this game. Nothing that suggests he'll become a top-six forward, even with skating improvement. Probably more of a second-rounder.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 26th, 2021

Buff State vs. NTDP U18s - NCAA

McGroarty plays the power forward role well, he drops his shoulder and drives the outside lane towards the short side post. Sometimes he fires off an ill-advised shot, sometimes he takes the back of the net and looks for more options. It's usually a toss. He's strong on his skates and uses his might in the defensive zone to pin opponents and help create turnovers. However, I just don't see the creativity, skill, or upside, to make him a first-rounder. So much of his game is limited by a wide skating base that stops him from being explosive. He'll employ a well-thought move or fake, but he doesn't have the ability to explode out of it, so the defender doesn't get exposed. He's a project and I haven't seen enough out of him to justify a top-32 pick.

**Daniel Gee:** October 9th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

McGroarty didn't play a lot, around 16 minutes in total against Muskegon, but he was fairly impactful from a shift-to-shift basis.

Offensively, McGroarty generates a ridiculous amount of value by leveraging his strength, being a monster on the perimeter, and finding open ice in high-danger areas to leverage his powerful wrist shot. In this game in particular, McGroarty opened the game with the aforementioned habits; out-muscles man on faceoff, wins the battle below the goal line on the retrieval, executes behind the back pass, and shifts to the far-boards to support the cycle, before finally planting in the hash marks with his stick set. His play under sustained pressure was really encouraging. He constantly re-files up the middle of the ice, jumps in between pressure to open pass seams for his teammates, and just loves to battle through box-outs. He scored a goal on a cycle sequence where he rotated to open up a pass lane, receiving a pass with his stick set in the hash marks -- he leveraged the threat of his shot to freeze the goaltender and defenders to deke and score on the backhand. His presence as a net-front screen was also impactful -- he ended up boxing out a defender on one play in the third, allowing his teammate in the bumper position to score on a rebound. Lots of crash-and-bang plays on retrievals below Muskegon's blueline with a lot of great body positioning/shielding habits.

McGroarty was equally dangerous on transitional attacks. Like in sustained sequences, off-puck he always has his hands ready to shoot, and has some ability to up his pace to get in behind defenders. In the second, he assisted on a breakout, upped his pace to create a 2-on-2, drove the net hard, but the

eventual pass was blocked in the blue-paint as he crashed. On-puck, while McGroarty doesn't possess enough two-step explosiveness to separate and drive, he's shockingly capable at processing and handling fractured breakout passes, popping bouncing pucks through legs, and transitioning into attack sequences. One of these plays happened in the third, creating a 3-on-1; he did a good job passing to the slot, but the give-and-go pass back was disrupted -- the line still scored later. Passing skill is solid - can pass into space, hook the occasional puck. Other on-puck plays didn't go as well. While he had a couple nice shots off the wing, I question how well he can shoot around defenders -- need to see more. Couple of failed one-on-one dekes -- idea was good, execution wasn't.

McGroarty keeps it pretty simple in the defensive zone. I'm not sure he's the most active scanner due to a lack of mental mapping through head checks. He supported really well in this game, however. Assisted on breakouts, helped win battles with his strength. His stride is the biggest issue. It's mechanically a mess. He doesn't cross his boots in the crossover and possesses an insane initial hop. He fails to get his knee bent past his toes, collapsing at his hips. Recoveries are wide off his left leg and he skates on his tippy toes. Pace really isn't an issue so I assume he's survived through the leveraging of that more than anything.

**David St-Louis:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I liked McGroarty defensive involvement in this game and the way he constantly used teammates to advance the offensive play. He reloaded the puck back to his defencemen and sent the puck into space for teammates rushing. He has no choice but to make these passing plays as his skating is a problem even at this level. He can't really separate from opponents due to his wide, hunched over stride, and those skating issues also limit his escapability in small-areas. He attempted skate fakes to elude defenders along the boards, but obviously the opponents didn't bite as they weren't convinced as there was no shift of weight. That weight is stuck between his two feet at all times. His off-puck game makes for some of those mobility issues, but I'm not sure how projectable his game is.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

McGroarty has some redeeming qualities in his defensive play and spacing off the puck, but it's hard to get past his skating. It's really bad. A lack of knee bend and extension prevents him from being explosive at all. He's just got no pace, no ability to manipulate defenders, and it's hard to project him from that reason alone. He plays strong and is decent in small areas

# "Most of our scouts are confident that, despite the below-average skating, McGroarty will find ways to create plays in the NHL in a middle-six role."

where he can kind of bully his way to where he wants to go, but I'm not sure how sustainable that will be. He's probably a pick but I'm really lost on some of the first round projections he's been getting.

**David St-Louis:** September 17th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

McGroarty scored a hat trick in this game, showing a lot of small-area skills. He managed his space well on his first release, speeding past a defender at a right to get into space and stick lifting him to prevent a shot-counter. He also fired with a drag shot instantly after the puck bounced to him in the slot, and he manipulated a last defender off the rush by faking a pass across -- there was no teammate there -- freezing a defender before cutting inside his space to attack the net and slip the puck past the goalie. Timing, manipulation abilities, and firing skills. Lots to like, but the skating is a problem. McGroarty is really hunched over and his freedom of movement is limited.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

McGroarty's not slow, he's actually somewhat quick for this level, but he has significant mechanical hurdles to overcome. I'm sure much of its strength, but his strides and depth are never the same. An intelligent handler with an inside mentality. He wants to bring the puck to the inside at all costs using a variety of deceptive moves and handling skill. Strong off-puck movement in this game, too -- generally positioned to get the puck back. Wasn't a high-event game, but he looked like a possible top-64 pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

The star of the NTDP in this game. McGroarty has nearly the full tool kit. He manipulates pressure with handling, hesitation moves, eye deception, and actively moves defenders to create passing lanes. He's a high-volume passer who consistently hits teammates on the inside, even his deliveries aren't always perfect. The way that he turns perimeter plays into high-quality inside lane touches is so advanced for this team. Off-puck movement, perhaps not timed movement, but he plays in and around contact and keeps his stick free, which directly led to a goal. Only major issue is that skating. Extremely inconsistent hip depth, driven from zero ankle flexion. His feet strike the ice at all sorts of different angles. Strides are extremely inconsistent. A lot of this is strength, and he plays, but I'm curious to see how it improves. First-round skill.

**Russ Cohen:** December 15, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

He played first line left wing. When he was in the offensive zone he was unselfish setting up teammates instead of taking a shot that might not get through to the goaltender. He may not be pretty to watch in regards to his skating but he gets up the ice well enough at this level. The release on his wrist shot is much better this season. It's faster. Muskegon had a hard time handling him in the offensive zone.



41  
Rank

6  
Skating

6.5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

B  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

# ISAAC HOWARD

LW | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. MAR. 30, 2004  
WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS LEFT

"I think Howard has good sense without puck, but not nearly as much with it. I think there is enough there to play in the NHL though" - NHL Scout in March 2022

57% 2022 XLS  
39% 3Y REGR. bXLS  
36% 3Y REGR. iXLS  
1.78 SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	60	33	49	82
USHL	27	11	26	37
WJC-18	6	6	5	11

> Committed to Univ. of Minnesota-Duluth

## Scouting Report

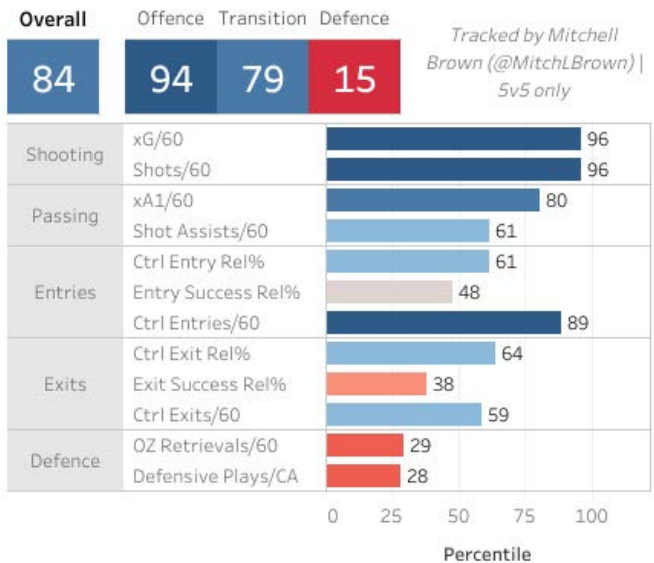
It took our team a few months to appreciate Isaac Howard's game. The USNTDP winger didn't make our top-32 board at our first meeting. He was also absent of our top-64 board in January. An honorable mention was the only indication at that point that we considered him a top two round prospect. But then, after his strong end of the season and World Championship Under-18, we came to see a clearer NHL path for Howard.

His tools were never in doubt, especially his skating and shooting, which both received significantly above-average projections. A couple of times per game this season, Howard sprinted outside of the defensive zone, received the puck in flight, and beat the line of defence to take on the goalie one-on-one. And the winger got even more scoring chances by sneaking past defenders inside pockets of space in the slot. A well-placed pass from Frank Nazar was all that it took for Howard to earn another goal.

The winger can fire off passes better than almost anyone else in the draft. His ability to control his feet and weight to load all sorts of releases quickly, one-timers and wrist-shots, allowed him to beat a lot of goalies before they even had time to move.

As a playmaker, Howard is hopeful more than creative. He sent many pucks into areas of the ice this season without checking if his teammates were there on the receiving end,

Games Tracked: 14 | Minutes Tracked: 222.4



a tendency that lead to turnovers. Contrary to his teammates, Logan Cooley or Nazar, Howard only rarely showed an ability to manipulate defenders out of lanes. Because of the inefficiency and predictability of his play, he required a high volume of puck touches to manufacture occasions for his teammates.

Howard's game should translate easily to the NCAA, but at the professional level, he won't be able to fly the zone on breakouts to catch defenders off guard. He will have to become more aware and learn to manage the puck much better.

The most projectable aspect of his game, for us, is his play without the puck, his ability to attack pockets of space and instantly fire inside them. If Howard improves his defence and overall playmaking efficiency, he could earn a career as a second-line scorer.

“His projection comes down to tools. He’s a projectable shooter, capable of firing off the pass or in motion,” wrote Mitch Brown, Elite Prospects Director of North American scouting, on March 27th, 2022 “Takes passes across the body, using the momentum of the pass to load his weight for the shot. Hands in front, elbow up – the puck explodes off his stick. I don’t see the dynamic skill that I was expecting coming into the season, and decision-making remains concerning, but his tools would make him a solid mid-to-late second.”

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Taylor Cammarata YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 88%	2 Thomas Vanek YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 84%
3 Jaden Schwartz YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 80%	4 Chad Rau YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 79%
5 R.J. Umberger YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 79%	6 Johnny Gaudreau YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 78%
7 Kyle Okposo YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 76%	8 Rocco Grimaldi YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 75%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Czechia vs USA - U18s

Howard's shooting mechanics were again the star of the show. He can fire off passes like few in this draft, one or two touching pucks on net, by directing his power fully at the net. He's sneaky with his drives still. He's climbing for me. I didn't respect some parts of his game enough, but there is a limit to how high he can move, as I still have the hockey sense concerns, and the level of competition isn't the highest here.

**J.D. Burke:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

By far the best game I've seen from Howard this season, as he collected four goals and an assist en route to Player of the Game honours for Team USA. The first goal was especially impressive. Just a strong off-the-puck read by Howard to get between Adam Fantilli and his intended target and pick off the pass, leading to an odd-man rush the other way and the first of his four goals, as he deposited the Lane Hutson feed into a yawning cage. The second goal was sheer will, as Howard sent the puck on net right as Frank Nazar put it on his stick, and then charged to the slot to hammer his own rebound past the Canadian goaltender. The last two tallies were just a case of being in the right place at the right time; sounds easy enough, but that hasn't exactly been Howard's strong suit this season. This performance was mostly dictated by Howard's elite level tools and a high motor, but it's one of the few times this season I've thought that his sense looked like an about average tool.

**Cam Robinson:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

Well, what can we say about Howard tonight other than he was simply feeling it. Four goals based on the back of speed, puck hunting, finding pockets and making hay when given a window. His ability to work off coverage while being focused on against the Canadians was very impressive. He knows when and where to get to on the ice. We love his feet, we love his hands and shot but the awareness has long been a concern. He looked pretty darn smart out there today.

**David St-Louis :** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

Great performance from Isaac Howard who found space in the slot for his teammates to find him. I don't think he necessarily created his scoring chances, but he was the predictable, rightly positioned, finisher on many of them. I also liked his one-touch passing and his desire to attack inside; it would be better if he did it in more controlled and projectable ways, however, not by driving a pack of defenders with the puck. The off-puck game was a strong plus, in this game. Something that makes me question my initial hockey sense projection. It might require a bump.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Blowout game but I was once again impressed with Howard. He's cut a lot of the waste out of his game. He's not just racing ahead of the play and trying to catch defenders sleeping (well, not as much). He uses give-and-gos to build the offence, occasionally slows the game down, and looks for teammates in positions where he used to shoot. Timing

on his passes can be a bit off, and he's not manipulating, but there were enough flashes to believe that he's actually reading the passing lane before passing. Still, his projection comes down to tools. He's a projectable shooter, capable of firing off the pass or in motion. Takes passes across the body, using the momentum of the pass to load his weight for the shot. Hands in front, elbow up – the puck explodes off his stick. I don't see the dynamic skill that I was expecting come into the season, and decision-making remains concerning, but his tools would make him a solid mid-to-late second.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

The best Howard game I've seen all season. He ditched the volume playmaking for a couple of crafty passes and an off-puck shooting game. Made an early pass on a battle for a high-danger chance (hook pass). Won battles and races for loose pucks, establishing positioning when possible. When not, he gets low and drives the combatant into the boards. His off-puck movement still lacks the timing and inner-slot focus of the draft's top scorers – he floats and disengages. But in transition, he skates behind and around defenders, changing speeds to stay a passing option. And he can still rip it off the pass. Projection is still entirely based on tools, but when he's playing off his teammates and not needlessly complicating simple plays, it's much easier to see the upside. He'd be a fine late-second or early-third.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Howard got his goal by sprinting ahead of the play, one of many times he did that. Take that away from his game, and there's not much left. He skates fast until he loses the puck by deking when there's an open teammate, by forcing a pass that will never get through, or taking a bad shot. He's just all tools and pace, but there's no greater underlying skill here. He doesn't manipulate defenders or even deceive much. I know he's scoring, but I still don't see anything that suggests a draft pick beyond the points.

**David St-Louis:** January 22nd, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

He scores by cheating ahead of the play or finishing the creation plays of his teammates. Otherwise, he can't create with his tools, can't manipulate. He just got by on skill alone and it won't work for him anymore soon, unless he completely changes his mentality. My opinion of him hasn't changed one bit since the first month of the season. He's opportunistic and toolsy. Pretty much what I can say. Not a player for me.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 22nd, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Good stuff from Howard tonight. He didn't have to create much offensively, but instead used his speed and smarts to activate off the puck into dangerous soft spaces. Howard has a decent shot, and can fire from in tight off a one-timer or a curl and drag wrister. Earned a nice goal. Going forward, I want to see more of him as a puck carrier and offensive catalyst, using his speed, attacking defensive triangles as he does so well, and finding an outlet or creating a shot opportunity off the rush. He's too skilled to be passive in games.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Howard was as frustrating as usual, but at least the upside was obvious in this game. He took 11 shots at 5-on-5, most of which qualified as scoring chances. Projectable shooting details: across-the-body pass receptions, adjusting speed and route to stay open in transition, and arriving at the net at the right time. Threw a couple of hits and then worked the puck inside. Connected with slick curl-and-drag pass around a defender's stick, but that was about it. There were needless spin passes, never-looked passes, and poorly executed plays on otherwise solid ideas. Better scanning habits will help, but they won't save his playmaking. He doesn't manipulate or even change pace to try to open the lanes he always tries to access. And he needs to stop trying to Harlem Globetrotter basic plays. He's a pick because of his speed, shooting skill, and desire to play creatively. Lots of assembly required.

**J.D. Burke:** January 14th, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Isaac Howard is a blunt instrument. There just isn't really a lot going on there. The program loaded up the top line with Frank Nazar, Logan Cooley, and Howard, and this only made it that much more apparent. Nazar and Cooley were creating magic every shift, and they may as well have been shorthanded. There was no puck support, no movements off of the puck to create shooting opportunities from Howard. The best that he could provide that line was some defensive work and a physical presence on retrievals. Cooley and Nazar were playing eight-dimensional chess, and Howard was playing Go Fish. Howard picked up a goal in the third period, collecting a Nazar pass in motion and depositing the puck into the yawning cage. Otherwise, it was a lot of low percentage shots, spin passes that missed his teammates by a mile, and not much else. You can't fade a player with his tools completely, but there's a very hard cap on his ceiling.

## Isaac Howard 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 8 || Base XLS: 57% || Impact XLS: 56% || XPR: 67 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I'm not a fan of Howard. The more I watch him, the more I see the issues. He has above-average tools: speed, acceleration, agility, handling, passing talent, and is even a good shooter, but he doesn't really know how to maximize his tools. He always looks to make the perfect play, doesn't really manipulate anyone, needs to get the puck inside space and keep that space for a little while to make a good second play, tends to overly veil his play (look off his target so much that he misses it)... There are a bunch of inefficient Junior patterns in his game, that work at this level, but won't at the next. He's more of a mid-round pick for me. One time this game, he got the puck in the slot with plenty of space to make the last remaining defender move and fire by him, but he waited and waited and waited for a teammate so much that closed down his space and had to pass the puck to a low-danger area.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Howard was largely the beneficiary of Nazar's incredible performance in this one. He consistently put himself in situations to become a passing option transition, which set up

several of his scoring chances. In general, this was a return to the old Howard, one who reads off his teammates, finds space, and looks to shoot. The shot doesn't look any better than last season, and his set-ups remain equally frustrating. He still tries to pull pucks around defenders and shoot, but never angles his outside toe toward the inside - which means he's always shooting into shinguards. He's late to recognize passing opportunities and pockets of space, resulting in hope passes and missed return feeds. A poor first touch failed him a couple of times, including in one breakout sequence where he should've just knocked the puck into space instead of trying to handle it. Emphatic one-time finish off the rush gives me hope the Howard of last year's still here, but it's hard to justify him inside the top-two rounds with performances like these. He's mostly an inefficient attacker without much transition or defensive upside.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Some flashes of the old Howard in here: getting open for a point-blank chance, deking through a player on a pass reception before shooting, and some questionable shooting decisions. But overall, this was a continuation of my other viewings. He has limited awareness of back pressure, tries

to shoot through defenders rather than around, and forces passes that aren't there. He has the tools to manipulate, but doesn't even come close. He's a straight-line attacker through and through. He's a dead-end with the puck, which is rather paradoxical because he primarily looks to pass these days. I have yet to see draftable qualities beyond pace this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Howard had three assists in this game. The most notable one was a pass through a defender for a breakaway. Some other deliveries: hook pass after attacking the group of defenders, a give-and-go, and backhand pass after a spin to the inside. Definitely a more creative, skilled passer than before. But he has trouble linking together his shooting and passing game together, beyond one unique give-and-go that resulted in a fluttering shot from the top of the circle. He either passes and disengages, or shoots and disengages. And he still charges straight at defenders, begging to have the puck taken away. Truthfully, I have yet to see anything draftable in his game beyond pace and flashes of playmaking.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I keep waiting for Howard to look like the player he did last season. With this viewing, I'm still waiting. He's definitely a better passer than last year, or at least looks for his teammates more often. Cross-ice passes, backhand passes, and he even set up a goal with a backhand pass on a broken play. He's largely inefficient in everything that he does, passing isn't any different. He's an inaccurate passer, but more concerning, he doesn't use his skating and handling to open or even prolong passing lanes. Didn't shoot much in this game, both because of his preference to pass and because he couldn't find the space off-puck to become a threat. Fringe draft pick, based on this game alone.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 26th, 2021

Buff State vs. NTDP U18s - NCAA

Howard is a bit of an enigma. He's so obviously skilled and has all the makings of a first rounder, but he's inconsistent in how he puts it all together. He operates at a mile a minute, which is good and bad. Sometimes it's effective for the purpose of catching defenders off guard and potentially opening up a scoring opportunity, but sometimes it forces Ike's hand and causes him to make a decision before his teammates are set. This culminated in several blind centering passes and a couple flings through traffic that I was hoping he had shook in my last few viewings. The kid is a project,

but the speed and skill is so undeniably, what team wouldn't want to try to fix him?

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 5th, 2021

Adrian College vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Ike's back baby. This was by far the best performance I've seen from Howard; he was buzzing all over the ice and demonstrated intelligent playmaking habits that were lacking in my last couple viewings of him. He had a nasty assist in the first period, where he looked to be curling for a shot and moved the puck at the last minute for a backdoor tap-in. His skating is such a huge asset, he earned a goal where he just powered around a defender with crossovers and picked the short-side corner. There were no blind feeds, the times he changed up his angle on the shot worked, it was altogether just super impressive. Looked the first-rounder I thought he was in earlier viewings.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Early in this season, I've found myself wondering what I saw in Howard last season. He's forcing plays, that's for sure. Lots of blind passes into areas, or looking and still making a pass to no one in particular. Consistently passes behind the feet of his target. Limited patience and zero lane creation ability. Shooting game is mostly trying to shoot the puck through defenders. That's bad. He sets everything up like he's prime Ovi, trying to shoot through legs instead of coming in at an angle and shooting outside their feet. It's like a weird feedback loop, where he comes in, takes a bad shot, loses confidence, passes the next time down, but it's also bad, so he loses confidence in that and goes back to the bad shots. What a sentence. Off-puck instincts seemed questionable in this game, too. Didn't look like the top prospect I thought he was last season.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Didn't seem to be Isaac Howard's night tonight. He's a talented facilitator and of course, no one can deny his skating ability, but his habits with the puck were off. It was a whole lot of driving wide, shooting into traffic, not trying to create high-quality chances. Rather than using his edgework to create pockets of space, cut back in the offensive zone, and attack the middle or make a quality pass, he opted to drive full speed towards the defender's inside shoulder and either whip a cross ice pass or take a low-percentage shot with at least one defender in front of him. I've seen enough good from Howard to give him the benefit of the doubt on

this one, but it wasn't very pretty.

**David St-Louis:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. Cornell Big Red - NCAA

Howard acted as mostly a connector in this game. Cooley was the main offensive driver. Howard barely kept the puck, choosing to pass it after only a couple of touches in transition. He calmed things down on breakouts when the team tried to get rid of the puck, reloading it to his defencemen, and had a couple of good defensive moments. Overall, nothing impressive from him. His skating stands out. It looks significantly above-average, maybe not in terms of pure mechanics, but output, yes. I doubt he is a true manipulator of the game, but mostly a player who takes what is there. I don't understand his current high projection on draft boards.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Howard panics when given space with the puck. He defaults to shooting. Many of the shots are terrible decisions, and he gets so fixated on trying to rip the puck past the goaltender that he can't adapt and find a new play -- he did it three times in this game alone. Instead of fixating on the shot, he needs to try to engage a defender somehow while looking for a passing opportunity. But I don't think he manipulates defenders. He skates fast, gets pushed wide, and then tries to shoot. He makes the early pass in transition sometimes, but doesn't do much to stay involved after that. Remember, this is player who racked up high-danger chances last year and start the his NTDP career by demolishing the competition. He's forcing things, but in a different way than most. Instead of relying on the handling skill and off-puck instincts that made him effective last season, he's forcing shots. It's time to be concerned.

**David St-Louis:** October 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Cornell Big Red - NCAA

Howard lacks planning in his offensive sequences, at least in this game he did. He didn't manage to create much as no teammates looked immediately open and he seems to lack an understanding of where to move and how to move to open them. His puck protection and management needs work, too. I'd be curious to look at the numbers, but Howard doesn't seem like a great possession driver overall. I like the tools, the skating mostly and the handling skills, too.

**David St-Louis:** October 16th, 2021

USNTDP U18 vs Michigan Tech Huskies - NCAA

Howard continues to be an inefficient playmaker. Either

his teammates are really open and he finds them or they are not and he tries the pass anyway. I like his hip pocket handling, that gives him inherent deceptive qualities, and his little changes of speed to create space for himself and go wide on defenders, but I don't see much creation potential at higher levels. The only way he scores right now is by abusing what the opposition gives him. The coverage mistakes will be less and less frequent as he rises in level.

**Daniel Gee:** October 16th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs Michigan Tech University - NCAA

Howard was all over the pace in this game against Michigan Tech, flexing inherent tools and transitional prowess. The major issue in this game was effectiveness, decision making, and inefficiency.

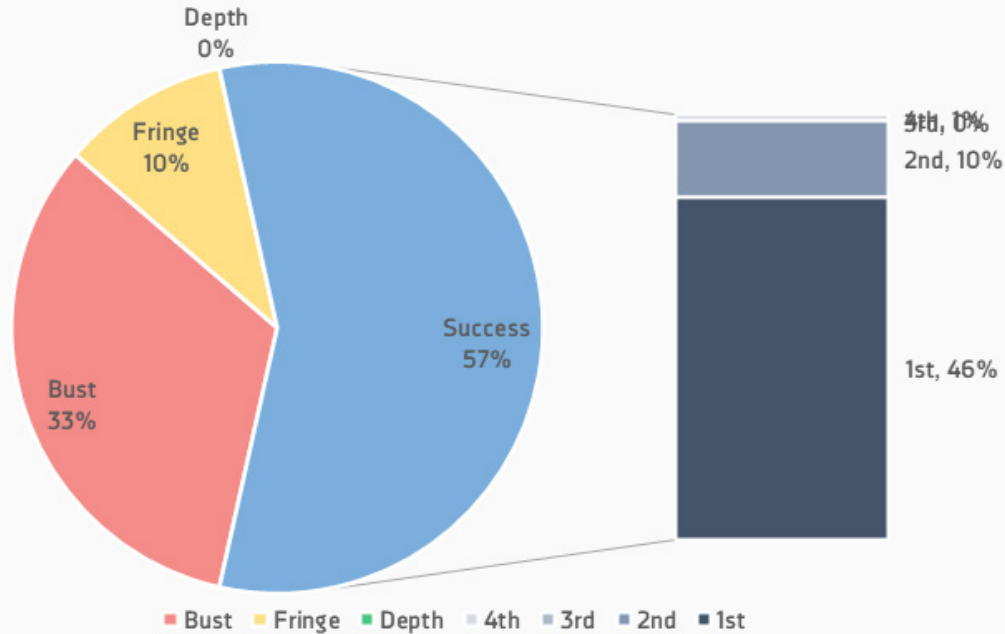
In general, stringing together actions was quite difficult for Howard in this game. Much of his efforts often ended up in predictable turnovers, born off of poor playmaking execution. Let's sample a few of his sequences. In the second, he bursted out of a defensive zone faceoff, attacking Michigan Tech's zone off the right-wing. Instead of taking the puck to the net, he flipped a bad attempt into pressure turning the puck over. On subsequent shifts, Howard made a couple of bad backhand passes in neutral zone pressure, both leading to turnovers. Even in the first, he picked up a Cooley turnover, dragged outwards towards the slot and turned the puck over on another backhand pass. The symptom here is possibly a combination of scanning errors, rushing passes/actions, and failure to recognize that he can leverage his mobility to open lanes. Telegraphed attempts and a lack of manipulation are also major factors. His play in transition wasn't all bad, however -- he was quite impressive on an abundance of other sequences. He intercepted an outlet, hooking a pass to Nazar behind the play allowing him to break in alone. Later, Howard drove the net on a decoy, allowing Cooley to ring a shot off the post on a 2-on-1. His best sequence was a one-touch pass he bumped to Nazar in the third, who heeled a shot wide. There weren't a tonne of standout sustained sequences in this game for Howard. On one play, he stopped up on the far boards, opening a pass lane and hitting Cooley in the slot for a high-danger shot -- why not manipulate earlier! All-in-all there is a base here -- he just has to leverage better.

Defensively, I thought his scanning was actually fairly competent. He shoulder peaks to build mental maps, pressures extremely hard to the perimeter to prevent inside activations, and he supports battles on the end boards. His stick is pretty active as well -- plus contributor.



## Isaac Howard 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Howard ran through the USHL early last season, starting with eight goals in four games. Didn't look anything like that player in this game. Skating-wise, he's still lacking some hip engagement and skills, but he's powerful with a high output. He mostly used that speed to attack the outside lane, run out of space, and take a low-percentage shot or throw a puck into the slot. One time, it worked. The rest, it wasn't anything of note. Didn't see any notable scoring instincts, mostly just a supporting player. He's skilled, but I don't think the decisions match. He's mostly just processing and taking open options rather than making the best play or creating options. Didn't see a first-rounder in this game, but I remain optimistic based off my viewings last season.

**David St-Louis:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

This was a better game from Isaac Howard. He abused the Force's coverage, sprinting past their last line of defence to receive the puck and score on a breakaway to open the game. I saw more glimpses of his skill, his handling ability specifically, as he moved pucks from skates to stick and threaded them around defenders to teammates. He can manipulate a bit, but he needs a favorable situation to do, like a lot of open ice or a position in the slot. He can leverage that advantage into a better one, but I find that his awareness can be limited to. He tries plays that aren't there. Howard feels like a player that outpaces and outskills the opposition more than a true creator and he isn't speedy enough or smooth

enough in his handling to still succeed with that type of game at higher levels.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Isaac Howard's game is all about tempo. He snagged a breakaway goal that he slipped through the five-hole simply by getting behind opposing defenders and corralling a hail-mary pass. The moment he crosses the offensive blue line, the hands and feet get going; he loves to attack defensive triangles and is generally successful, moving a stick one way before making a pass or shooting through a screen. I saw a diversity in his rush patterns in this one too that was encouraging. Quick crossovers in either direction helped him open up pockets of space. He played smart, creating high quality chances even if it meant slowing down and not forcing a bad-angle shot on net. He finds some consistency in his game, he's a clear first-rounder.

**J.D. Burke:** September 25th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

That Howard only finished this contest with a pair of assists seems like a cruel twist of fate. Not that I was keeping track, but it seemed like Howard created three breakaways for himself in this game with his unreal speed. Nearly perfect mechanical skating form. Some nice east-west passing in this contest. He looks the part of a high draft pick, certainly.

**"Howard's game should translate easily to the NCAA, but at the professional level, he won't be able to fly the zone on breakouts to catch defenders off guard. He will have to become more aware and learn to manage the puck much better."**

**David St-Louis:** September 17th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Howard is hyper-reliant on his teammates being open. If they are not, rarely does he make an effective play, often firing at shin pads or losing the puck trying to force a pass through a lane that doesn't exist. He overpasses. His passing skills are above-average -- he can slip pucks through opponents -- but it doesn't justify his unidimensionality.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Nothing different from last night's report: Skilled handler and skater, with exceptional body control and awareness. He wants to play on the inside, but he can't time his passes, forces passes that aren't there, and is way too optimistic about his ability to create lanes. Hasn't quite figured out how to transfer his deceptive handling into playmaking. Pushes hands forward, generates downforce, and explodes through his shots. At the very least, he should score plenty of goals next season. Active on the forecheck through high pressure, but also anticipates plays and plans accordingly. If the playmaking doesn't improve, he's probably more of a second-rounder. If it does, he could become a dual-threat -- which would make him an easy first.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Right away, Howard's skating stands out. Pushes his knees past his toes, engaged his hips, and maintains his posture in tight, while deking, or on the backcheck. His top hand moves freely around his body, which he turns into incredible

stickhandling displays. When handling, he's scanning. Adjusts body positioning to get pressure on his back, then uses hesitations and changes of pace to slip around the check. The scanning habits don't translate to his playmaking: he throws a ton of pucks into the slot blindly. Wants to play on the inside, but lacks the body positioning, determination and skills of Nazar to consistently do so. Looks the part of a top pick, for sure.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

Howard scored a tap-in, but the playmaking was the most exciting part of his game. Consistently tried passes into the slot, sometimes connecting. Didn't shoulder-check before passing out of retrievals, leading to turnovers. Sometimes passed too late, too. He attacks the inside lane from the perimeter, using east-west movement to manipulate defenders' feet. But his game lacks a stronger transition passing element. Heavily involved in the forecheck, and consistently gives himself a chance through effort. An impressive prospect beyond the shooting, for sure.

**Russ Cohen:** December 15, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

He played second line left wing in this game. His puck retrieval in the defensive zone was very good. As in most of my viewings, he had a great rush down the ice showing off some speed but he was dragged down before he could get a shot on net. He has a sneaky low wrist shot that goalies aren't ready for. Maybe they expect most players to go high and Howard doesn't always do that.



42  
Rank

B  
Grade

5  
Skating

6  
Shooting

5  
Passing

6  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# MICHAEL FISHER

D | ST. MARK'S SCHOOL

HEIGHT 6'2"  
WEIGHT 198

D.O.B. MAY 2, 2004  
SHOOTS RIGHT

"This kid is something, huh? His upside is very, very high. He could be a high-end player. He's very raw though and he's grown a tonne in the last few years."

- Western Conference scout in March 2022

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHS-Prep	28	13	37	50

> Committed to Northeastern Univ.

## Scouting Report

It took until about the midway point in the season for Michael Fisher to land on our radar, but once he was there, he was there to stay.

Simply put: Fisher may very well be the most dominant high school player we've scouted in three years of draft guide work at Elite Prospects. Certainly, he's the most dynamic and offensively gifted one to cross our paths in this time — no doubt about that.

Even Fisher's most seemingly mundane puck touches often develop into scoring chances. In no phase of the game was this more apparent than the breakout. He would go deep into his zone for a retrieval and in the blink of an eye turn that anodyne play into a highlight-reel goal at the opposite end of the ice.

Perhaps most encouraging of all was how Fisher made those plays happen. He wasn't just overwhelming opponents with straight-line speed or handling skill. Instead, each rush was meticulously planned at pace, driven by deception as much as it was natural ability. As EP Rinkside Editor-in-Chief J.D. Burke noted in a mid-season Scout's Notebook, the weight transfer was his most potent move as a puck-carrier.

"That manoeuvre -- the weight shift -- is the hallmark of Fisher's game," Burke explained. "In the absence of an explosive first two steps or real breakaway speed, the St.

Mark's defender relies on deception to create space, baiting his opponents with a feint in one direction and then throwing his weight in the opposite one."

The obvious, unspoken truth to this point in his profile is that Fisher has doubtless benefited by mostly playing in the American prep school circuit. It's about as open an environment as one will find in hockey, and one that this player probably outgrew from a skills perspective at least a year ago.

So, you probably won't see many end-to-end goals from Fisher at the next level. The number of players who can pull that sort of stuff routinely in college hockey is almost nonexistent, much less in the NHL. But you'll see that same skills package drive strong results in transition and activations from the offensive blue line.

The most projectable offensive element in Fisher's toolkit is probably his shot. Our scouts regularly caught the Northeastern-commit taking as many as 10-plus attempts in a game, most of them of the high-quality variety.

"Fisher heavily leverages his wrist shot from the point to great effect," Elite Prospects crossover scout Daniel Gee wrote in a player report. "An unlocked top arm, absurd flex, weight transfer, and downforce -- it's all there. He almost always hunted high placements -- handcuffing the opposing goalie

multiple times. He relies on volume, has a bomb of a one-timer, and regularly beats goaltenders clean with velocity."

The two most pressing concerns for our staff with Fisher's game aren't really concerns in the traditional sense so much as they are question-marks. Specifically, we don't have much proof of concept to lean on for determining his quality as a playmaker and as a defender. Fisher didn't use his linemates often because he was so self-evidently better with the puck

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** March 2nd, 2022

Portsmouth Abbey vs. St. Mark's - USHS-Prep

The biggest limiter in Fisher's game may very well be the camera. Anyway, whenever there's a player with this frame, mobility, and coordination, he's getting NHL interest. Mostly stood out for his puck rushing and shooting. He outraces players at this level with ease, but he also uses weight shifts and driving crossovers. Skating looks NHL-calibre. Takes too many shots, but that's not uncommon for players at this level. Inconsistent scanning habits, but some deceptiveness on retrievals. Right now, his puck game is mostly waiting for lanes option and then passing. Doesn't manipulate at all – he's just taking space as it comes. Translating that deceptiveness to open-ice will be key for development. Delays on breakouts, suggesting some ability to read the ice, but usually only in simple forms (cutback and rim). Projectable defensive footwork but he backpedals too far to the middle and lunges when making up ground. Lack details, failing to lead with his stick and failing to scan for threats behind him. He's definitely a prospect. The upside is high because of the shooting, handling, and skating combination. But he's far away from Rinzel skill-wise.

**J.D. Burke:** February 12th, 2022

St. Mark's vs. Middlesex - USHS-Prep

A commanding performance from Fisher, who was on the ice for St. Mark's literally every other shift and finished with a plus-six (six goals for, zero against) goal differential in all situations on the strength of a hat trick on about six or seven shots, by my reckoning. Fisher is such a gifted skater, with perfect posture and ample flexibility in all the right spots. His four-way mobility is off the charts good. The first goal was highlight-reel stuff. He just exploded past the F1 on the breakout, faking inside, then shifting back across the dotted line and taking the puck into the offensive zone before he dropped the shoulder, turned the corner on the defenceman, and beat the goaltender to the opposite post, jumping all the while for the goal. The other two goals were pretty much identical – wrist shots top-corner after a won faceoff. Fisher is such a crafty, deceptive puckhandler. There's no telling which direction he's taking the puck on defensive

than them, and his team rarely if ever had to defend when he was on the ice.

There's a lot of risk associated with drafting this defenceman, as there always is with dominant high school players. Fisher would hardly be the first elite prep schooler to struggle in the NCAA and not make much of an impact at the NHL level. He's about as skilled a defenceman as you'll find in this draft past the first 15 picks, though, and that's worth betting on.

zone retrievals, and the opposition forecheck couldn't lay so much as a finger on him for much of this game. His footwork in space and defending through the neutral zone was stellar. Fisher has some ugly defensive habits that will need to be ironed out of his game, not the least of which is a tendency to make flat-footed lunges at the puck. Could stand to scan a bit more often defending the rush, too. Overall, though, Fisher has the profile of an early Day 2 pick. I just wish he was going to not-Princeton.

**David St-Louis:** February 11th, 2022

St. Mark's vs Cushing Academy - USHS-Prep

This game is going to leave a strong impression. The skating looks like an above-average projection. Hard to tell watching on video with this low-angle, however, but the mechanics are sound: flexion, knees advancing, good back angle... The top hand is toward the hip a bit, but it doesn't impair Fisher's moves all that much. And those moves. He can walk the blue line, spin on forecheckers, and manipulate them with lateral steps; he's shot-focused but it would be easy for him to add more playmaking elements. The poise is high and the plays are risky, but he has the skill level to execute them even at a higher level. The defence was harder to evaluate as he just didn't play much of it during the game. He has a physical element to his game and seems to understand angles. He can close on opponents quite fast. A lot of tools and instinct. He could be a first-rounder, but the uncertainty of the competition might keep him down.

**Daniel Gee:** February 7th, 2022

St. Mark's vs Groton School - USHS-Prep

This was an absolutely wild game from Fisher, who was frankly dominant against Groton School. For the first half of this game, it was essentially Fisher exploiting weight-transfers and end-to-end controlled carry attempts – to my count he had 10 plus, all leading to a shot or inside rush-pattern. While this was wholly inefficient and very individualistic, it's probably more of an example of Fisher seeing openings are running with them. Regardless, he wasn't able to create off these chances, often taking shots in high pressure, devoid of manipulation or angle changes. Rush patterns devolved

very wide as Groton School adjusted to his units' transitional patterns but he handled back pressure very well -- it didn't phase him and he looked to cut off routes. His hands are really special. Toe-drag from hip-pocket holds, constantly attacking defenders' weak sides, and some real acceleration ability all makes him a large-ice threat.

With St. Marks down 1-0 in the third, Fisher scored a natural hat trick to win St. Mark's the game. His first two goals were heavily leveraged wrist shots from the point; unlocked top-arm, insane flex, and placement blocker side -- his long wind up release and real use of his stick technology a feature. The third was a bomb of a one-time 5-on-5; he stepped into a puck at the top of the right-hand circle -- velocity was crazy. His play in sustained pressure is really about the shot. He doesn't really activate much on the weak side. Again there was a lack of manipulation -- he did exploit one aggressive forward with some shoulder-shimmies and head fakes but it really isn't a constant habit.

Fisher spent little time defending in this game. Transitionally his gap and the accompanying footwork was strong -- proactive with a priority to protect the inside. When he did get aggressive, he showed some physicality that I didn't see in a previous viewing. Stapled a puck carrier and held him horizontal on the boards -- massive collision. Forced a bunch of dump-and-chase plays with his positioning. Stripped a couple of pucks with some stick work too. His best defensive play in sustained pressure was a wrap-around read in the second; essentially stripped the puck on the ring. Needs to scan more though. Looked like a definitive B prospect who has a base that can be expanded upon greatly in NCAA.

**Daniel Gee:** December 11th, 2021

St. Mark's vs Brooks School - USHS-Prep

Fisher was the best player in this game, pushing a fairly sophisticated transition game against Brooks School. Practically every end-board puck recovery that Fisher took resulted in an end-to-end carry attempt. While his skating limits his ability to really turn defenders with speed to the outside (his knees are almost 90-degrees, hips tilted, and a slight curve of his back), Fisher constantly beat F1's with the use of weight-transfers, one-on-one handles (unlocked top arm and hip-pocket protection as he faced pressure), and exploitation of poor defensive body positions. His handle selection and execution is wild. On one first period shift he carried the puck up the near boards, popped the puck

to his hip, and toe-dragged a defender, just shovelling the puck on net as the defender pushed him out of the lane. Not all individualistic though, he often looked to pop pucks to trailing teammates. Sometimes he overhandles, slows down the natural transition, and forces awkward stop-up plays for his teammates trying to stay onside -- needs calibration overall. Multiple shoulder-peeks always preceded retrievals; scanning allowed him to mental map forechecking pressure -- somewhat manipulative with direction changes but the pressure wasn't strong in this game. Some in-motion passing habits as well -- not a consistent habit as sometimes he is a bit too static when releasing.

Fisher leveraged his shot upwards of 5-6 times in this game, almost always from the right point or above the hash marks (out of a transitional activation). His shot is above average mechanically - top left arm is always unlocked, solid lower-body weight transfer, and a tonne of leveraged flex allows for a quick release. Almost always hunted high placements -- handcuffing the opposing goalie multiple times. He lacks a manipulation element, though -- almost all his shots are telegraphed through his long wind-up. Worrying for translatability, even if he got shots through in this game. Pushes pucks from the outside-to-middle. Could use his teammates better, I feel.

On the defensive end of the puck, Fisher is a bit clunky, but his habits are solid. He always is on his back heels, creating awkward pivots -- something that would get exposed at a higher level. Regardless, he almost always protects the inside lane, possesses a level of aggressiveness on perimeter activating puck carriers, and there were some scanning habits on a couple of transitional defending sequences. Gap was consistently strong in this game -- proactive mover. One major gaff happened in the first, however. A failed scan by Fisher led to an opponent slipping behind him for an easy breakaway -- maybe the habits need more time to form. In sustained pressure, Fisher is very raw. Has the frame but is missing the strength to box out opponents -- often attempting stick work plays instead (leading to multiple HDC in the crease). Fisher pushed pressure, though; he often forced rush passes out of the corner because of his quick activations. Will need to shore up body positioning, become less reactive with more mental mapping and scanning. Strikes me as a player who went through a lot of recent growth. Looked like an A/B level prospect in this one.



43  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

6  
Passing

B  
Grade

6.5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

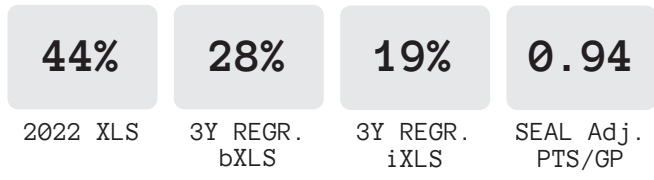
5  
Physical

# SEAMUS CASEY

D | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JAN. 8, 2004  
WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS RIGHT

"He's a really good puck-moving, offensive, power-play quarterback defenceman. He moves the puck well on breakouts, in transition, and creates offence. He's a great skater and is skilled. He's actually a pretty good defender too. It's still a challenge for guys his size to make it and make an NHL team better." - NHL Scout in April 2022



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	48	10	23	33
USHL	17	3	10	13
WJC-18	6	3	3	6

> Committed to Univ. of Michigan

## Scouting Report

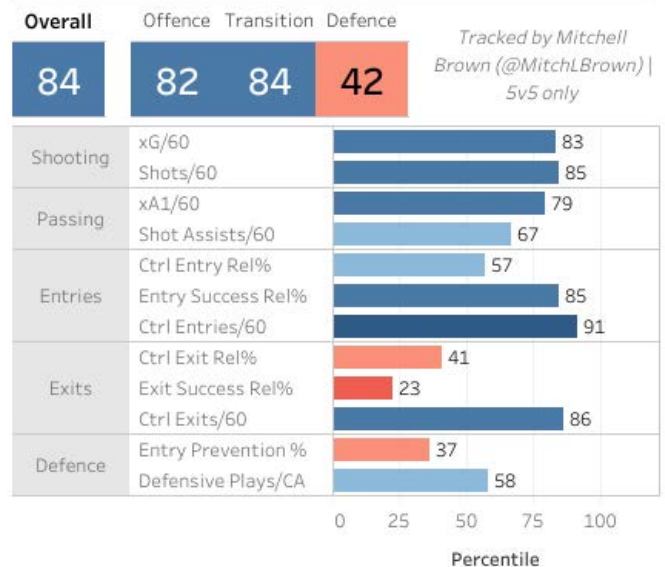
Seamus Casey isn't just one of this draft's most gifted puckhandling defencemen. He's one of the draft's most gifted puckhandlers, period. There are 16 skaters out of 313 in the Elite Prospects 2022 NHL Draft Guide with a 6.5-grade or better as a puckhandler on our 1-to-9 linear scale, and he's one of them.

His technique as a handler is nearly perfect, and he's as comfortable on the forehand as he is on the backhand; as comfortable blending the first touch or pass reception into a dangle as he is a dangle into a pass or a shot. It's a real thing of beauty to watch the right-shot defender when he's feeling it with the puck on his stick.

"Due to his high-end handling skills, Casey can make plays that are not accessible to most defencemen," Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis wrote in a Scout's Notebook article on EP Rinkside. "He can freeze defenders with fakes, drag the puck under their stick, and open them up to slide passes through their skates. His handling skill is especially useful on breakouts, where he can beat forecheckers 1-on-1 and connect with teammates in the middle of the ice, and at the top of the offensive zone, where he can manipulate defenders to create lanes for his shots."

At one point this season, we were so smitten by Casey's

Games Tracked: 11 | Minutes Tracked: 147.0



skill that we assigned him a first-round grade on our debut board; a position we spent the balance of the season walking back as we accumulated views as a team and saw lots of flash and little substance.

This phenomenon often expressed itself in the form of hope passes. Casey would handle his way past an opponent and then use his newly created space to launch a seemingly aimless pass into the slot. The sort of thing that happens

when a player isn't really planning any of his forays from the offensive blue line and into the zone and relying on pure instinct.

So while we doubtless admire his skill as a handler, we mostly see that as a tool that will confer advantages in transition at the next level rather than the offensive zone. We have far more proof of concept at the junior level to feel comfortable about that part of his projection if nothing else.

That skill as a handler allows Casey to draw in forecheckers, dart past them up-ice, and create a numbers advantage as his team gains the offensive zone. A capable short-range passer and never one to miss an opportunity for a quick break, this 5-foot-10 has already developed a fully-formed transition game, one that projects comfortably to the next level.

"Casey is just so smooth with his skating and handles, and

he rarely makes mistakes," Elite Prospects American regional scout Joey Padmanabhan wrote in a September game report. "He's elusive and has the ability to beat F1 himself on the breakout if needed. He thrives in transition play and advances the puck up ice, even if it means circling back into his own end and reevaluating options."

You couple that skill in transition with Casey's stout in-zone defensive play, and you have the basis for a potential NHL career as a third-pairing, puck-moving defenceman with some utility on the back end of each special teams unit. And if he tones down the constant experimentation and adventurism for a more predictable, perhaps system-based approach to building offence, perhaps there's something even better than that in the cards.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Torey Krug

YEAR: 2009

SIMILARITY: 88%

2 Eric Werner

YEAR: 2001

SIMILARITY: 87%

3 Bryan Miller

YEAR: 2001

SIMILARITY: 86%

4 Brett Lebda

YEAR: 2000

SIMILARITY: 84%

5 Alexx Privitera

YEAR: 2011

SIMILARITY: 84%

6 Blake Kessel

YEAR: 2007

SIMILARITY: 83%

7 Justin Faulk

YEAR: 2010

SIMILARITY: 82%

8 Joakim Ryan

YEAR: 2011

SIMILARITY: 82%

9 Michael Brodzinski

YEAR: 2013

SIMILARITY: 81%

10 Keith Ballard

YEAR: 2001

SIMILARITY: 81%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

USA vs Germany - U18s

Not much change in the projection of Casey's hockey sense. He's mostly just a dangler. He lacks awareness inside his moves; doesn't scan for his space before receiving the puck... He can process decently fast and manipulate defenders on first touch, but it's mostly skill-scripts, not creativity. There is a large gap between what Hutson can do and what Casey can do, but he has enough skill to figure out the timing and better patterns in time. The defensive game was more on point and it's trending upward as the season progresses.

**J.D. Burke:** April 26th, 2022

Germany vs. Team USA - U18s

Probably Casey's best performance thus far at the tournament. The biggest difference was just how engaged Casey was defensively, whether it was joining the rush or activating off of the blue line to get involved in sustained offensive zone sequences. Really liked the way that Casey took the puck from the wall to the inside of the offensive zone in this contest, using his best skill (his puckhandling ability) in a projectable fashion. Not that his in-zone defending has ever been in doubt for our staff, but he's been an absolute rock for the Americans defensively this entire tournament. Not

sure this changes my projection for Casey - I still see him as a Day 2 pick - but credit where it's due, because he played one hell of a hockey game for the Americans. He's just been really solid in general this whole tournament.

**David St-Louis :** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

A better defensive and puck-moving performance from Casey, but I don't see the hockey sense anymore. The plays have to be there, ready for him to take, like the multiple open stretch passes he made. However, he can't create. He's very involved but not effective or efficient.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Awesome game from Casey. He had one of the best defensive sequences I've seen from a prospect all season long. In one shift, he activated to hold the zone and prevent the exit, kept his check tight and got the steal with the pass in the neutral zone, and then tracked his check off-puck and tied their stick up just as the puck arrived. It was a great example of three-zone defence. And that was largely the story of his game. He broke up plays, eliminated off-puck threats, and minimized defensive zone time by holding the

puck. With the puck, this was more of the standard outing. He connected with a crafty look-off pass from the point. Deked around a defender, drove the inside, and fired off a chance. He also made panicked plays under pressure and needlessly cleared the puck (as a result of taking too long to make the next play). Tons of work to be done on Casey's game, and the upside isn't entirely clear. Still, his defence means that a coach will give him the rope he needs to improve his on-puck reads.

**David St-Louis:** April 1st, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs USNTDP U18 - USHL

Casey took charge a little more in this game, using his one-on-one skill to beat high defenders at the point and fore-checkers in his zone. He activated down, absorbed contact low in the zone to move the puck, caught the puck in flight to rush it up ice... The lack of planning ability or "knowing his next play" remains quite a problem in his offence. He's hyper-focused on making plays to the slot, to the net and misses possession-retaining lateral passes that would open up the offence. The reception and handling skills are still top-end. The defensive game, off the rush and in-zone, gave me flashback to some of his better early season performances.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Casey took a nasty hit in the second period and didn't return. But this was quite the performance in the early stages. On the PP, he deked around three defenders before sending backhand pass cross-slot for a chance. It's that reactionary handling coupled with the playmaking flashes that make him exciting. Showed a bit more on breakouts than normal, using the middle and hitting a cross-ice pass. Better gap than normal. When he's engaged, it's clear he's a projectable defender. He angles, kills plays early, and mirrors footwork. There are moments when he either checks out or isn't sure of what to do. Not a defensive problem-solver, but he's solid. Could be a fine second rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Casey wasn't great, but he wasn't making poor play after poor play. Grabbed an assist with a stretch pass up the middle. A crafty shot where he encouraged the defender to reach out, then shot underneath their stick. Some shiftiness on the end board and quick passes to get his team moving. Engaged defensively, and he showed a bunch of projectable defensive skills: early gap, getting stops in the NZ without overextending, eliminating the inside early. Several defensive skating mistakes, but it's clear has the ability. He didn't do a ton with the puck, and his game doesn't have much foresight.

He needlessly complicates simple passes, but still somehow never attempts the best play. He avoided using the middle unless it's painfully obvious, didn't show much cross-lane/ice vision, and didn't do anything on the offensive end. He's a bottom-pairing projection. Maybe a fine second-rounder.

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

This was a bit of a better defensive game from Casey, although Mitch's tracked stats might disagree. His gap was tighter all over the ice, better rush defence (stops plays a couple of feet inside the blue-line), and he was ahead of his man on net-drives, cutting potential passes...The issue is that Casey is entirely too focused on attracting and beating opponents, to the point where he misses completely open options. If the plays aren't scripted for him, he doesn't know what to do. I thought he was creative at the start of the season. He isn't. His skating also looks like an average projection. Form is good, but there isn't any true explosiveness there. He's falling toward a B grade for me. Actually, he's pretty much there. He had a nice stretch pass to Howard, but that's a play Howard makes 5 times per game, every game. Good precision. Passing technique, handling technique... are all strong points.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 22nd, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Kind of a bland showing from Casey. He's got the skating ability to be an absolute beast in transition but goes for the deke or stickhandle instead. Offensively, he's more efficient and is solid on the point, walking to the middle and either firing a quick wrister on net or swivelling his hips to move the puck back to the flank. He's at his best when he underhandles, he can become a liability when the game runs through his hands.

**David St-Louis:** January 22nd, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Another quiet night, except for a few dangles in the offensive zone and in transition. When Casey has a clear play in front of him, a plan traced for him, you see his skill work to get there, but he lacks imagination, especially on the powerplay, where he distributes the puck side to side without any attempt to move the defensive box or challenge defenders. It's becoming clear to me that he just doesn't know how to use his skill. I got overexcited about his game in the early stages of the season, thinking he would expand on his reactive dangles, his spin moves, and his (at the time) aggressive rush defence. It hasn't happened. It's a lesson in patience for me.

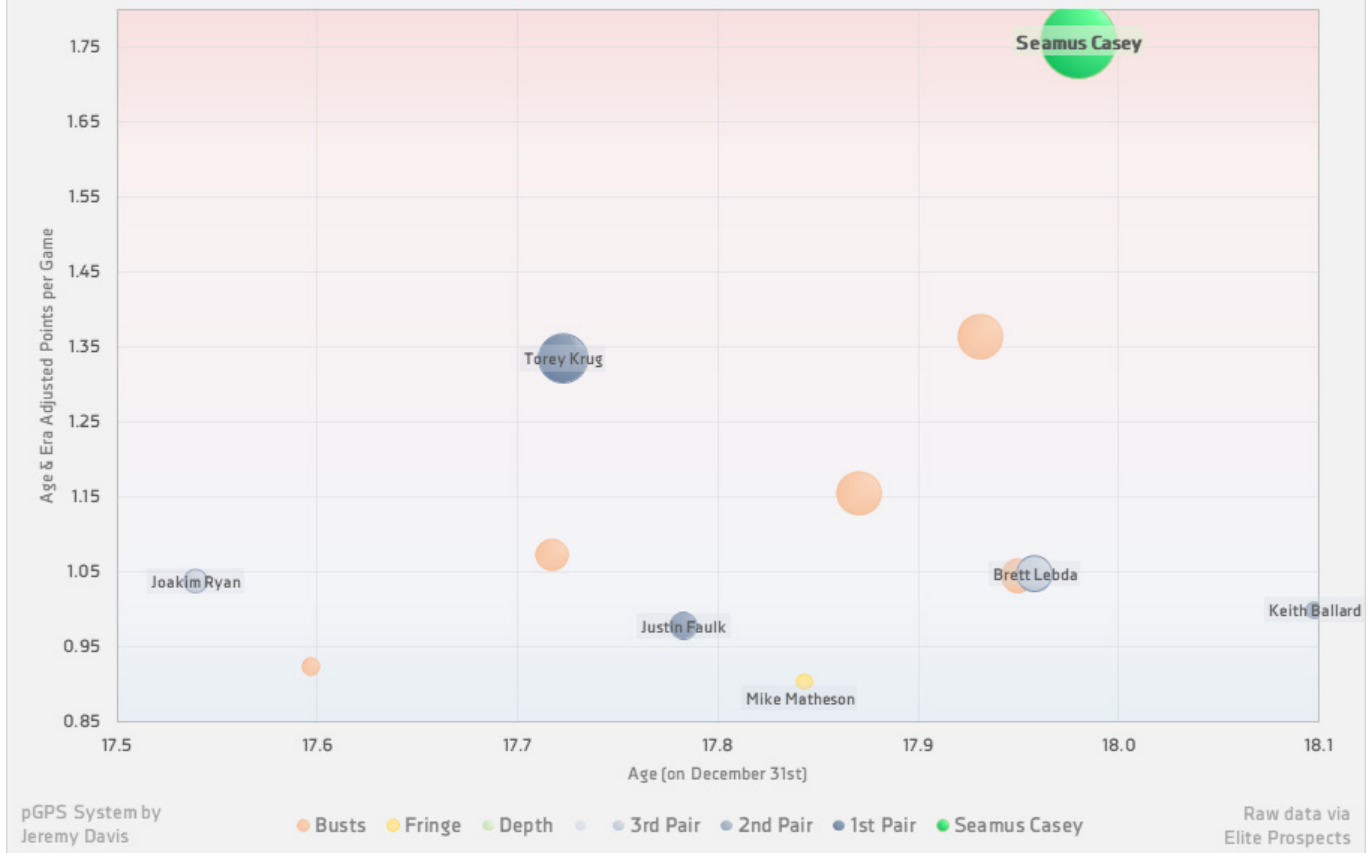


## Seamus Casey 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 12 || Base XLS: 44% || Impact XLS: 29% || XPR: 41.7 || Drafted Pct: 50%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Finally, Casey did things! In one shift, he manipulated the incoming forechecker to create a passing lane up the middle, and then activated. Upon getting the puck, he spun, cut inside, and got a chance. Was the better play passing there? Yes. But this was good. And then he spent the rest of the shift in the corner extending OZ time. Hit an advanced pass into the slot from the upper-corner of the OZ. The slick handling style was on display in a few sequences. He's best with the underhandle, using his feet and eyes to deceive with fakes changes of direction. Tight NZ gap forced a couple of dump-ins. Managed speedy attackers well, conceding space in exchange for the outside lane. Some poor decisions. For a high-end offensive defenceman, you'd expect him to hit the inside entry pass in transition and turn retrievals into clean breakouts. Runs too much through his hands when activating, and I didn't see much of a give-and-go game. Still, I finally saw it. I've been waiting for months. This is the Casey that everyone loves. Just considering this game, he's a 20-30 prospect.

**David St-Louis:** January 3rd, 2022

Minnesota Golden Gophers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Casey's defence is quite passive. He postures aggressively against the rush, but doesn't really react to it; that aggressive posturing is more of a consequence of his offensive inclination than a real desire or intent to kill the rush early. He is late to most defensive plays, but not by much. Overall, he can identify the next play of opposing carriers, passing lanes, and his man; he just needs more urgency. He isn't afraid to take on opponents one-on-one or turn away from them to find a better option. He can read options progressively on regroup and regroup (when those options are in front of him) and pick the best one. Sense and skills seem above-average to me, but the lack of intensity, smaller size and dynamic skating might hold him back.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Casey didn't do much out there. He has a couple of flashy activation sequences, including spin to escape pressure before racing down the boards and turning the puck over. I like his playmaking ideas, but he struggles to get passes to their target. He's a deceptive handler, but it doesn't translate to his playmaking, where his next play is abundantly clear several steps in advance. Missed several manipulation opportunities to make the basic play, and on more advanced attempts,

hurried the pass. The breakouts remain concerning for a top prospect: he passes to teammates more covered than himself, rarely makes the best play, and doesn't create better opportunities. Didn't look like a first-round pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Nondescript performance. As usual, Casey's handling skill was his best attribute. He's particularly crafty on retrievals, turning tricky pucks into passes to teammates along the boards. I haven't seen any standout breakout ability from him yet - it's all beat one and pass to the most obvious option without much understanding of space. His aggressive positioning in the OZ allowed him to grab a couple of chances. Shot looked worse than previous, it's like he's falling into the puck as his feet slip behind him. Looks for the deflection too much from the point. He's a better playmaker than he's shown recently, but he's too content to step off the boards and hope someone gets a stick on it. Awful rush defence, getting walked through and consistently beat. Much better in-zone defender with a strong understanding of how to close off space on the cycle and eliminating threats, but only when his check is obvious. Otherwise, he freezes. At this stage, I see him more as a mid-to-late second. It's been months since I've seen make him a high-end play that wasn't a deke.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

This was the blandest game I've seen from Casey, and I haven't seen too many exciting performances from him. A few nice dekes, some passes through layers to the inside, and a well-timed pinch or two - that's it. This game was mostly poor breakout decisions either showing a lack of foresight, a lack of awareness, or both. In one sequence, he should've identified that the numbers didn't make any sense - instead, he stood there and waited as the forechecker grabbed the puck off him. A couple of proactive off-puck defensive sequences, and a couple of lost-and-disinterested ones. No idea what to make him. He has top-four upside because of his hands and deception, but I grow more concerned with each viewing.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

The standout part of Casey's game is handling. On retrievals, he takes the typical routes but then uses his patience and handling to throw the F1 off the scent. From the point, he dekes to start his activation sequences. Strong change of pace game built into his handling. The decision-making is concerning. He takes too long to make his passes, passes to teammates already covered, and lacks deception to prolong

the passing window. Defensive impact comes and goes. He's sometimes too passive and gets beat without much friction. Doesn't consistently scan. Also shows defensive timing and recovery ability. Not sure what's going on there. He has top-four skill, but his inconsistency and lack of foresight with the puck have me concerned. Not to mention that he has just 4 primary points at even-strength this year. Tyler Duke's only one back, and he has just 5 all-situation points in 22 games so far. Shrug emoji.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 26th, 2021

Buff State vs. NTDP U18s - NCAA

Yet another solid performance from Casey. Didn't need to be all that good, but showed all the usual habits: good handles, effective in transition and a good enough skater to carry the puck up himself. He doesn't activate on the rush as much as someone like Hutson, but he's just as good in-zone, he'll run the high cycle with his forwards and using nifty handles and cutbacks to create pockets where he can operate from. I like his shot too, seems to have a quick release on his wrist that gets through traffic more often than not. A solid night in a game where he didn't need to show off.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Casey's handling skill is surely among the best in the draft. He has the mechanics (top hand moving across the body, rolling out the back), the setups, and the creativity. Escapes on retrievals by scanning, identifying pressure, and deking on the first touch. When activating, he gets more creative and tries more advanced plays, like a toe-drag inside a heel-to-heel. Nasty on the backhand, too. The shooting mechanics are a plus, pushing his hands forwards and dropping his weight over the stick. Moves with the pass reception and beats defenders into space. The rest of his game's pretty limited by decision-making and engagement. He was beaten cleanly four times in this game, most of them coming from poor off-puck gap control (hangs out too close to the puck usually, not respecting the weakside threat). Doesn't load pivots. Urgency comes and goes defensively at the best of times, but he was particularly disinterested in this one. To be fair, he also made some advanced stops deeper in the play, and he didn't fall for the same Adam Fantilli play more than twice. Didn't see any breakout skill in this game, other than the deceptive handling. A poor retrieval where he stopped dead while facing the boards led to him passing to the other team on a rim (he needs to pull the puck off the boards and step to the middle there). Then, he just flipped the puck straight to the other team shortly after. Scanning isn't exactly a habit for him on the breakout, and he fails to use space when it's given to him. He just passes to teammates with

pressure on them instead. It's like he's running the high-level scripts without the high-level processing. But the tools are simply too good to ignore at this stage.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

The strength of Casey's game seems to be evading the first forechecker and finding an outlet. He's so good with the puck and his above-average skating ability gives him a leg up in the neutral zone to make a quick maneuver around opposing players and turn play up ice. Defensively was less pretty, Casey's got the skating ability to be a good rush defender but he got beat cleanly on inside and outside routes multiple times throughout the game. I wonder if he just needs to pick up his engagement level; I've seen other games he's played against NCAA competition where he's looked better defensively. That said, Casey shows good offensive habits, he is active on the point, darting in to present options for teammates, and wheeling around the zone, high and low, with the puck. Casey's also got a good, quick snapshot that gets through traffic that makes him even more of a threat offensively. He's got the tools to be very good at the NCAA and beyond, it will be interesting to keep an eye on how he progresses.

**Daniel Gee:** October 30th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs Chicago Steel - USHL

Casey possesses all the skill to become a translatable offense-facilitating defender, but in totality, he has some work to do in cleaning up his habits while defending the rush.

Casey saw his best play occur in sustained offensive zone pressure and transitional sequences against Chicago. In transition he facilitated two-touch outlets, exploited the boards, and exploited his above-average large-ice maneuverability to push advantages through carry attempts. In the first, Casey made a pivot in the neutral zone, carrying the puck on the left wing, cutting hard through the dotted-lines, dragging defenders, and executing a drop pass. Later in the shift, Casey again entered the zone the same way, this time executing a drag deke towards his skates, stringing a spin to avoid another defender -- just wonderful small-ice handling and one-on-one ability. To top the play off, he won a recovery, scanned the upcoming play, and moved backdoor, nearly scoring on a jam play. (one of the better shifts I have seen out of a draft-eligible this season). In sustained pressure, Casey's activations highlighted his possessions. In the first, he dragged a puck to the middle, attacked into space left by collapsed defenders down main street and fired a weak powered, but highly leveraged release shot. His habits are pretty direrable -- constant shifts to support ring passes, body and proactive edge work to maneuver the blue line,

and manipulations were present. He loved to execute shoulder shakes, stringing the hesitations into actual steps into open lanes left by defenders. In general, he took a myriad of weak wrist shots from the perimeter, one leading to an assist -- not much of a weapon at all. He had a highlight reel puck recovery in the third; skating directly onto the puck, quickly shifting his ankles an opposite direction to deke out a defender.

While defending Chicago transitional attacks, Casey struggled with play reading, often mis-judging oncoming attackers speed, or missing secondary pass options. Casey had multiple sequences where he was caught too high in the neutral zone, missing threats, forcing him to pivot early, and often giving up a lane. There's some positives, however. Backwards mobility is extremely strong, he can mirror his footwork to combat shifter opponents, and his retrieval scanning habits are high-end. In sustained defending situations, I liked Casey better. He was extremely proactive, sliding into lanes well before passes materialized. In the first, he reacted incredibly well to a broken teammate exit, reading a cross-ice pass, and executing a block. Recovered a nasty rebound in the third as well. Some positive battle and containment sequences below the goal. Upside looks very high.

**David St-Louis:** October 29th, 2021

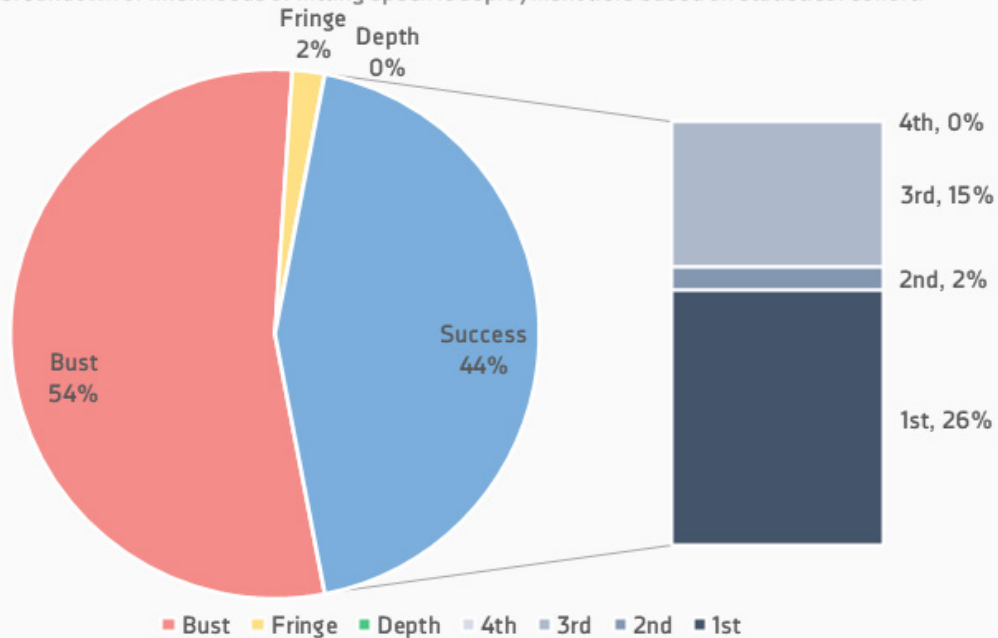
Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - NCAA

Casey continues to be one of the most impressive prospects in this year's draft for me. His gap off the rush is aggressive; he closes it early, even in the offensive zone if he can. But it's with the puck that he did his best work in this game. Casey doesn't understand simple, neutral plays, like shots on net or chips to open ice. He wants to create something when the puck reaches his stick and so he spins on forecheckers, fakes them, goes through options until he finds a great play. He succeeds more often than not. He can protect the puck one-on-one in open ice, move the puck quickly, and even carry the puck up himself at times. He had one sequence where he passed to a teammate standing at the blue-line; the puck came back to him shortly after, and Casey took advantage of the space that play created to run up to the offensive zone. He then proceeded to dangle a defender with a toe-drag before using a second one as a screen to fire on net. Yes, he is on the smaller side, but the manipulation skills, understanding of offensive concepts (preparing passes with deception, using open ice, moving the play quickly to catch opponents off-guard, fakes...), and desire to be a playmaker is very attractive. He could be a top-10 or even a top-5 pick by season's end, maybe the best defenceman in the draft.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

## Seamus Casey 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



### Chicago Steel vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Casey was chaotic this game. He failed to pick up pucks on retrievals, passed into teammates more covered than himself, and made unnecessary moves. The turnovers were numerous, but he stays engaged. One time, that led to a scoring chance where he set up a defender, deked around him, and then fired while slightly off balance. His game lacks any sort of foresight, he's just spamming moves and making a resulting play without reading (or using) space or identifying the best option. Patient, yes, but didn't have the next gear in this game. He uses the middle in transition, deceives with look offs and body positioning, and hits teammates cross-ice. A skilled skater, but he lacks depth and energy. His movements are consistently weak from a lack of depth, and he doesn't ever have any urgency. Defensively, he gets on his check early and eliminates off-puck threats, but he doesn't have a ton of stopping power. He just backs up and backs up with trying to make the last bit of effort to kill the play proper. I've seen better from him. He has second-pairing skill but the projection's a tricky one.

### David St-Louis: October 23rd, 2021

#### USNTDP U18s vs. Cornell Big Red - NCAA

Casey seems to alternate between great defensive performances and great offensive performances. He defended odd-man situations, complex situations well in this game. Even pitted 3-on-1 in the slot, he managed to remove the right option to limit risk. He engaged college opponents physically and won the puck, even if he was on the outside of the battle, by using timely stick lifts, shoves, and a ton of

energy, before immediately making the first breakout pass under pressure. He manipulated almost every opposing forechecker that came to him with deep turns that turned their feet. His timing on when to turn back counter to the movement of opponents is perfect. His turns could be made tighter to them, however, as despite great timing, depth, and control in his moves, he is not creating much separation. He will either have to refine his technique even more (let forecheckers close on him even more before starting his dance) or become more explosive. His skating looks like a 5 to 6 depending on the game for me, so an NHL average to slightly above-average projection. Not ideal for a 5'10" defencemen. His passing in transition was again impressive in this game, a mixture of quick ups and progressive reads. Casey goes through his options rapidly in regroupings and he seems to foresee where the space will be.

### David St-Louis: - October 16th, 2021

#### USNTDP U18 vs Michigan Tech Huskies - NCAA

Casey's low-energy defence will cause problems at the next level. He's relatively effective right now, but the lack of urgency will hurt him when the play is moving fast north and east-west. He has the skating ability to keep up, however, and for him, it is just a matter of adapting his motor to the demands of the game. Some of his decision-making in rush defence also needs to improve. He tried a low-percentage hit this game that took him out of the play. With the puck, Casey can problem-solve and find options, but sometimes, he would gain from hitting the first open option instead of entering a dangle battle with the forecheck.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Casey did almost nothing with the puck. Okay, he had one sequence where he beat two forecheckers and passed to a covered teammate, and a slick cross-ice pass on the breakout. In those sequences, he manipulated a forechecker and deked through another. That was it. He didn't try many plays. He moved a lot on the point, reading pressure, waiting for their reaction, and passing to his defensive partner. Very simple. Defensively, he was a killer. He timed his neutral-zone breakups with the incoming pass. Beat once, but he quickly recovered for one of three transition stops in the defensive zone. Defensive skating and stickwork aren't always great (he killed in his momentum in one sequence where he should've skated across), but he clearly reads attackers and eliminates their options quickly.

**David St-Louis:** September 26th, 2021

USNTDP U18 vs Fargo Force - USHL \*Let's Watch\*

Seamus Casey's many offensive talents were on display in this game. He evaded forecheckers and won the offensive zone by manipulating the neutral-zone trap of the opposition. We also saw his playmaking abilities. He created lanes and distributed the puck well. He made sure to attract defenders on himself to create more space for teammates before passing to them. But overall, it was his rush defence that impressed me the most. His gap was aggressive off the rush, when he defended the puck carrier and also when he covered off-puck attackers. He broke a couple of odd-man rushes, too, by cutting the passing lane and by closing out on the puck carrier at the right time, as the opponent tried to pass or dangle and had his head down. He could have boxed out attackers better in his zone and, sometimes, his plays were risky, but besides that, it was a great game from Casey.

**J.D. Burke:** September 25th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

A pretty pedestrian performance from Casey. Frankly, I didn't really see much of interest there in this hockey game. You like the involvement rate in the offensive zone, the activations into space, and the violent weight shifts under pressure to create shooting and passing opportunities. He's one slippery defenceman with the puck on his stick. Picked up a power play goal in the third period with a well-placed shot through traffic from the point, too. There was an awful lot of take in this game too, though. Some scoring chances that died on the vine because Casey failed to identify the right passing play, in one instance missing an easy break-away pass to make a glass-and-out play that immediately

turned into a scoring chance against the Program. Got caught puck-watching on the penalty kill in two separate instances that just as easily could've found the back of the net.

**David St-Louis:** September 17th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Casey commands the ice. The game feels easy for him. He manipulates the opposition, reacts to their move very fast and in effective ways -- like this time where he instantly had a forechecker on his back after a rim in the defensive zone and he placed the puck into space before spinning on him and picking it backup -- and he has an offensive plan, or at least, he moves in ways to improve scoring chances, not content settling for low percentage shots. One time in this game, he went down the wall and around the net to find passing targets in the slot. He also attacked slot space himself on reception. He doesn't move with pace, but he executes with pace on passes, fakes, and shots. There is deception in his game, too. Defensively, his footwork is more often than not perfect to limit the options of the opposition. He understands angles off the rush and kills odd-man rushes. Skating is probably above-average, but like said before, Casey rarely moves with the urgency that allows one to really evaluate it.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 17th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Casey's play-creation potential is sky-high, probably the highest of the defenders on this team. He packs multi-layered deception into most things, combining his edges, body orientation, pace, and puck positioning to confuse defenders. He shifts his weight, looks down the boards, waits for the defender to commit, then cuts to the inside. His hands set up a lot of what he does, making tight manoeuvres or deceiving with a quick handle over top the weight shift. The issue is that he doesn't anything with it at 5-on-5. He forces entry attempts that aren't there, misses passing options altogether, and waits too long before making plays. The odd quality rush defence sequence but mostly too passive. Interesting player. Could have massive variance in projections/rankings next season.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Casey's a low-energy skater. He doesn't properly engage his lower body except when spinning, preferring to stay upright and use these very delicate pushes to constantly bob back-and-forth over actually striding. Those habits impact his ability to separate in-tight, especially when turning to his left -- makes these wide turns that might as well be on one

foot. The consequences are the skating was felt in transition, where he was mostly a negative beyond one easy-enough spinny sequence and inside-lane pass after looking off his target. His awareness of space is really lacking; he makes the move to escape, but then just throws the puck away instead of using the space he just created. Inconsistent scanning habits and defensive habits. Some moments on the powerplay but hardly did much of anything at 5-on-5.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 30th, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

Very strong performance from Casey. He consistently manipulated forecheckers and defenders, showing better awareness of space. He makes decisions slowly, preferring to slow the game whenever possible to facilitate that. Still, many of his ideas are really advanced: get pressure on his back, cut inside, pass to a teammate on the middle. He relies on the same outside lane activation play to do it, but the changes of pace and handling skill will make that play work at any level. There are moments where he seems to plan plays, like stepping inside to draw pressure towards him, creating the cross-ice lane or those activation sequences. Strictly in problem-solving situations, his low pace hurts him. His low-energy skating exacerbates the issue. Defensively, he was much more engaged than in previous viewings. Scanned off-puck, timed a check in the NZ, and kept a decent gap most of the game. He pivots too late and gives up space through the NZ without any hesitation, but I see potential here. The play-creation ability is really exciting, probably a first-round skill. The rest? Not convinced.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

This performance was frustrating and fascinating. For the fascinating part, he spun off the boards on a pass reception, drove the inside, and wristed a shot past the goaltender. Waited an extra second for the defender's stick to move to the boards -- great read. Pushes hands in front of his body and shoots it from compromised positions without a huge loss in power. He constantly fakes plays from the point or while activating. He never deceives on retrievals in the DZ and simply gives the puck to the other team. Doesn't scan, either. Defensively, he broke up a couple of plays in transition through a tight gap and some angling ability, but also concedes entries because he doesn't know how to make up space. He just stands there waiting for the attacker to come to him instead of stepping forward, pivoting, and building backwards momentum to match the attacker. Lacks a bit of depth through his hips and rarely finishes strides. No idea what to think.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

If Casey continues on this path, he's going to be a highly divisive player in the 2022 NHL Draft. He's painfully low-pace, accentuated by a low-effort, incomplete stride and a hyper-reliance on his inside edges when pressured. Some of his skating patterns are unique, shifting his weight then mohawking where most players use crossovers. His style led to a turnover resulting in a goal. But it also created several high-end exit-to-entry sequences. He sliced through pressure, manipulated multiple layers, and cut inside. Demonstrated the patience and skill to both set up teammates and pull the trigger himself. He's naturally deceptive but throws in eye deception and head fakes to further misdirect. Consistently brought the puck to the inside before making breakout decisions. Some quality rush defence sequences, but that's about it on that end. Really interesting prospect. Definitely some first-round skills here.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** October 23rd, 2021

Cornell Big Red vs. USNTDP U18s - NCAA

So much to like from Seamus Casey through this one, for one, he didn't look intimidated by the size or speed of the Big Red. With the puck, he kept composed, got his feet moving up the ice, and found his teammates in transition. He was evasive, and showed some good maneuverability on his edges, shaking pressure with a tight turn or change of pace. Defensively, he wasn't exceptional off the rush, but he did a good job of funneling Cornell forwards into the corner and keeping play on the perimeter. He was clearly the NTDP's best defenseman through this game, showing transition ability and high IQ in a game where the Stars and Stripes desperately needed to get out of their zone.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

I have yet to see a bad game from this guy. I mean honestly, Casey is just so smooth with his skating and handles, and he rarely makes mistakes. He's elusive and has the ability to beat F1 himself on the breakout if needed. He thrives in transition play and advances the puck up ice, even if it means circling back into his own end and reevaluating options. He's got solid offensive instincts; he's not as prone to join the rush as say Hutson, but he picks his spots and supports play well. The rush defense is good, he's got some decent angling ability but needs to make sure he's not creating odd-man rush opportunities against by overpursuing. He's got first-round ability written all over him.



44  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

B  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

# JACK HUGHES

C | NORTHEASTERN UNIV.

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. NOV. 2, 2003  
WEIGHT 170 SHOOTS LEFT

19%	22%	8%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
NCAA	39	7	9	16

## Scouting Report

Evaluating 18-year-old prospects in the NCAA is always a challenge. The league is much more competitive than the USHL. College players are more mature physically and much more structured in their game.

Jack Hughes, a freshman at Northeastern, more than held his own this season against the older competition. He showed that he could also play that structured game, that he could reload to a defensive position ahead of offensive turnovers, fill the right role on the backcheck, and apply pressure on the forecheck.

The centreman's pace was his main scoring tool. His skating, which projects as slightly above NHL average, and his rapid puck-moving game allowed him to beat defences before they could get in position.

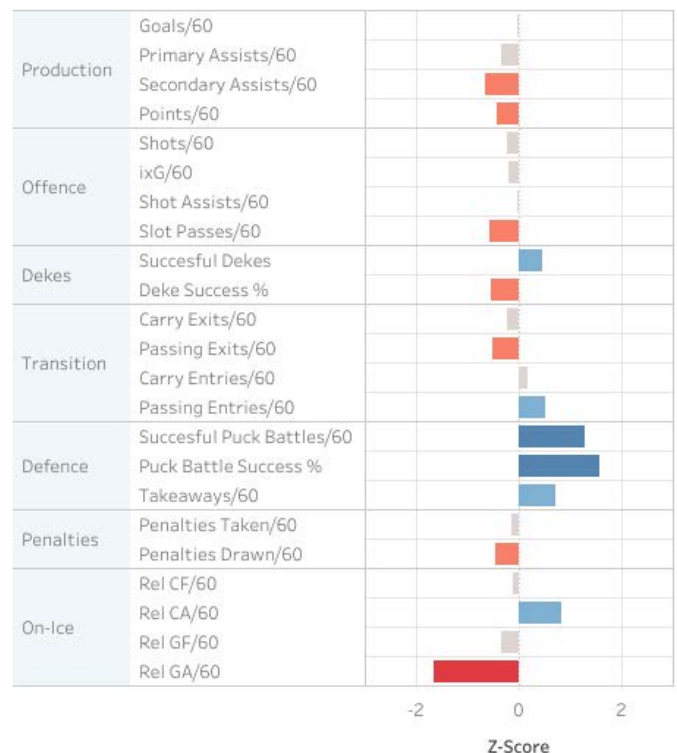
Hughes also showed elements that could become a legitimate strong give-and-go game with experience, things like a precise passing technique, an ability to attract defenders on himself to create space for teammates, and a talent for finding pockets of space - but only in flashes.

At this stage, his offensive projection is based mostly on those flashes. Hughes seldom showed creativity as a young forward against the USHL last year and the giant step up in competition this season didn't allow him to expand his skill-set all that much.

While his likelihood of making the NHL is higher than most other prospects, Hughes's realistic upside likely lies in a third-line role.

Games Played: 30 | Average EV TOI: 15:08

Data via InStat Hockey | Viz by Lassi Alanen (@lassialanen) | EV only



## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Zach Budish YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 99%	2 Conor Sheary YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 97%	3 Michael Mersch YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 97%	4 Drake Caggiula YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 97%	5 P.J. Yedon YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 97%
6 John Sabo YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 97%	7 Riley Sheahan YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 97%	8 Michael Biega YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 97%	9 Chris McCarthy YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 97%	10 Justin Florek YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 96%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** March 25th, 2022

Northeastern vs. Western Michigan - NCAA

Pace plus defensive engagement plus average skill is often good enough to make a player an everyday NHLer, even a good one, especially if the pace and the rotations continue to improve to match the increase in competition level. Hughes could be a middle-six center in the NHL, probably more a third-liner, with his forecheck, timely defensive interventions, and some of his playmaking principales (attracting defenders, deception...). He flashes above-average technical abilities at times, but I'm not overly confident he will become an NHL play-driver. My main issue with his game, right now, is the faltering defence sometimes. It should be a constant strong point of his game: he doesn't recognize passing lanes or off-puck movements of the opposition perfectly. I bet that corrects itself with time. The defence is one of his main tickets to the NHL. I like how quick he gets off the wall with the puck, by carrying it or passing it to teammates. He also could become an effective puck protector: he already preemptively establishes body positioning on opponents in loose puck races.

**David St-Louis:** March 18th, 2022

Northeastern vs. UConn - NCAA

Hughes plays with pace. He attacks the right areas and fills the right areas defensively. Is there more? The decisions with the puck are not all great; he over relies on his hands and dangling when he isn't capable of pulling off the moves he wants. The puck springs off his stick inside them or he doesn't set them up well enough. The engagement or effort level in the game is commendable; he shadows his coverage defensively well.

**David St-Louis:** March 12th, 2022

Boston College vs Northeastern - NCAA

Hughes doesn't look like the most skilled prospect, but his handling stood out in this game, with how often he managed to thread the puck under the stick of defenders in tight spaces. He understands how to develop plays and what the next one should be and he has physical abilities to offer,

to an extent; he laid a reverse hit on an opponent to win a loose puck on the walls, creating enough space to move it to an open teammate. Defensively, he positioned himself well, filled the right spot, and showed constant effort.

**Daniel Gee:** March 5th, 2022

Merrimack vs Northeastern - NCAA

Hughes isn't all that dynamic, bland even, but what can you expect when considering the competition. While the dynamism lacked, he was overtly impactful in this viewing.

Already pushing a tonne of translatable habits in transition, Hughes had some great sequences in motion. He one-touches passes, can saucer and hook pucks through layers, uses the middle lane, and baits pressure in the slot so he can distribute to open wings. He had a pretty wild saucer pass to Aiden McDonough in the first, popping the puck backdoor, the high-danger chance missed. Efficient handler on-puck; likes to deke to the backhand to beat F1s and other forecheckers. Entries can be a bit perimeter and he tries to create sustained pressure by unloading the puck into dump-and-chase plays. Out of these sustained sequences, Hughes constantly is fighting through pressure. In the second he was able to escape a couple defenders, pivoted to his forehand and sipped a hope pass into the crease that was instantly turned over. Not all hope passes though. On another shift, he was alone in the far corner, took a pass, popped on his heels and sauced a pass to McDonough in the slot, but the puck bounced over his blade. Hughes will cut back from pressure, even pickpocketing slow moving defnrs. In the dying seconds of the game he pushed on the forecheck, recovering a puck; he got his stick free and hooked a pass to an open McDonough in the slot to score a buzzer beater -- insane stuff.

Was a strong defensive presence in this viewing. Hughes scans transitionally constantly and harrasses neutral zone puck carriers. He shadows on activations and his pressure forces errors like bad passes. Hughes made a huge sliding block in the third off the left-point, getting the clear -- massive play. Even had an intercept in the hash marks that he batted away. Really mature player. Not sure he is ever going

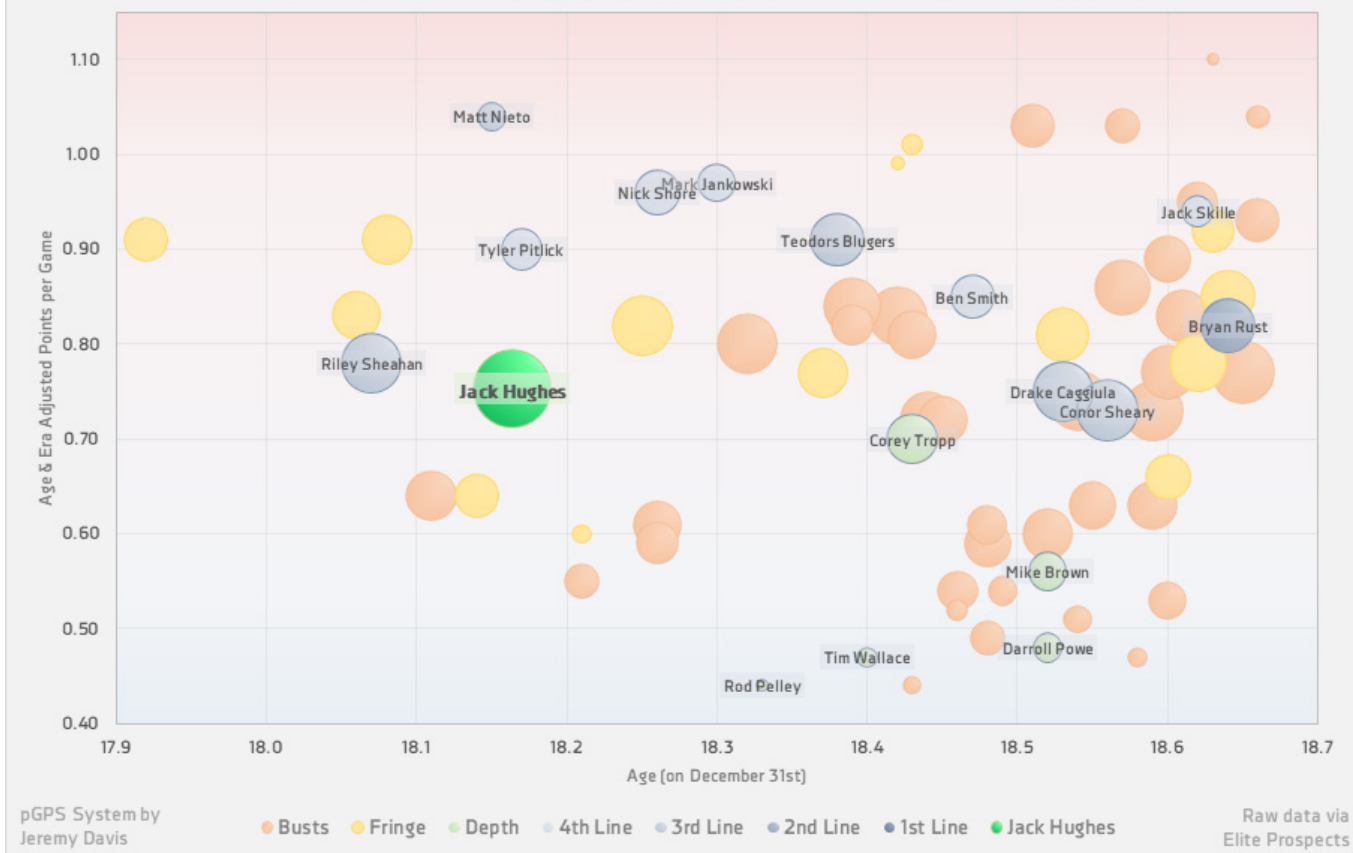


## Jack Hughes 2021-22 NCAA pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 67 || Base XLS: 19% || Impact XLS: 2% || XPR: 27.7 || Drafted Pct: 55%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



to be a top-line player but he will contribute in a middle-six role at the NHL level. Skating needs work, knees not at a full 90-degrees, tilted hips, heel kicks. High effort but not complete as a player yet -- it will come.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 26th, 2022

Northeastern vs. UConn - NCAA

The puck seems to roll off Hughes' stick at the most inopportune times. Otherwise, he's a solid player. Scored with an NHL shot: moved into space with his stick ready, took the pass across his body and let the momentum start his weight shift, and fired. Hands in front and elbow up the entire time. He does a bit of everything: off-puck offence, attacking the middle, skilled variants of basic passing, gaining the OZ, and defending. He doesn't manipulate defenders - doesn't even try. He had a great opportunity to delay and hit a teammate in the middle. Instead, he took a no-chance shot. I see him as a high-probability bet to become a defensively responsible, skilled third or fourth-liner. Unlikely to be a driver in that role.

**J.D. Burke:** February 11th, 2022

UMass-Lowell vs. Northeastern - NCAA

Just an absolute quagmire of a hockey game, as is tradition for the teams playing between Beanpot matches. Hughes

failed to really distinguish himself in any way short of his defensive contributions, which were full-value as always. There's no denying Hughes' motor. He backchecks at every opportunity, tracks well, and supports his defencemen below the hashmarks. His limitations as a puckhandler were glaring in this one. Hughes lacks the skill, creativity, and dexterity to really break a defenceman down in space. I was really hoping to see Hughes string together two standout offensive performances in a row for the first time this season, and it just didn't happen. He looked the part of a player who projects as a checking line centre at the NHL level in this contest.

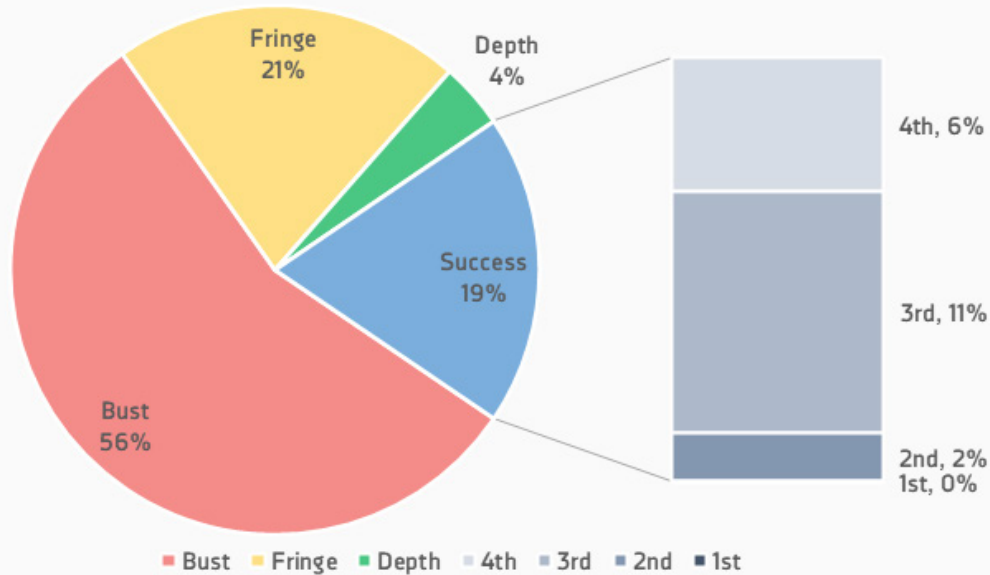
**J.D. Burke:** February 7th, 2022

Boston College vs. Northeastern - NCAA (Beanpot)

Probably the best Hughes viewing I've had to date. Just a really strong performance in all three zones, but the offensive one especially, which is a nice change of pace. Picked up an assist early in this one, collecting a puck along the half-wall and sending it to Gunnarwolfe Fontaine in the slot for the one-time goal. This was probably the first time I've watched Hughes at the college level where he hasn't seemed totally overmatched physically. Actually put a Boston College player on their ass with a massive hit below the goal line to dispossess them of the puck, and then set up another

## Jack Hughes 2021-22 NCAA pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



great scoring chance. Tried to pull off the Michigan in the middle-frame; he failed miserably, but respect for the effort. Saw much more pace with the puck and skill as a handler than I'm accustomed to seeing from Hughes.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Vermont vs. Northeastern - NCAA

Hughes is perfectly alright. For some reason, he keeps trying to deke through everyone, even though he loses the puck. He sets his moves up in glides and rocks back and forth on his inside edges. And he's a bit physically overmatched at times, but that doesn't deter him from trying to establish body positioning or throwing hits. Demonstrates a delay game and some passing creativity, but struggled to connect. Deceptive in open-ice, and moves through his passes to get open for a return feed. Some off-puck offence through his movement. And some offence from defence thanks to his check ID'ing, constant shifting between engaging and supporting, and anticipation. But I didn't see any dynamic qualities. The stride's probably an average projection, provided he gets a bit more ankle flexion, hip engagement, and lateral push-off. A generic skill player with solid defence and off-puck instincts. Maybe a second-rounder. I just don't know yet.

**J.D. Burke:** November 8th, 2021

Northeastern vs. Harvard - NCAA

This was one of the most boring hockey games I've seen in

recent memory. Neither team was letting much of anything happen offensively. It kind of fits with what Hughes has become for Northeastern, which is a defensively calibrated middle-of-the-lineup centre. Made some great plays in the defensive third. Cut off an attempted wraparound with great timing and maybe even saved a goal against in the process. Showed some switchability during sustained possessions. Constantly scans off of the puck. Didn't see much of anything from Hughes offensively -- or anyone else, for that matter -- but there were some interesting flashes of passing skill. He's got touch as a distributor, no denying that.

**J.D. Burke:** February 26th, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Didn't notice Hughes much at all through the first two periods of this game, save for the goal against in the middle frame, a bad look for Hughes as he got caught puck-watching by the playmaker on that one. Otherwise, his defensive effort really stood out. He's got great supporting instincts. Showed a really, really nice flash of skill in the third period, executing a highly deceptive play to cut to the inside between about four members of the opposition for a Grade-A scoring chance.





45  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

4.5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

B  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# MICHAEL LASTARZA

LW | SIOUX FALLS STAMPEDE

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JAN. 14, 2004  
WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS LEFT

19%	19%	4%	1.15
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	57	16	28	44

> Committed to Boston Univ.

## Scouting Report

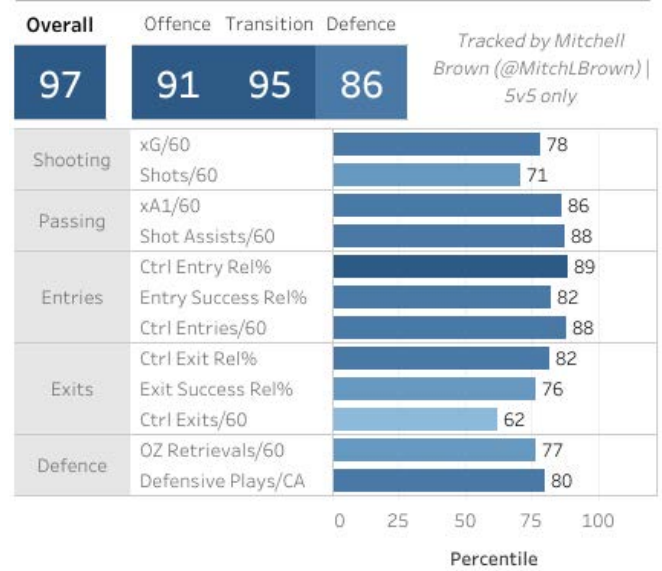
A trade from the fourth-worst team in the USHL to the second-worst slowed Michael LaStarza's point production, but the projectability of his impactful three-zone game only increased.

Of LaStarza's many skills, his ability to get plays from the boards to the inside lane will prove the most valuable. He creates favourable situations by getting defenders on his back. In the corners, he establishes body positioning before even receiving the puck, allowing him to quickly cut inside or spin away. In transition, he prefers to cutback rather than outrace, creating opportunities to set up the trailer or cut inside for a shot.

The number of ways that LaStarza accesses the middle within a seemingly basic loop speaks to his creativity. "He alters the timing of slot cuts to keep defenders guessing," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown detailed. "Sometimes, he cuts inside immediately; others, he waits, c-steps to put the defender on his back, then pushes off the middle." And he's never shy to fake an attack up the boards, then toe drag around the defender.

With the board play comes LaStarza's defence and transition game. A non-stop motor ensures that he's eliminating off-puck threats, deterring shots, and creating loose pucks by applying pressure. Then, he attacks in transition, combining crossover-heavy rush patterns with give-and-gos to maximize his team's odds of gaining the offensive zone with control.

Games Tracked: 13 | Minutes Tracked: 175.2



While LaStarza has many tools and skills, he's rarely creating the best play. Moments of a high-skill exist, but he prefers short-range passes and off-puck movement. He's not deceiving to create passing lanes and his shot's not much of a weapon, either. But that he's creating favourable situations for his teammates with the inside-lane attacks and give-and-gos makes his game scalable.

LaStarza should step into a major role with Boston University immediately. Don't be surprised if he outperforms his draft slot almost right off the hop, too. He could become a third-line forward who brings value across all three zones.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Trevor Moore  
YEAR: 2013  
SIMILARITY: 95%

2 Louis Leblanc  
YEAR: 2009  
SIMILARITY: 94%

3 Sahir Gill  
YEAR: 2010  
SIMILARITY: 94%

4 Brock Bradford  
YEAR: 2005  
SIMILARITY: 94%

5 Brock Trotter  
YEAR: 2005  
SIMILARITY: 94%

6 Chris Fournier  
YEAR: 2000  
SIMILARITY: 93%

7 Vinni Lettieri  
YEAR: 2013  
SIMILARITY: 93%

8 Domenic Maiani  
YEAR: 2004  
SIMILARITY: 93%

9 Connor Brickley  
YEAR: 2010  
SIMILARITY: 93%

10 J.B. Bittner  
YEAR: 2000  
SIMILARITY: 92%

## Game Reports

**Daniel Gee:** April 20th, 2022

Sioux Falls Stampede vs Des Moines Buccaneers - USHL

LaStarza was incredible in this viewing. He is rather persistent at preserving possession for his team -- this is present throughout most of his offensive zone shifts -- he would much rather default into a simple cycle play instead of working a more complex play. Nevertheless, he still does some amazing things in the OZ. High effort forechecking and dig outs, blending heel-to-heel manoeuvrability were a common pattern in this viewing. LaStarza will even string high skill plays like hooks and slips while moving to open ice. The four-way mobility is rather overwhelming for defenders to handle. Even off-puck he works into high-danger areas. In the first LaStarza read a left-point shot, activated to crash the net, and had a backdoor rebound saved. From there he worked the puck high, cutting inward through the dotted-lines and passed off. It really does feel like he could do more at times. One-touch bumper threat on the powerplay. In transition LaStarza was taking passes in stride, adjusting rush-patterns inward, and implementing a delay game to hit trailers up the middle. On another shift in the third he executed a stop up, delayed and hit a teammate in stride for a downhill shot. He even works give-and-gos off entries, one such play led to a primary assist in the first. Lots of things here will translate and I wouldn't be shocked if he is a major contributor at BU next season and beyond.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

LaStarza's delay game is one of the best in the draft class. Not only does he cutback, outwait defenders, and cut inside; he alters the timing of slot cuts to keep defenders guessing. Sometimes, he cuts inside immediately. Others, he waits, c-steps to put the defender on his back, then pushes off the middle. A give-and-go started his goal. Shot remains a bit limited, as he keeps his hands too close to his body. Release lacks quickness and deception. He's more of a playmaker anymore. Not going to create the best play, but he consistently brings pucks into favourable positions with his delays, handling and skating blend, and defensive

pro prowess. I'd take him in the second. Might not be anything more than a fourth-liner, but there's enough here to suggest he has a middle-six upside.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Another impressive showing from LaStarza. Most of his sequences start in the defensive end, where he applies pressure, supports the puck, and moves pucks off the boards to the inside lane. Up the ice, he delays to outwait pressure and makes a positive next play. Lots of changes of pace and direction to confuse defenders and create space. A bit risk-averse with the puck (as in, he's rarely making the best play), but he's consistently bringing play to the inside and creating advantages that could be exploited by more skilled linemates. Tough go this year, moving from Waterloo to Sioux Falls. I'd pick in the second. Lots of upside through tools, projectable style, and details.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

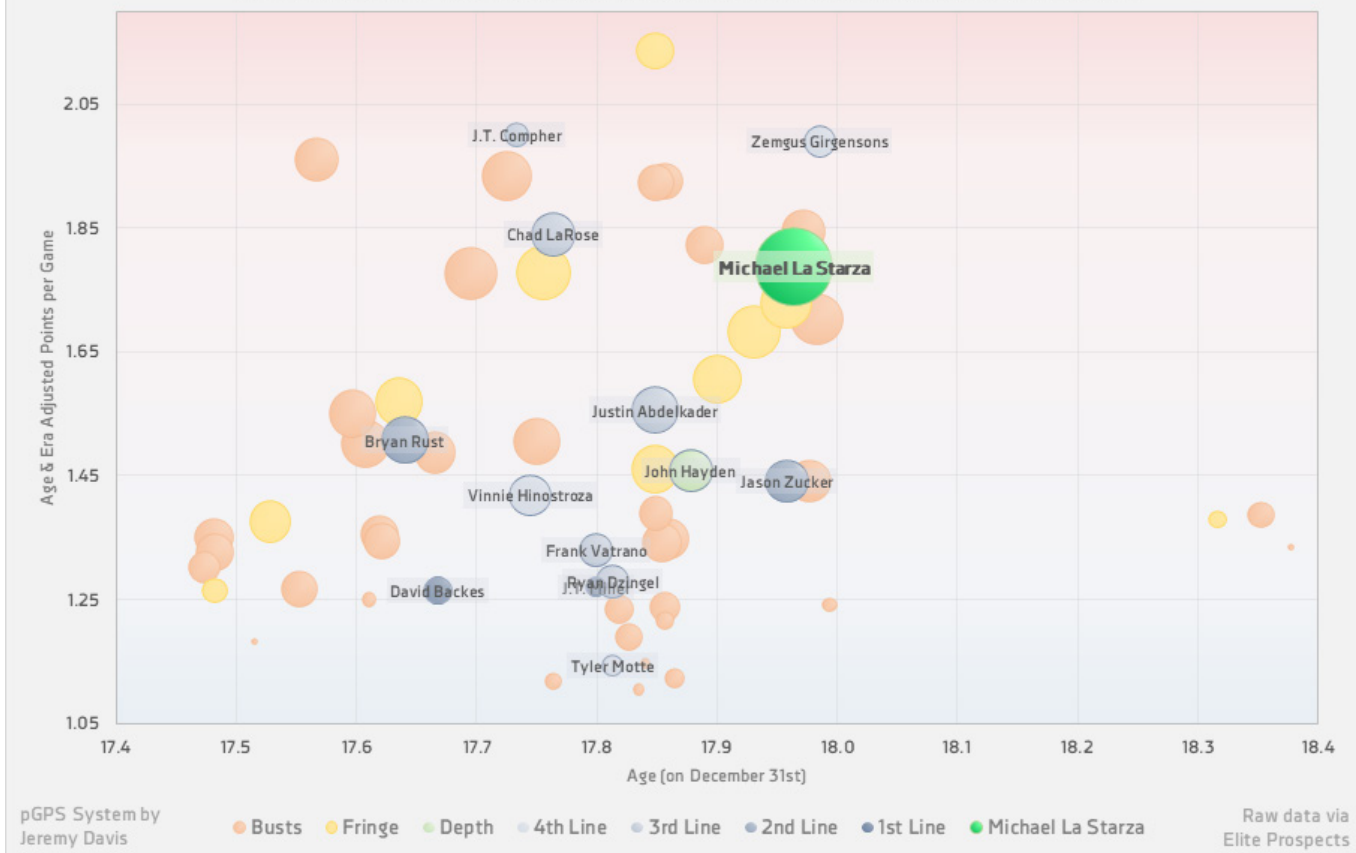
LaStarza put on clinic in gaining the inside lane in this game. At least twice times, he took a puck off the boards, read the feet of the nearest defenders and anticipated the seem, then deked around them and cut to the middle. Not a true manipulator, but he reads the feet and attacks at the perfect moment. Combines the finesse with a well-timed shoulder or heel-to-heel to establish body positioning or get the defender on his back. Still can't shoot off the pass, but he's better at getting open in space instead of rushing the net. Needs to work on ankle flexion inside the release and leaning over his outside edge instead of defaulting to the heel-to-heel. Scored with a flashy handling sequence in front of the net, showing his creativity. As usual, he's a defensive presence. In this game, that mostly took the form of recovering loose pucks and intercepting breakout passes. He'd be a fine second-rounder. Third-line upside.

## Michael La Starza 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 58 || Base XLS: 19% || Impact XLS: 7% || XPR: 36.9 || Drafted Pct: 50%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Des Moines Buccaneers vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Yet another impressive game from LaStarza. When he's not looking to stretch the ice, he's an attentive, proactive defender. Anticipates passes, angles out attackers, and pressures shots. High motor. Put on a masterclass in bumper work on the PP for his goal. Moved constantly with his stick available, proactively took away the stick's off PKers, then got open in the high slot. A couple of breakaways, whiffing on one shot and hitting the post on another, but his best work came when he was cutting to the slot from the boards. As usual, he shows that delay game, using cutbacks, jab steps, and c-steps to gain the middle in number ways. Sometimes, it seems like he doesn't really know where he's going with his passes. For the most part, he has solid ideas, like passing under sticks to the middle or finding players behind him. One of the best players in the draft at getting off the boards. Looks like an NHLer, limited mostly by his situation than skill. Of course, lots to improve, but he'd make for a fine late-second.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Sioux Falls Stampede vs. Lincoln Stars - USHL

All the usual stuff from LaStarza. Not a manipulator. He's not manufacturing the best possible offensive play. But he's a

positive force across the ice. Well-timed steals across the ice, then immediately looks for offence. Doesn't needless handle the puck, instead underhanding when possible. Relies more on cutbacks and body positioning to create space. Sometimes, he cuts across the front of defenders, too. Game follows a simple pattern, but he's creative within it. He's probably not a top-six forward. But I could see a third-liner with refinement.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 23rd, 2022

Fargo Force vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

This was a pretty mediocre game from LaStarza through 40, but he had a standout third period. Scored on the powerplay by pushing away his check when the puck moved high, freeing his stick for a tap-in. The way he times contact and gets inside defenders continues to impress. He kept trying to beat defenders with his hands - it failed. But in the third period, he returned to his old habits, but added a bit more flair. Connected with a spin pass into the slot after a cutback, delayed and hit the activating defenceman, and stepped off the boards to create a point blank chance. Leads his teammates into space with his passes, but they fumbled many of them. I'm biased towards players like LaStarza: playmakers with a delay game and on-puck physicality. Someone else will have to take a look, at some point.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 20th, 2022

Fargo Force vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

LaStarza probably had the best pass of the game. After whiffing on his shot, he cutback and a teammate bursting down the middle with a backhand feed. In transition, he does a bit of everything: well-timed dashes to stretch the ice, short support, cross-lane passes, lane-changing attackers, and delays to wait for reinforcements. That's driven by his skating: knees over toes, hips engaged, under-the-shoulder recoveries, and near-complete extensions. Integrates crossovers (all directions), c-steps, and cutbacks into his attacks without changing his posture significantly. Blends the skating with handling to find more separation. He often has more space than he realizes. Proactive defensive player, but perhaps lack some play-killing. He's an interesting combination of NHL upside and probability. Probably a fourth-liner. But his tools and delay game could make him a secondary force in the middle-six.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 28th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

LaStarza's so consistent on the defensive end. Both of his goals were the result of backtracking and denying entry into the zone. He comes across the hips, establishes positioning, and moves the puck to an open teammate. Very active in the defensive zone, sprinting from high to low, getting steals without putting his team at risk. Delay game is his strongest offensive attribute. He's almost too reliant on cutting back, but it's rare to see prospects who understand how to manage pressure like this. A projectable style, for sure. Along the boards, he turns his toes to indicate one direction, then goes the other. Waits for pressure to come to him before making the next move. Skilled backhand passer and handler. Determined to attack the inside. Off-puck offence is mostly filling lanes and skating his route – it worked twice in this game. But adapting his speed and timing his movements into space are required to score at the next level. Lacks some creativity (see: overreliance on the delay), but I wonder how much of his limitations come from his surroundings. I like him as a second-rounder. Uncommon combination of details and tools.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 16th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Fargo Force - USHL

LaStarza is a give-and-go player stuck on a team that doesn't do anything with his passes. He set up three teammates in scoring position this game, and none of them even took a shot. He's both mechanically sound and skilled. See his transition game, where he blows past defenders with a

projectable, potentially above-average NHL stride, then delays when he feels pressure and hits the trailer. That top hand moves freely across his body, and he makes plays off the backhand when pressured. Tactical mohawk use to get his back to defenders or slip past a check. Attacks the inside, even if he's going to get blown up for doing so. Sets picks. Standout defensive performance, cutting off the top of the zone to grab some steals. He doesn't just rely on superior skating, it anticipates passes and gets the jump. LaStarza would be a big scorer in the QMJHL. He plays it a bit safe with the puck sometimes, preferring to make simpler plays over complex ones, but I think that's a product of his situation. He could be a second-rounder for us.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

Des Moines Buccaneers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

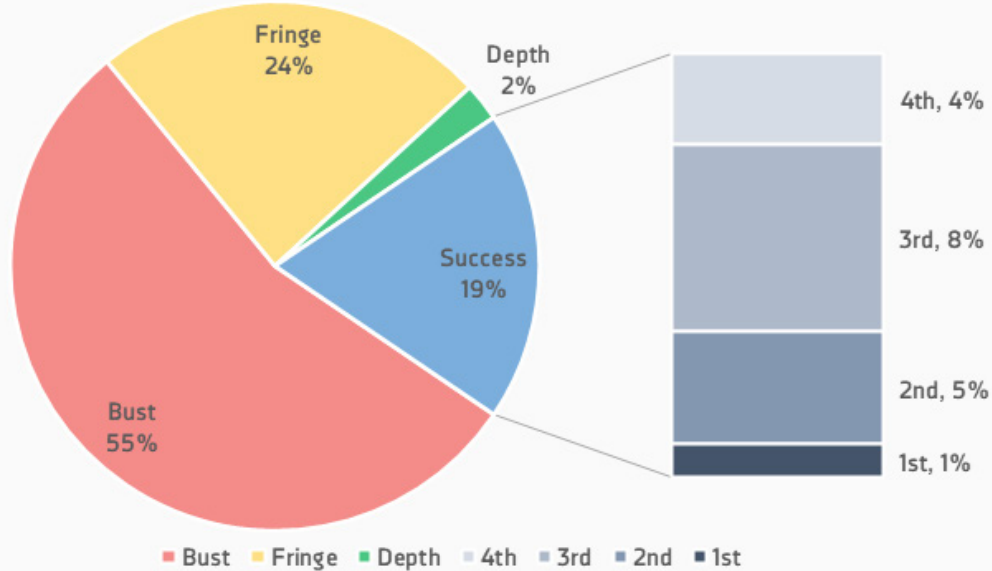
Another impressive showing from LaStarza. He's already mechanically refined – projectable stride, skating skills, and handling form. Plays a give-and-go, movement-heavy game with tons of plays to the inside. Understands how to invert pressure, often by delaying in transition and hitting the trailer. Along the boards, he waits, then spins off the inside, using a combination of his bottom hand, well-timed mohawks, and handling skill to lock the defender on his back. As soon as he feels them leaning on him, he passes into space. He's essentially a runway manufacturer, with the potential to become a dynamic, high-danger chance creator. To get there, he'll have to improve his shooting mechanics, off-puck movement (he defaults to the net), and experiment with more complex plays. Every game, he misses opportunities by simply playing it safe. Although he tried a look-off pass to the slot through two players. With that comes defensive refinement and work rate. Takes the extra stride to come across the hips. Wins body positioning. Anticipates passing lanes and gets interceptions. Proactive movement, especially down low. A projectable, toolsy player. Potentially a top-64 pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021 - Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

LaStarza was solid in this game, but not dynamic. His playmaking stands out the most. Frequently changes gears and routes, trying baiting defenders to the outside before cutting to the inside. Didn't look for the high-value pass, but he dropped pucks off to teammates behind him and started give-and-gos. A crafty deke inside a pass reception to beat a defender and gain the zone. A bit too safe with the puck in general. Skilled, but not much to make a projection on.

## Michael La Starza 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Fargo Force - USHL

There are a lot of elements to like in LaStarza's game. He plays fast, puts in the work on the defensive end, has a small-area game, and uses his teammates at the right times. He combines handling skill with footwork to beat defenders into space or squeak around them. Pushes his knees over his toes and sinks into a projectable NHL-calibre stride. Looks for cross-lane options and doesn't overcomplicate plays. Deflected a bad pass into space, outraced one defender, then skated through the other's recovery route for a breakaway chance. For no fault of his own, once he passes, the puck doesn't come back to him. That's an issue for a give-and-go, pace-centric attacker. It's a classic USHL story: notable playmaking prospect has little support, so his touches are limited and inconsistent. He'll improve as his teammates improve. He's definitely a draft pick.

**J.D. Burke:** September 24th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Played with a lot of energy in this contest. Really explosive first two steps. Shows some advanced rushing habits, whether

it's changing speeds in the neutral zone or pulling up on entries to find the trailer. Showed some technical grace as a puckhandler, working hook and slip passes on the rush to get the puck through traffic. Good shot placement. High defensive motor. Disrupted a few plays in the defensive zone. Battle level was very high.

**J.D. Burke:** September 23rd, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Needs to spend a lot of time working at his shot. Mechanics are all kinds of yucky. Mostly, the dude just sweeps the puck on net. Otherwise, I came away pretty impressed with LaStarza in this contest. Made sound reads on top of the puck to intercept breakout attempts through the neutral zone, showing some real explosiveness as a skater to make those plays happen. He showed some good timing and spacing off-the-puck in this contest, sliding into pockets of space at just the right moment -- had one such instance on the rush for a scoring chance early. He's physical, has no problem taking the puck inside, and isn't going to back down from a tussle. You love to see it.





46  
Rank

4  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

B  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

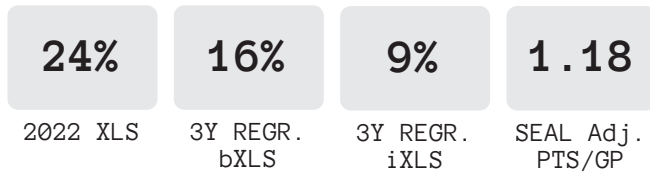
5.5  
Physical

# ADAM INGRAM

F | YOUNGSTOWN PHANTOMS

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. OCT. 14, 2003  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT

"He's an opportunistic offensive player. He anticipates and has a goal scorer's release." - NHL Scout in May 2022



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	54	26	29	55

## Scouting Report

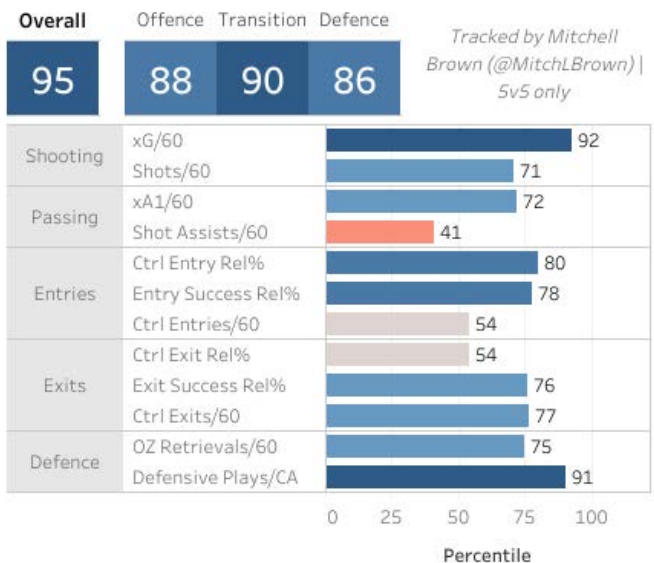
One of this year's early risers, Adam Ingram only needed a week of USHL action to announce himself as a candidate to go somewhere in the middle of this July's draft. By November, he was near the top of the league's leaderboard in scoring, as a rookie, and looking the part of a first-round pick.

Our crew took notice, led by hearty endorsements from EP Rinkside Editor-in-Chief J.D. Burke and Elite Prospects American regional scout Joey Padmanabhan. Ingram would place 25th overall on our board and seemed primed to only go up from there.

By about the midway point in the season, though, Ingram started to cool off. It wasn't just the points either. The displays of deceptive, pacey playmaking that made him so effective out of the gate gave way to a shoot-first mentality that eventually devolved into a shoot-at-all-costs one by about February. The bottom-line suffered in a big way, as he went from 29 points in his first 20 contests to a much more unremarkable 16 in the 20 that followed, and it took a bite out of his draft stock, too.

"Nearly a nothing performance from Ingram, which seems to be a theme of these January and February games," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a February report. "He's always selective, but this is a different level. He's not finding space off-puck. He just tries to launch himself past the defenders on the breakout,

Games Tracked: 10 | Minutes Tracked: 128.3



but he's not a good enough skater to play that way."

The most charitable read on Ingram's changing posture would be that it was his response to the lack of a supporting cast in Youngstown. The Phantoms were one of the USHL's lowest-scoring teams last season and only barely made the playoffs with a minus-eight goal-differential. By season's end, Ingram's 55 points placed him first on the team, a dozen points clear of his next highest-scoring teammate.

The version of Ingram that we saw in October and November looks like one of the draft's few triple-threat scorers, owing



to plus grades as a passer, shooter, and handler. What he lacked in a straight-line skating stride, he more than made up for with a yeomanlike work rate that made him one of the most disruptive players on the ice every time he stepped over the boards.

"What a performance for Ingram, who had three points and could've easily had three more," Padmanabhan remarked in a November game report. "The man has such a high work rate; on both ends of the puck, he makes himself a factor in the play. Defensively, he practices good stick positioning, forechecks hard, and seals off opponents with his sizable frame. Offensively, he's always scanning the ice and using slick handles to open up passing and shooting lanes. He's a cerebral player, and he may be flying under the radar as a rookie in the USHL."

There's no doubt that Ingram did enough this year to walk that stage in Montréal, but it remains to be seen when he gets that call. There will doubtless be teams who bank on the high-end displays of skill and sense early in the season coupled with a projectable 6-foot-2 frame and his status as a premium position player and set their sights on him early.

Then there will be others who worry about the fading production, good-not-great numbers on the whole as an October birthdate, and a skating stride that isn't close to good enough to play NHL minutes, and keep him from their board entirely.

Ingram is slated to play for the St. Cloud Huskies next season. With considerable improvements to his stride and game-to-game consistency, a middle-six role with secondary special teams work at the NHL level isn't out of the question.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 John Hayden YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 95%	2 Connor Brickley YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 95%	3 Seth Ambroz YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 94%	4 Troy Riddle YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 94%	5 Nick Schilkey YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 94%
6 Ryan Dzingel YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 94%	7 Jason Zucker YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 94%	8 Vinni Lettieri YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 94%	9 David Backes YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 93%	10 Tim Kennedy YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 93%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 1st, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Ingram's skating is a big problem. He's high in his stance, limited ankle flexion, and no weight shifting capabilities: upper-body is always between his two feet. The crossovers are all hops. No upper-body hinge. The mechanics need a lot of work and he needs to add strength. I liked his off-puck movements in this game overall. He supported well and scored with a wrist-shot on the power play. He looked engaged and on top of the play, decent motor even if he lacked speed. He's a project. Game was too uneventful to really make a judgement on his offensive upside, but he has handling skills and awareness under pressure. So, a few interesting elements heavily weighted down by the skating stride, which is not projectable at all.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

When Ingram's playing like this, it's easy to appreciate his game, but he's still a tricky projection. His skating limitations are significant, impacting his shot, ability to cut inside, board play, and physical game. The work rate off-puck is usually visible, but the other skills required to play this style in the NHL with a skating deficit aren't. This game, however, he showed a bit more. He consistently brought the puck from

the boards to the inside lane, creating more opportunities for his playmaking. Connected with one of the better backhand passes I've seen this season: turning away from his target after getting the steal, delaying to wait for the defender's reaction, then passing inside crossovers. Plays like that make it clear that he has passing skill and vision, but he can't use them consistently (a combination of skating limitations and structure). Deceptiveness comes and goes. As do his off-puck instincts. Neither of these will be an option for him at the next level. I can see an argument for a late second, but I suspect he's going much higher.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 5th, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Ingram barely played but had the best shift of the game. Before touching a loose puck, he spotted his teammate sprinting to the slot. Connected with a one-time shot pass, a convincing one at that. A teammate forced a steal and threw him the puck, which he turned into a between the legs shot a moment later. That was about it for Ingram, apart from a steal into a drop pass for a teammate. He attacks the middle and works hard on the backcheck, but neither seemed like overwhelming strengths. Zero board game or puck protection. He doesn't even really try to invert pressure and then drive the middle. Just offloads possession and avoids contact when

possible. The flashes suggest a top-nine forward, but the rest of his game suggests AHL scorer. Tough evaluation, but given his slightness and impressive profile, I'm becoming more optimistic. Skating improvement will bolster the volume of the things he already does and unlock new skills.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

I can't remember the last time I saw a top prospect play such few minutes regularly. He also doesn't get the puck much. Some of that is his own doing. He can't extend possession along the boards (he doesn't even usually engage along the boards, either). Skating's still an issue. He offloads the puck too quickly on the breakout and his off-puck routes leave him inaccessible for a pass. However, he shows scoring instincts around the slot by finding open space and making small adjustments to ensure he gets the puck in his shooting pocket. He's a diligent defensive player, combining some proactiveness with non-stop energy. Overall, this was a quiet performance, even for Ingram's standards. But it's easy to see how his game will improve with more strength, ice time, and better linemates. He won't be a play-driver in the NHL, but he could be a third-liner.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Ingram made three plays all game and left with two goals. I respect the efficiency but he scores low on the does cool things scale. The best was his first goal. He stole possession in pursuit (something he did regularly in this outing), tracked the play, skated to the net at the right time, and fired in the rebound. Another off-puck sequence saw Ingram take away the defender's stick, creating the cross-slot passing lane for his teammate. Scored with a relatively generic wrister on the PP. And that was it. He didn't bother making plays on the breakout, preferring to rid himself of the responsibility. He whiffed on shots. Didn't get many touches and didn't seem interested in passing on many of them. High work rate, some scoring ability, and significant skating issues. I don't see the necessary qualities to play in the NHL with skating as a weakness, although much of his skating comes from a lack of strength (he often has the ankle flexion, but not the hip engagement). Therefore, his projection comes down to getting stronger, improving skating, and adding more skills. It's a tricky one, but he works hard on the ice. He's probably more of a late-second, early-third for me.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 11th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Nearly a nothing performance from Ingram, which seems to be a theme of these January and February games. He's always selective, but this is a different level. He's not finding space off-puck. Just tries to launch himself past the defenders on the breakout, but he's not a good enough skater to play that way. Took a point shot that deflected for an assist. The motor on the backcheck and forechecker is admirable. Timed his engagements in DZ well, but reaches in pursuit. He's better than this. I've seen enough to believe it, but these performances don't inspire confidence.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** February 2nd, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

A quieter night for Ingram offensively, but I'm seeing some improvement in his skating ability and defensive play. He tracks nicely in his own zone and supports the puck close in transition. He's comfortable making the quick up or a touch pass to get the play moving before activating. He's crafty with his hands and showed a little bit of speed out of his crossover, but his edgework was still a bit sloppy and he didn't have any sort of second gear acceleration out of his stops or turns. He's probably a second or third rounder to me.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 29th, 2022

USNTDP U17s vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Against the U17s, Ingram should be a factor, even though Youngstown is tough to watch. He was alright. When he's looking to pass, I mostly like his ideas. But he misses opportunities early in his possession because he's so focused on funnelling play to the net. Some advanced off-puck reads around the slot, but his teammates can't get him the puck (that's not his fault). Still, he does very little on the ice, even when he's getting touches. It's all projection based on the question, "what happens once he adds weight?" Surely, he'll become a better skater, but how much more will his puckhandling improve? Or his board play? Or his deception? The answer is likely a bit, but he should have some of the details by now, even with the skating limitations (see: Rutger McGroarty). He doesn't. I should probably watch some of his games from earlier in the season. For now, I don't consider him a top-64 prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Cedar Rapids RoughRiders vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

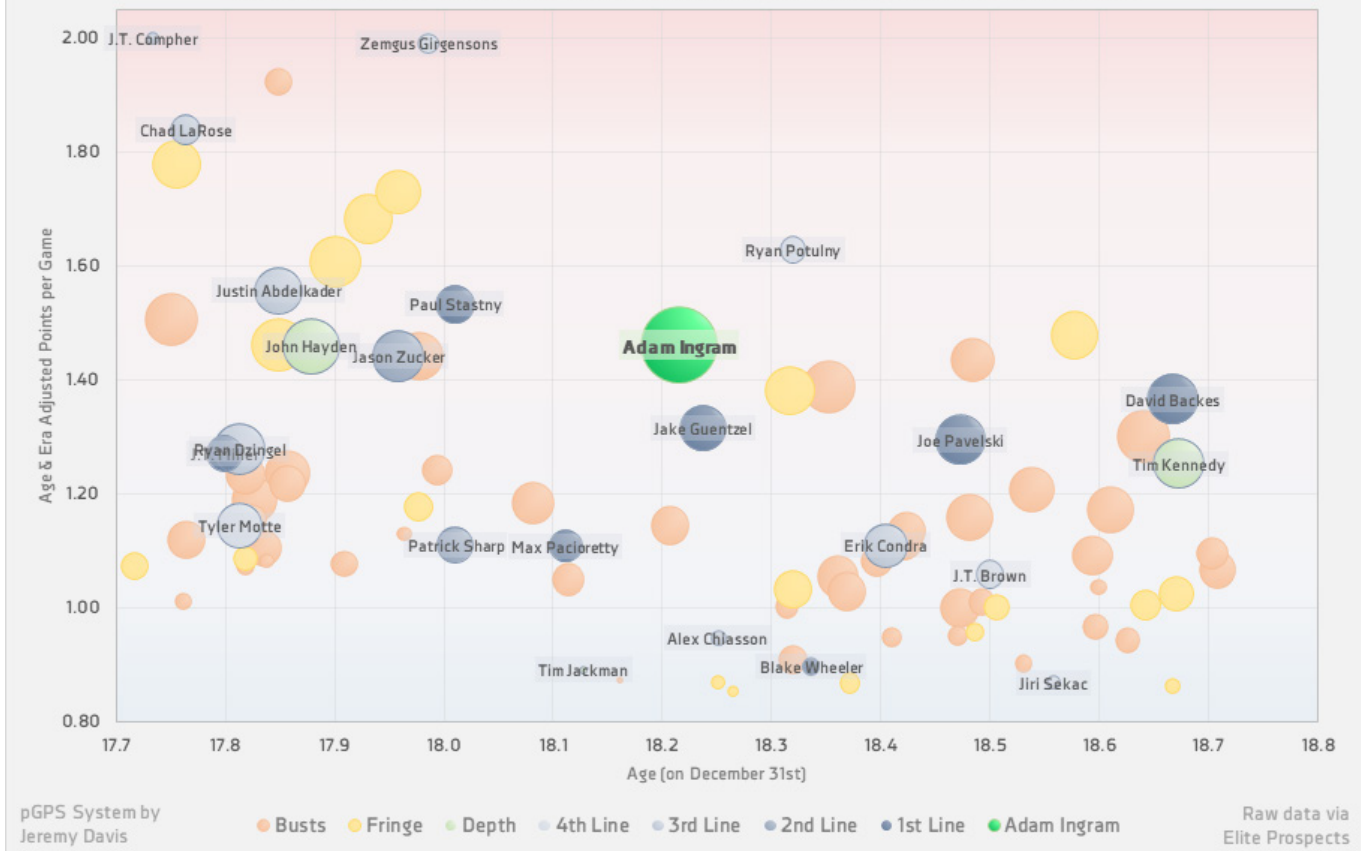
Ingram's all pace at even-strength, but is, well, way too patient on the PP. He misses opportunities to move the puck

## Adam Ingram 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 87 || Base XLS: 24% || Impact XLS: 14% || XPR: 45.7 || Drafted Pct: 57%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



early and doesn't move after passing to get open. Some deceptiveness on the PP, but it won't matter unless he picks up the pace. At 5-on-5, he did a few things. Fired off a few scoring chances, dangled around the goalie for a breakaway goal, and turn retrievals into offence with his passing. Outraced a defender wide then passed into the slot for his best pass of the game. He's only comfortable handling and managing pressure on his heels, which doesn't bode well for his NHL future. Consistently failed his pass receptions, either with poor first touches or reaching instead of taking the extra stride. However, he had one sequence where he deflected the puck out of mid-air in-tight and turned it into a scoring crazy. Some off-puck instincts, even deceiving a defender in one sequence. Teammates struggle to get him the puck, partly because they're bad and partly because his off-puck movements lack pace. Works hard but engages by flying by. Maybe a mid-rounder or late-second. The skating is a major hindrance that affects every part of his game, from his puck protection to his shot.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Ingram scored by outracing a poor-pivoting defender to the net and tucking a backhand between the goaltender's legs.

Nice finish, probably won't work anywhere else. He lacks depth to the point where he struggles to get one foot in front of the other on his crossovers. He has the right idea – few strides and many crossovers – and he generates a surprising amount of speed for a player with such significant skating limitations. He always gives himself a chance on plays, winning battles and stealing pucks on will alone. But I don't see any advanced offensive ideas to offset his skating limitations, lacks deception, manipulation, and puck protection. Whiffed on his second-best scoring chance of the outing. Didn't look much more than a mid-rounder in this game.

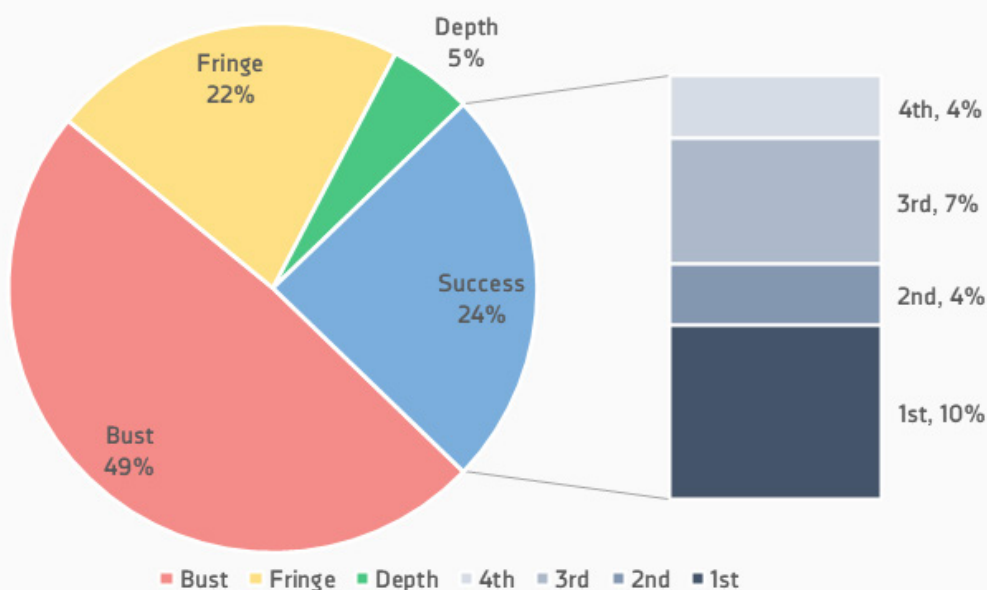
**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Ingram's skating limitations are significant. It's not just the stride mechanics, but his feet fly around, he's always off-balance, and he can barely crossover. Ankle flexion sometimes, but he's as close to a straight leg skater as I've seen for this level. I haven't seen the skills necessary offset the skating outside defence. His feet compromise his shot, and he's not particularly good at getting open anyway. Doesn't deceive to prolong options, let alone create. He forces shots with open passes. In fact, I'm not sure he passed more than three times in the OZ. One came after a quick deke off the boards before

## Adam Ingram 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



going cross-slot, but he left so much value on the table over the course of the game. He's dependable defensively and on the forecheck. Disruptive through timing and work rate, but he's reaching so often. He looks like a junior scorer and not much more, unless the skating is masking some sort of highly manipulative, give-and-go scorer. Doubtful.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 26th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Ingram hardly factored into this game. A disruptive stick in the NZ a few times, always brings the energy in pursuit (he always gives himself a chance on plays), and he consistently peeled pucks off the boards and got them to the inside in transition. Best play: a deke between the feet of a defender just as they opened, showing timing, handling skill, and technical proficiency (set ups, in particular). It created a 2-on-0, which he choose to go to the backhand on - a pass was the best play there.

The skating's grim. Ankle dorsiflexion's sort of there, but his hips don't follow at all. Drops his chest to the ice, the heels kick upwards wildly, and he can't properly crossover as a result. Stride recoveries are seemingly too narrow at times - that's uncommon in today's game (or it could just be the camera). Doesn't load his stride with his upper body; there's wild arm swinging but he doesn't shift head or shoulders. Didn't see the deception, off-puck game, or awareness of body positioning to offset the skating, even if much of the skating seems attributable to his lack of strength/weight. Looked like a mid-rounder in this one.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 20th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

What a performance for Ingram, who had three points and could've easily had three more. The man has such a high work rate, on both ends of the puck he makes himself a factor in the play. Defensively, he practices good stick positioning, forechecks hard, and seals off opponents with his sizable frame. Offensive, he's always scanning the ice and using slick handles to open up passing and shooting lanes. He's a cerebral player and he may be flying under the radar as a rookie in the USHL. The knock is the skating. He's got a bend at the hip and a lack of extension that prevents any sort of agility or acceleration. The hands and smarts help him get away with it, but this will need to improve if he's worth a first-round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Madison Capitols vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Ingram's really disruptive on the backcheck. He overcomes significant skating limitations with pace, will, and timing to disrupt the puck carrier. Physical to separate the puck, too. But I didn't see any notable offensive ability. He scored off a lucky bounce and had a couple of rush chances that were the most of the work of his linemates. A give-and-go deep in the zone that failed was probably the most notable play in this game from a projection standpoint.

Changes lanes in transition with passes, but inside OZP, misses opportunities to better the attack. Top hand was locked to his hip while handling that limited his range of

# "With considerable improvements to [Ingram's] stride and game-to-game consistency, a middle-six role with secondary special teams work at the NHL level isn't out of the question."

motion, especially when combined with his total lack of depth through his lower body. Didn't see a draft pick in this game.

**J.D. Burke:** November 12th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Just a phenomenal performance for Ingram in this hockey game. He was an absolute force in all three zones, easily the best player on the ice every time he stepped over the boards, imposing his will on the opposition. Picked up an assist early from the left side half wall position in the 1-3-1 power play formation, collecting a difficult pass and sending a two-touch feed into the slot for a tap-in goal. Used eye-line deception to hold a defender on a 3-on-1 rush and then furnished a perfect pass to his teammate for what should've been a tap-in goal at the net-front if not for a sprawling save. Picked up another assist in the third period by calming a bouncing puck and sending it between two defenders to set up a breakaway goal for his teammate. Snuck into a defenceman's blind spot at just the right moment to collect a pass for a breakaway attempt in the second period, losing control of the puck at the very last second. He finished with two assists but very easily could've had three or four points. Made some really strong plays defensively, too. Backchecked hard to disrupt at least two potential scoring chances (that I can remember), tracking well through the neutral zone on each play. The thing that really stands out with Ingram is the way he's constantly scanning the ice for options. He's got his head on a swivel, surveying for passing options, threats to monitor in the defensive zone, etc. He knows what to do with the puck before it arrives on his stick every time. Looks like a no-brainer first-round pick at this point.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 8th, 2021


Youngstown Phantoms vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Ingram was looking to pass in this game, and it was glorious. He hits teammates with backhand breakaway feeds

through defenders, two-touch feeds off retrievals to the inside, and a spin-around pass to the slot off a broken play. Consistently tried more complex ideas, like look-off slip passes or backhand passes through a defender. Put the puck on the heels of his target, but it's clear that has vision and an awareness of options. The skating's an issue. He makes one-foot cuts to the inside; there's no explosiveness or quickness in his edge work. Stride isn't much better, stemming from a lack of ankle dorsiflexion and hip engagement. Has shooting skill; it's clear in the way that he cuts inside and loads his shot inside the cut. But his shot was mostly a sweeping wrister in this game that did little damage. Work rate defensively was notable, but he ends up reaching as the stride falls apart. This is a big bet on improving his skating. He has inside play, passing skill, and work rate. But I don't see the puck protection mechanics, deceptiveness, or off-puck instincts to play in the NHL as a significantly below-average skater.

**J.D. Burke:** September 22nd, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Lincoln Stars - USHL

Just finished watching five hockey games, and Ingram's performance in this one was by far the best I saw from a first-time draft-eligible prospect all day. Was buzzing out there right from puck drop onward. He's a real handful around the net-front, with a good sense for space and timing. Puck protection mechanics are great. Used the dotted line and a crossover-heavy blend through the neutral zone to create space on entries. Made some just fantastic passing plays in this one, including an east-west feed on the rush, and a hook pass to find the trailer through traffic. Really high level vision there. Picked up a goal by sneaking behind a defenceman in the neutral zone and firing an in-stride wrist shot on net. He's a handful physically, has a good defensive work rate, and makes smart plays all over the ice. Great combination of attributes. Need to follow this player closely this year. 



47  
Rank

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

6.5  
Passing

B  
Grade

6  
Puckhandling

6  
Hockey Sense

4  
Physical

# LANE HUTSON

D | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 5'8" D.O.B. FEB. 14, 2004  
WEIGHT 159 SHOOTS LEFT

35%	33%	29%	1.51
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	60	10	53	63
USHL	27	6	26	32
WJC-18	6	0	8	8

> Committed to Boston Univ.

## Scouting Report

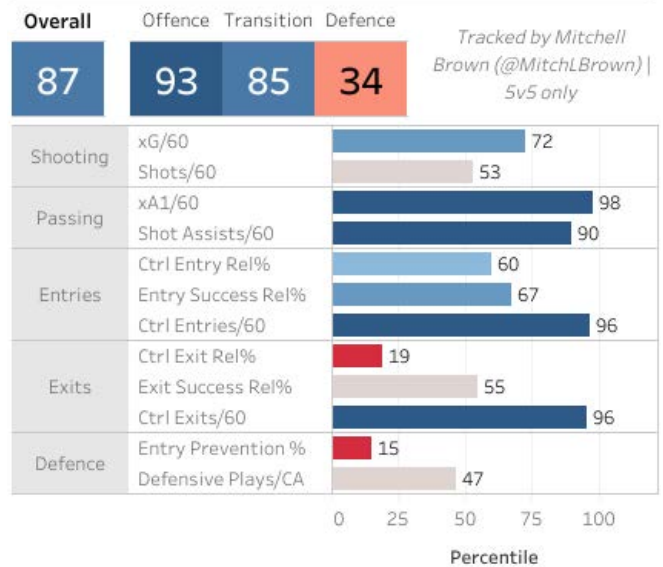
There is a significant divide between the degree to which our staff likes Lane Hutson's game and how well we think it will translate to the NHL level. One that, unfortunately, took a player with several components that would grade as first-round calibre and forced him to the second round on our final board.

Few in this draft can match Hutson's quality from the offensive blue line as a defender. The way that the 5-foot-8 blueliner evades opponents with weight shifts, handling moves, and fakes allow him to turn every puck touch into a Grade-A scoring chance, whether he's the one pulling the trigger or as a setup man.

"He is a master of the weight shift fake move," Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis wrote in a mid-season Scout's Notebook article on EP Rinkside. "As a defender is coming at him, he leans to one side, indicating that he's going that way, before exploding toward the other when the defender bites on the fake. This move allows him to attack down the blue line toward the slot, where he's in an even more dangerous position to create."

His cunning as a distributor is mostly expressed in his ability to anticipate plays coupled with the patience to let them develop before dispatching the puck to the stick of a waiting teammate. The end result of which was Hutson placing in the 98th percentile as an expected primary assist generator according to the data set that Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown tracked. The 53 assists at retail value in 60 games with the USNTDP U18

Games Tracked: 14 | Minutes Tracked: 236.8



squad last season isn't half bad either.

All of these same hallmarks -- the manipulative handling and skating patterns, the patience as a distributor, and the skill as a passer -- in Hutson's game that made him so effective from the offensive blue line translate to transition play, too.

Where Hutson may find trouble as a puck-moving defenceman at the next level -- and perhaps in general -- is in the lack of a separating gear as a skater and a mechanically grim forward stride. For all his grace, agility, and shiftiness, this part of his skating profile is nowhere near where it needs to be for his game to translate to the NHL.

Brown explains in a mid-season article on the USNTDP: "Hutson's feet flail as his knee bend changes wildly from one

move to the next, limiting stability, explosiveness and control."

And when Hutson gets beat in space, that's it. Game over. His inability to access his outside edges means that he's done. It's as fatal a flaw as one can have as a defenceman. Without significant -- and we mean significant -- improvement to this part of his game, there's very little hope that he'll feature in anything more than a depth role at the NHL level -- if that.

To his credit, Hutson defends admirably along the boards and in body-on-body defensive sequences for a 5-foot-8 defenceman. He scans well, stays on top of the play, and

cuts opponents off at the hands going in for loose pucks. No issues there.

But if you're a 5-foot-8 offensive defenceman who can't defend in space because of fatal flaws as a skater, well, that could be a problem. Perhaps Hutson can take the steps to rectify it en route to a lengthy, productive NHL career. Here's hoping, because the league would be so much better for having his creativity from the blue line. He's a hell of a lot of fun to watch at his best

## Game Reports

**Daniel Gee:** April 30th, 2022

USA vs Czechia - U18s

Hutson is extremely uncontrolled and chaotic and because of this he can go nuclear, but he did some fun stuff in this game.

Defensive skating and transitional defending is worrying. He often pivots early, giving up good body position to just stay step-and-step with speedier opponents. This makes him an easy target for better handlers and manipulators. Hutson had an abysmal sequence in the first that exposed his decision making. Facing a Czechia forward 1-on-1 attacking off the left-wing, Hutson first pivoted right, forcing him to make an extra pivot to face the attacker, he then upped his pace, feet wildly heel kicking out of control, just catching up with the threat and bodying him enough to make the stop -- talk about failing successfully. He over-committed too much as well. On one second period shift he failed three separate pokechecks on an inside threat; a more skilled attacker would have a field day. There are some good inside-lane protection and the ability to shadow attackers, but he straight up loses straight-line races to retrievals too much. Made some quick stops in sustained pressure. On a third period play, Hutson rejected a centering puck reading the pass from the right side of the net. Super high effort, but struggled to seal off cycled pucks and was a bit behind occasionally.

In transition, Hutson has a bunch of cutbacks and pivot ability to shake off forecheckers -- sometimes using unnecessarily. There were tonnes of crazy carry out sequences that ended in neutral zone dump-ins. Hutson can up his pace to become a factor in odd-man rushes, but limited shooting tools makes him ineffective as a trailer threat. He completed some layered outlets -- one was a long saucer pass that created a USA 4-on-2 and a secondary assist. Sustained habits are hit-and-miss. He drags pucks to the middle, but shoots under pressure a lot in this game. One on board-to-middle sequence, Hutson overhanded, panicked in pressure, and had the puck knocked away leading to a turnover and a slashing penalty. Some manipulation work in his game. Slap-passes

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Danny Richmond YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 74%	2 Torey Krug YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 67%
3 Eric Werner YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 65%	4 Bryan Miller YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 65%
5 Brett Lebda YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 63%	6 Justin Faulk YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 62%
7 Alexx Privitera YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 61%	8 Keith Ballard YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 61%

worked wonders. Very telegraphed shooting threat. Czechia had an easy time getting into lanes to block stick-pointed-to-the-sky slapshot attempts. He reminds me of Troy Stecher on North Dakota -- undersized, vulnerable in transition, but obviously skilled enough to make plays.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

Another fun Hutson performance. A ton of manipulation sequences, activation patterns, three-zone offensive involvements. The skating is still a problem; if he misses a play, he can't recover and he lacks the finer agility on retrievals to escape larger and faster forecheckers. He defends well at this level, relying on aggressivity and timing and general annoyance and high motor to stick to attackers and jump on the puck at the right time. Maybe a top-50 pick in this draft, but the NHL chance remains low, which is a bit disappointing as his game deserves more praise.

**Cam Robinson:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

Hutson was good again in this one. He manipulated well - especially on the man-advantage and a couple of sustained

5v5 pressure spots. He jumped into the play regularly and offered support and trialing passing options. But the concerns remain. If only Hutson was a plus-skater. Things could get really interesting. He has innate feelings for moving with and without the puck in the offensive zone and transisitoing up the ice. He's shifty and can escape pressure in tight spots, he can work the top of the umbrella to give, get, give and go very well. He's an aggressive stopper at the defensive blueline. But the overall speed and ability to get back and retrieve pucks is limiting. At his size, he needs more than just average skating ability over the course of extended space. It's a shame, because he's smart and creative. But he has a major uphill battle ahead of him.

**David St-Louis:** April 1st, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs USNTDP U18 - USHL

Lane Hutson is dynamic -- as much as he can be with his skating ability. He's still pulling feints all over the ice, especially weight shift fakes, but he lacks explosiveness out of his moves still. He got hit team out of trouble on the breakout multiple times by activating, making backhand passes under pressure, and beating forecheckers. He's the complete package at this level; even physical on defence to separate attackers from the puck. He supports every single play.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

A relatively nondescript game by the lofty standards Hutson has set. He didn't show quite the same playmaking ability in the offensive zone, but his shooting reads continue to improve. When he joins as the trailer, there's no indecisiveness. Off-puck activation doesn't just further his playmaking; now, he's looking to get into shooting position. This was the cleanest zone exit game I've seen from Hutson. He turned retrievals into fast-break offence up the walls. He delayed at the right moments and sped play up at the right moments. They're not complex and lack layers. He still gets forced into poor decisions, but his awareness of pressure limits these plays. He's fine as a second-rounder. Lots to like in his game.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

If Hutson's breakouts were better, he'd be a top-40 pick. Instead, hardly any of the offensive skills translate. He can manipulate defenders, but chooses to skate and forechecking pressure and make a panic play up the boards. I guess it's more credence to the theory that his game is mostly running the scripts rather than high-level offensive creativity. To his credit, he's diversified his offensive game. He's not just doing

that untranslatable head fake, fake-weight shift nonsense when activating. He's scanning, beating defenders into space, and strategically cutting back and finding new options if he can't access the first one. He sprints around the offensive zone, paying close attention to the feet of defenders. When they turn, he cuts inside. He's become increasingly more shooting-driven, primarily using off-puck activation to become a weak side threat. Improved defensively considerably, now getting the odd stop with the pass. In 1-on-1s, he's still highly beatable. He's a quick, but mechanically weak skater. Strength will help, but I'm not sure strength alone fixes the mechanical issues. There aren't many players like Hutson in the NHL, and the similar ones don't have the same skating issues and with more creativity. But I still believe in him.

**David St-Louis:** February 25th, 2022

USNTDP U18 vs Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

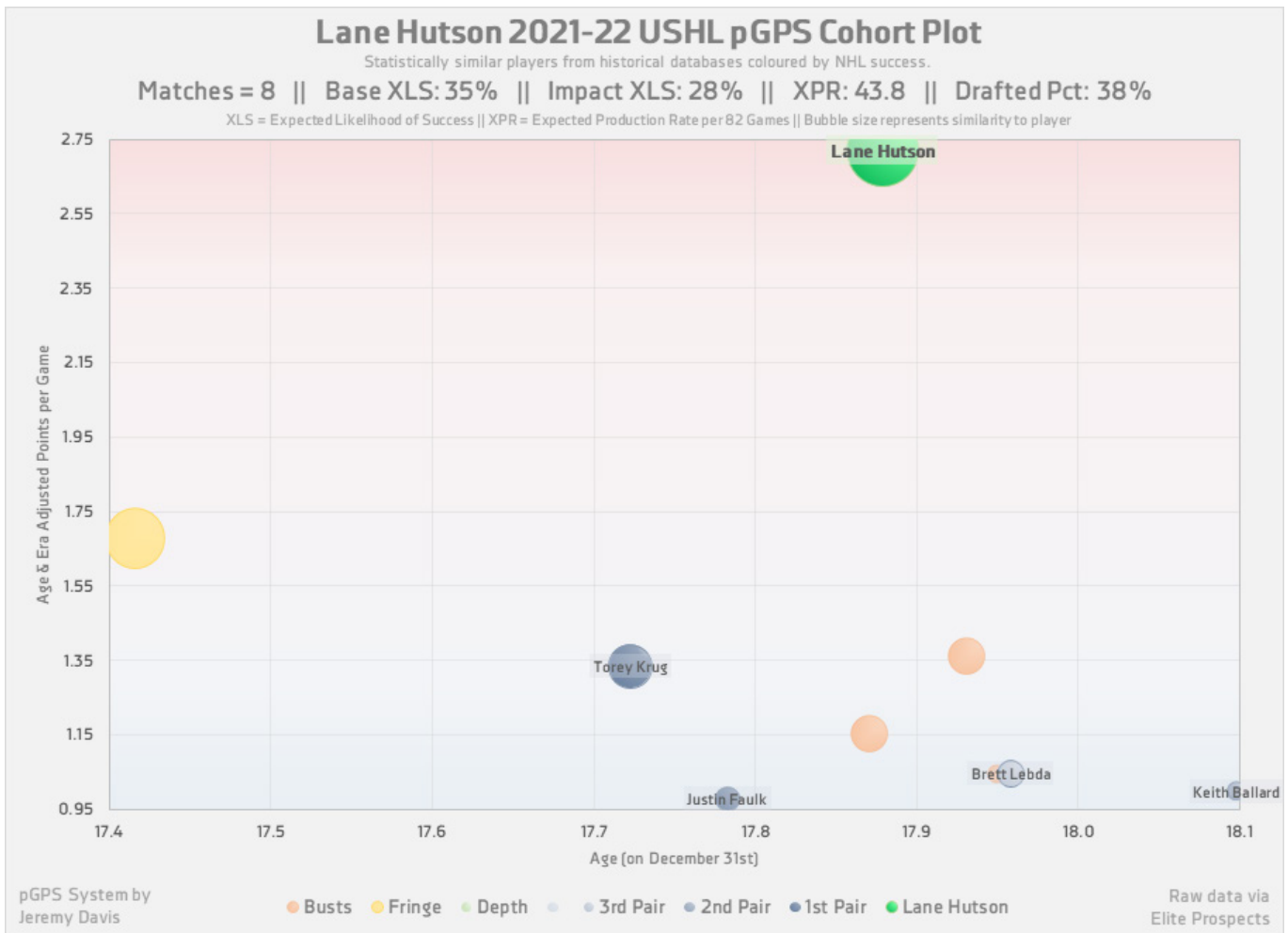
Hutson continues to be the most interesting, involved, and engaged defencemen in the USNTDP's back-end. His offensive reads and manipulations, his ability to recognize vulnerable opponents, to pinch on them and dangle around them, is better than the vast majority of defencemen in this class. But the size. But the skating. There are real hurdles and I can't see him being all that high on our board. The game will simply be much harder for Hutson than a Chesley in the NHL, and because of that, he can't really be ahead of his lesser talented teammates.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Hutson really looks like he's flying, but then you look at everyone else on the ice and realize it's mostly an illusion. The skating's a problem, no matter if it's straight ahead, defensively, turning, or skills. He lacks the depth and the mechanical form, but there's reason to believe it will improve. In transition, he constantly looked for the weak side teammate and has the pace and passing skill to access them. He's a bit of a mess on the breakout, but it's no longer for a lack of trying plays - it'll improve. Offensively, he's running the same scripts over and over. He's so reliant on this poorly executed weight shift move with a shoulder turn to beat defenders - he doesn't even get over his outside edge! It's just all inside edges, sometimes barely loading the outside leg, before skating straight into the nearest defender because they just read his feet. When that's taken away from him, he problem-solves better plays. That's good, and it's clear he sees teammates - he connected with two cross-slot passes from the point. He's not Behrens in terms of projectable high-level playmaking, but he's inching closer. The defensive





skating remains poor, but he's an engaged defender who gets stops at the top of the circles. Maybe a fine mid-second, but his NHL odds aren't great for reasons that run deeper than size + skating combination.

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022  
Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

This is the type of game that makes me think Hutson relies too much on certain patterns to create, that he's not adaptable. The weight shift fake (which he does beautifully) is his way of opening up offensive plays, but it also looks like his only way. He misses better plays trying to fake defenders that way. I like his offensive involvement in general and the way he tries to improve the conditions of the puck for teammates with those pre-pass fakes, and by making pick plays to slow down forechecker. He's engaged, creative enough, and relatively skilled (handling/passing).

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 22nd, 2022  
Madison Capitols vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

There are certainly knocks on Hutson's straight-ahead skating stride, but he is so mobile and his motor is so high that his sloppy mechanics almost don't matter. He's deceptive with his hips and eyes, which allows him to create separation

with a cut or tight turn. The point play continues to be so strong, the way he combines his hands and his feet allows him to manipulate shot blockers and open up shooting and passing lanes. All of the tools he has in his repertoire make me think he could slide into the first or second round.

**David St-Louis:** January 22nd, 2022  
Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Hello Lane Hutson! The last time I saw that guy was last season. Others have talked to me about his offensive ability, but this was truly the first time I saw him in real, memorable action. He didn't just beat one guy in this game, but actually chained a couple of moves, showing deception, challenging defenders, keeping their attention on him, moving at the point east-west to clear space for teammates and invite them in his offensive ballet. The contrast with Casey (who wasn't doing anything productive with the puck) was striking. I like the hip pocket handling and the agility, the activations, and the general activity. He is aware and engaged and aggressive, both offensively and defensively. Two times in this game, he established body positioning on a retrieval -- the kind of things he will have to do at the next levels. He is the best offensive defencemen on the team and one of the best in the draft. He's also 5'8" and an average skater, unfortunately.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Not much offence from Hutson, aside from one activate, deke, pass cross-slot sequence. Give him space, and he makes things happen in transition. Cross-lane passes, uses the middle, deceives and occasionally delays for the right opening. With pressure, he's wildly inconsistent. Lacks adaptability. A tighter rush defence game than usual. Defence probably won't be a strength at the next level, but the details are better. The next step is timing his engagements with the opponent's stickhandling and turns. I'm not a huge believer in his game working at the next level, but it's worth a shot in this draft.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 8th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Pretty typical performance from Lane Hutson: good transition play and first pass, exceptional deception at the point and on the rush, decent defensive play. I get that he's not a very good skater technically speaking, but his motor is so high that he still manages to evade forecheckers and create space for himself. We'll see if that carries to the next level. His size doesn't help him defensively, but he has good enough habits that he doesn't hurt him. He'll bang around in the corners, leverage and pin opponents, and maintains stick on puck while defending the rush. He's a top defender on this team.

**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Hutson skates hunched over, with a distinct rounder back, and with his feet kicking. He can acquire speed, but lacks the pop out of pivots to really defend at a high-level in the professional game. There is a high chance that he ends up a specialist, on the powerplay and on a bottom-pairing, if he ever makes the NHL. He does his best to defend, laying his body on the line, showing a high level of activity, and I like his breakouts, the way he reads the path of forecheckers, and evades them. He always tries to make the best play, to improve the conditions of the puck for teammates. And he uses manipulation tricks: change of speed, direction, look-offs...

**David St-Louis:** January 3rd, 2022

Minnesota Golden Gophers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Hutson was everywhere in this game, offensively and defensively. He faked defenders at the point by attracting them and stepping around them, made give-and-goes plays (passed then exploded as much as he could into space)... His hands are clearly above-average and his play-reading, too. He knows his next play before the puck touches his stick and, if nothing is open, he moves and tries to find new angle and passing lanes. He doesn't force plays when nothing is open. His defensive effort was commendable. A bit like Howard at

times, he tries to be overly deceptive in his passes and misses his target. Despite his size, he engages on opponents, slips in front of them while stick-lifting them to win first touch on the puck. His pace is projectable, but size/skating combo isn't. He needs to work on his mechanics.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18 - USHL

Hutson is always involved. He jumps inside space, showing good timing on activations as a trailer (doesn't overskate), challenges defenders, moves around them with honed weight shift fakes (he even gets on his outside edge on the faking side to really sell them) and seems very conscious of the effect his moves have on the defence, of the plays he will have available after attacking past them. His hip pocket handling also contributes to his deceptive act. I didn't get much of a chance to evaluate him defensively in this blowout.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Hutson was dynamic in this game. Constantly looked to set-up teammates for scoring chances with an aggression that no other defender has on the his NTDP. Head fakes and changes of pace hold the set-up for his activation sequences, and then he uses pace with the occasional shot fake to pass to the inside. Set-up three scoring chances in this one and nearly had two more. However, the projectability of these dampers the outing. He's a below-average skater (lots of unnecessary movement and a lack of depth) who relies on handling skill, and one particular head fake that he sees him remain on his inside edges point in the same direction the entire time. USHL defenders fall for it, NCAA ones won't. He's mostly looking to beat defenders wide before passing back to the middle, too. And once the pass gets taken away, he either goes for it anyway or lobs a weak shot on goal instead of adapting. I like his fake shot wind ups, anticipation of hand-offs, and off-puck movement, but I don't his game scales as well as Casey's or Sean Behrens from last year. This was, however, a better defensive and transition performance from him than usual. Still lacks some purpose on his breakout plays, but he delayed to wait for pressure to fly-by - that should help the decision-making. Tighter off-puck game than normal, and engaged with timing instead of wild lunges. Pivots remain a massive hole that even slow-moving attackers exploit, like they did for a goal in this game. Looked like a potential late-second in this one, but he's a long-term project.

**Cam Robinson:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I love the pace that Hutson showed in this outing. He was constantly engaging in the rush, transporting the puck and

looking to distribute to mates in dangerous situations. Now, on the flip side, his overall skating posture and mechanics are not ideal. He swings his arms side to side and is too upright much of the time. His hands, fakes and overall offensive awareness are plus features that allow him to mitigate the skating issues at this issue. In the offensive end, he can make the best use of those qualities without needing to explode or cut back often - which the lack of depth hinders.

He's an interesting prospect in this crop as he appears to be better than his long term projection likely indicates. Seems like a top-60 kid.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Not sure Hutson left the ice in this game, but it wasn't a particularly impressive performance. He has major transition issues because of his skating and handling - just seems to lose control at the wrong times or put himself in a position he can't escape. I think his game lacks foresight overall, even as a playmaker. In OZP, he does the same deke: twist upper-body with a head fake on the backhand, then try to beat man to the outside. But he stays on his inside edges with his toes pointed in the same direction the entire time. A defender read it and easily stopped it. It's only going to get worse at the next level. I like Hutson's defensive timing in this game, but he's done if he can't get the stop on the pass. Committing footwork from a passive gap, and he generally loses track of off-puck threats. He's a draft pick, but this game didn't show why.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Hutson's game is limited. He's a bit panicky under pressure and is largely ineffective defensively. He's a volume-based creator, not because he lacks the skill, but because he plays too fast for his current skill level. Throws out head fakes (and pivot turn fakes), jumping down the boards, and then looks for a teammate as he's actively fighting his feet. And he does everything in motion. The result is plenty of failed plays, even if the idea was good. His offensive script is formulaic (pivot turn fake, dash down the boards, pass against the grain), but he has enough surprises (like one-touch cross-ice passes) that keep me curious. Long-shot to make the NHL, but I think his skill's worth a pick for a development-oriented organization.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

There's a natural comparison between Hutson and Tyler Duke, two short, high-pace NTDP defencemen with skating limitations. Hutson's the more dynamic of the two. He tries to create advantages with the puck, through a combination of

give-and-goes, handling, and playmaking. Lots of activation, too. The shot's mostly sound (distance between feet, chest up, elbow up), but lacks power. Occasionally takes too long to execute on his pass and he lacks planning in his handling sequences (often beating one into a group of defenders). Lacks ankle dorsiflexion with inconsistent depth, limiting his manipulation ability, quickness, and sometimes puck control. Very high frequency of crossovers and strides, always far too short and he strides behind him. There's no way around it: he's bad at defending the rush. He's passive through the NZ and then commits on the slightest of fakes. Many rushes, he might as well not even be there. He's a projection of a projection, largely based on the clearly advanced offensive mind limited by his tools. I think he's a pick, but probably a third-rounder or beyond.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 26th, 2021

Buff State vs. NTDP U18s - NCAA

I'm going to keep banging the drum for Lane Hutson. The kid had one of the nicest goals I've seen all year long tonight. He continues to be the best offensive defenseman for the NTDP, turning shotblockers into pylons from the point and activating off the rush with nifty give and gos inside the blue line. I know the defense isn't anything to write home about but the offensive upside is too good to overlook. The rush defense can be taught and I know the kid is a slow skater, but his edgework is good and he's slippery in transition. I think if he continues showing me what I've seen so far through a relatively large sample size, he's a late-first to early-second.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 5th, 2021

Adrian College vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Damnit I like Lane Hutson. He's got such a high motor and is always trying to make stuff happen. It doesn't always go his way but it's hard to fault him for that. He's so deceptive on the point opposing wingers have no choice but respect him with space. He is always in motion, swooping in the offensive zone to make him a threat for a shot. Hutson also loves to activate and join the rush, and has the spatial awareness to be an effective fourth man in. The rush defense isn't great, I'll admit it, but his defensive zone play is solid and he plays bigger than his size in corners, finishing hits and using his body. He's a pick for me, maybe even a high round pick.

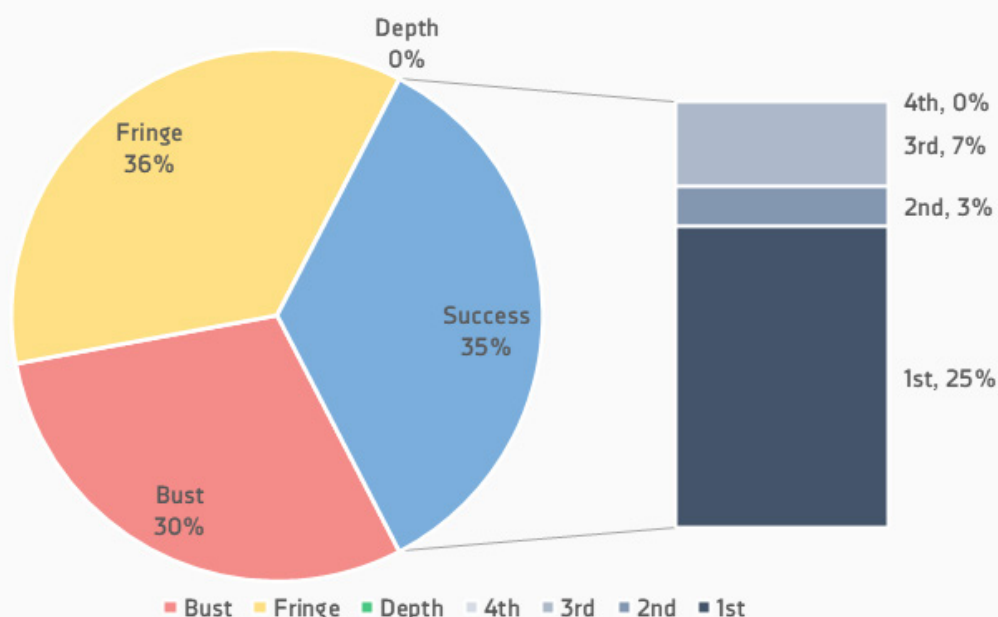
**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Hutson's ideas are often great. He looks for teammates through layers, freezes defenders with hesitation movings and pivot turns, and spins away from pressure before bursting down the outside. In one shift, he all of those and set up a cross-slot scoring chance. But he's always playing at the very

## Lane Hutson 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



edge of his skill level. The skating's limiting and it impacts his handling, he's unstable and inconsistent, seemingly on the verge of falling at any given moment. To his credit, he had some better rush defence sequences in this game, killing plays around his blue line without giving the attacker a second to beat him on the second effort. He's a bit careless with the puck and has some play connection issues. He rushes his passes and doesn't consistently mask his intentions. Still, I'm a lot more optimistic about his game after this viewing. Looked like a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Hutson's skating is already an issue. It's visible defensively, where he struggles to pivot, build backwards momentum, and has committing footwork. He gets dusted way too easily for a player who closes his gaps early. I like how he activates, I like how he tries to manipulate the odd forechecker and get inside. He shows handling skill and awareness of pressure to make these reads, but his skating comprises his puck control and execution. He plays too fast for his skills in the USHL -- that's going to be a major problem in the NCAA. At this stage, I don't see a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I don't know if it's just the camera angle or what, but Hutson's skating looks worse this season. There's very limited lower-body engagement. He doesn't engage his hips, he strides behind him, kicks his feet, and doesn't generate much power.

It's a problem defensively, as his pivots are weak, his lateral range is limited, and he gets burned without much issue. Joined the rush and set up a cross-slot scoring chance. That was pretty much it for him offensively. He's turnover-prone on breakouts, even on simple plays. Lacks patience and awareness to wait for options to open, and doesn't try to create advantages up the ice beyond activation. Perhaps the passing develops across the ice and he becomes an offensive force. More likely, he's a fun college player and not much more.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

I mean this was a solid game for Hutson, but damn it was hard to watch. Fargo just punished him along the boards, it felt like every time the kid went into a corner he'd end up looking at the ceiling. This would be a negative, but he somehow kept drawing penalties, perhaps based on sympathy. In open ice, Hutson was solid per usual, churning his feet with the puck and finding outlets nicely. Offensively, he's so shifty from the point and does a good job of joining the rush where appropriate. Seems to me like a high-round pick.

**David St-Louis:** September 17th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Hutson thinks he is a bit more skilled than he is in reality. Creating advantages is a bit harder for him because of his lesser stick range and mobility. He is agile; you see it in his rush defence. He can move from threat to threat and cut passing lanes with his footwork. His skating lacks depth (knee and ankle flexion). It's wide and his feet kick the air

before recovering. Lots to fix. At his size, that might prevent him from being drafted altogether. I liked his passing in this game. He attacked open ice until he met a defender and then moved the puck around him, effectively transferring time and space to a teammate. In other words, he understands offensive concepts, but has trouble executing all of them already in the USHL.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Hutson will be popular on Prospect Twitter given his height, even if he isn't any good. This wasn't a particularly impressive game from him, but there were some intriguing tools on display. His ability to change directions, spin-off checks, and bring the puck to the middle were visible on the breakout all game long. Now, his decisions are doing that were mostly bad -- dump-outs, bad passes, etc. -- but this is a positive start. He's a bit too passive through the neutral zone, especially given his limitations (kill early to avoid reaching later), but shows defensive instincts and timing. Offensively, this was pretty much a nothing performance. Intrigued, but only slightly.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 30th, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

Hutson has to clean up his pivots: they're always too late, lack any sort of power, and he often turns the wrong way. Still, his defensive game's strong. He times his engagements well, disrupts plays in the NZ frequently, and forces dump-ins. In transition, he's inefficient and occasionally misses options, but deceived forecheckers to open lanes in this game. Active from the point, looking to set in and create, usually as a passer. Backhand skill to set-up a chance. A bit more of a problem-solver than planner, but shows the requisite handling skills and deception to make it work. Still, I don't see high-level playmaking ability here.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Hutson has some skating issues, mostly strength-related. Lacks depth and consistency, with a narrow stride with limited push off power. His pivots push off and timing, often turning too late to continue to defend the play. He's beat wide a ton. Hit a breakaway pass after peeling away from pressure, but that was about it for skilled plays. Defers a lot. Didn't see anything NHL calibre in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

I'm extremely interested in the Twitter discourse on Hutson next season. He's short by hockey standards with significant flaws but many strengths. His defence is an interesting juxtaposition of reasonable instincts but poor habits that will lead to him getting crushed at the next level. He's far too passive through the NZ but shows the timing necessary to break up plays -- the NZD should come with time. Activates in the rush regularly, and looks for passing opportunities before shooting lanes. Some standout cross-ice passes in this game, but less of the Behrens-esque manipulation-type and more based fast execution. Missed a ton of transition passes, either throwing them behind his target, way ahead, or not even noticing an option before off-loading possession. His game lacks patience, but I'm a sucker for OZ playmaking from the point.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** October 2nd, 2021

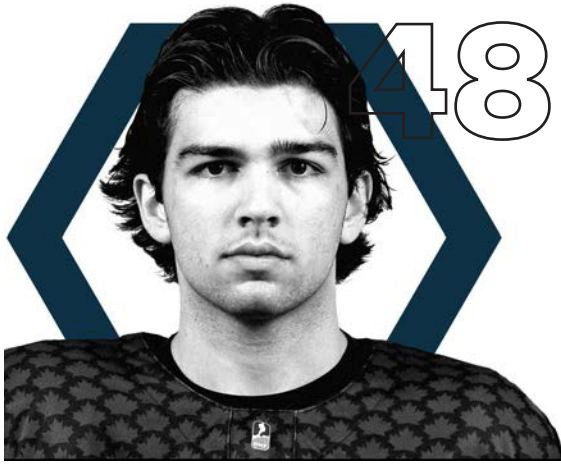
USNTDP U18s vs. Michigan State Spartans - NCAA

Liked this game from Hutson, he's certainly an interesting prospect on the NTDP blue line. Huston shines offensively, he's a threat leading the rush and activates nicely without the puck. On the blue line, he's incredibly shifty and moves shot blockers around to open up shooting lanes. Defensively is where the question marks begin to pop up. It honestly isn't of any fault of his own, the kid has dogged determination in corners and tries to practice proper habits (angling, pinning, boxing out, etc.) but the size is an issue, especially against collegiate competition. He is probably a high round pick based on skill alone, it'll be important to keep an eye on how he continues to manage physical play.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** October 30th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Was a fan of what Hutson showed in this game; he demonstrated some good transition ability and an awareness with the puck that was clear in his decision-making. His offensive game is well-developed and he's great at activating and joining the rush. Defensively, he's so-so, he's not super impressive off the rush as he lacks the raw strength and power in his skating to deny entry early. He's certainly tenacious in his own zone, almost erratic at points, but he works hard, especially in corners, despite his size disadvantage. He seems to have some good skill to offer and is certainly one of the standouts on the NTDP blue line. Someone to keep an eye on for sure.



48  
Rank

5  
Skating

6  
Shooting

6  
Passing

B  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

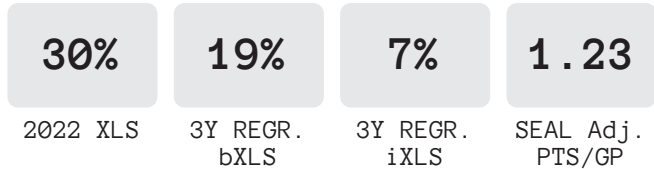
5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

# PANO FIMIS

C | NIAGARA ICEDOGS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JUN. 17, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	54	14	30	44
WJC-18	2	0	0	0

## Scouting Report

The Niagara Icedogs were one of the worst teams in the CHL this season. They struggled to score, to defend, and most of all, to link transition plays. The team's many problems made it hard to evaluate Pano Fimis.

The IceDogs forward barely got to handle the puck during many of our viewings. And when he did receive it, he was rarely in a favourable situation, in open ice with teammates ready to take his pass. Fimis consistently had to make the most out of tough situations and, partly because of this, the nights where he managed to create and produce up to the level of his NHL-calibre skills were rare.

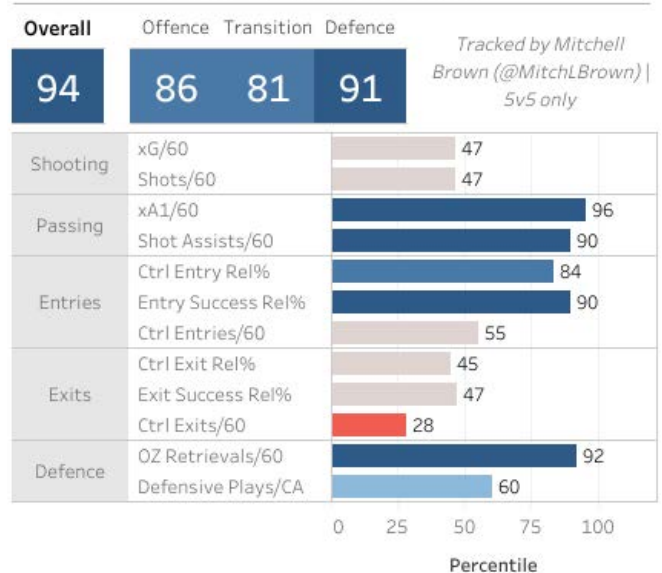
We still saw improvements in his game as the year went on. He became more responsible defensively, better at managing the puck, and more active in all three zones. His increased motor and poise helped him better control the flow of the play and enabled him to show his playmaking skills.

"He slips pucks through defenders, passes just out of their reach, and makes plays off the backhand," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown wrote in an April 16th report. "He immediately recognizes the next play upon getting the puck, which couples with his puck retrieval ability (anticipate, steal, body positioning). He even deceives."

By the end of the season, Fimis was a legitimate playmaker, one capable of displacing defenders with deception, handling moves, and planned movements to create passing lanes to teammates. He skated and passed with more purpose, and in turn, become a better offensive generator for Niagara.

When making our draft board, we gambled that what Fimis

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 122.0



showed in the last months will become the norm for him as soon as next year. His play should become more consistent as the Icedogs become a stronger and more structured offensive team.

To become an NHL-level playmaker, however, Fimis will have to further develop his anticipation, especially away from the puck. By better timing his movements inside pockets of space, he will be able to facilitate many of his line's plays, and in turn, improve his give-and-go game and generate more scoring chances.

If Fimis can learn to consistently manage both sides of the playmaking game, passing and getting open, he could become a third-line scorer in the NHL.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Steven Shipley YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 96%	2 Steve Ott YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 95%	3 Bobby Hughes YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 95%	4 Seth Griffith YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 95%	5 Michael Latta YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 95%
6 Chris Terry YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 95%	7 Gemel Smith YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 95%	8 Nazem Kadri YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 94%	9 Daniel Sisca YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 94%	10 Tim Brent YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 94%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Fimis wasn't quite as dynamic in this game, but he still looked like a top-50 pick. Lots of playmaking skill on display. He slips pucks through defenders, passes just out of their reach, and makes plays off the backhand. Immediately recognizes the next play upon getting the puck, which couples with his puck retrieval ability (anticipate, steal, body positioning). He even deceives in this situations! Uncommon. Used give-and-gos instead of handling to create opportunities. Sprints his routes. Not an anticipatory off-puck threat in the slot, but he gets touches through pace and supporting reads. And he's always bringing it defensively. Sprints to pressure the puck carrier, often making up space in the process. He angles attackers, anticipates passes, and supports battles down low. He has a real offensive identity now: he's a puck-retrieving, give-and-go playmaker with defensive upside. Players with this work rate normally figure out the details.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

I was wrong about Fimis. I didn't think he was anything more than a standard junior scorer. This game made it clear that he deserves to be in top-50 discussion in the draft, if not higher. He showed everything: pace, manipulation, a delay game, shooting skill, vision, defence, and passing skill. Cut inside to drag defenders across, then passed back into the space he just cleared – completed with a look off, too. Slowed down, showed shot, then passed to a teammate just as they entered the lane. Knew the next play immediately after recovering possession, often making the deceptive pass immediately after. Skated his off-puck routes and, in one sequence, took the defender's stick to create space. Disruptive defensively but wasn't chasing. He anticipated plays and jumped into the lane. Grabbed a few interceptions, too. Underhandled when necessary, even pushing the puck through the defender then grabbing it on the other side after fighting off their stick.

Biggest issue was the breakouts. Too quick to throw away possession and he doesn't look to the middle. He has a

middle-six, if not higher skills. The execution has arrived.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 10th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Fimis picked up two assists in this game, the first wasn't too notable but on the second, he found space, delayed when he had the puck, before passing off down low and ending up banking the puck in off a teammate's shinpad and in. Kingston ran up the score in this one, but I really liked Fimis overall in this one. Though the injury happened at a fairly inopportune time of the season, I thought he was able to pick up right back where he left off. Strong attention to detail in his own end, working down low more often, backchecking and covering open players, good transitions from defence to offence. Good motor, even as the score continued to get more lopsided - he was far from the player I saw at the beginning of the year with pace and intensity issues.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

There's no denying that Fimis has a motor. He's always moving, whether that's in pursuit or pressuring the point in the defensive zone. Sometimes, it takes him a bit to figure out his check, but when he does, he goes all-out. First on pucks when possible, and consistently disrupts exits. A steal in the defensive end combined with some fun hand-eye skill to set up his goal. The rest of Fimis' game needs work. He overskates pockets of space. There's little foresight to his game – he sees defenders, he dekes, even if a successful deke just runs him into the shoulder of the next player. He's clearly skilled and his pace stands out, but it's tough to figure out what he's going to bring to the next level beyond energy.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 16th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Fimis was injured halfway through this game, after he crashed violently in the boards and is going to be out for about a month. It was unfortunate timing, because I thought this was his strongest game all season. His engagement level alone was the most consistent it'd been all year in my

# "If Fimis can learn to consistently manage both sides of the playmaking game, passing and getting open, he could become a third-line scorer in the NHL. "

viewings and he was forcing turnovers, stripping players of the puck and working well in the DZ. He was quiet in the offensive zone unless he had the puck, and even then most of his shots came from the outside. He'll probably miss most of March, but hopefully he'll be able to continue this level of play when he's able to again.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Fimis doesn't have an offensive identity beyond skilled junior player. Big shot, but he only looks for space at the top of the circles, and if he's around the net, he's flatfooted. Skilled passer, but his timing, willingness to pass, and deception are lacking. Dekes unnecessarily. Lacks a give-and-go game, and the cross-ice transition passing that appeared in my last viewing wasn't here today. Two slick setups: a pass from the boards to the slot in transition after a delay, and a backhand pass from behind the net. For the first time, I really appreciated Fimis' defence in this game. He was physical, scanning, and applying pressure at the right times. Reads weren't perfect, but he was disruptive. Lots of potential, but his game requires calibration, if not overhauling. First round skills, however.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 30th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Man, Fimis has a temper. And a pretty concerning one, because after the Steelheads put the game out of reach in the third period it was pretty evident he gave up playing hockey and was chasing after players in hopes of laying them out. He threw a couple of hits that could have been pretty bad had they connected. Finally landed one with five minutes left in the game, upending a Steelheads player with a dangerous knee-on-knee collision that nearly sparked a

line brawl. I don't know what to make of this player now halfway through the season. He's playing on the worst team in the league, so maybe I should cut him some slack, but he relied way too heavily on 1-on-1 skilled plays like dekes and curl and drag shots to create offence for himself and wasn't really contributing with his linemates at all. He also took a hooking penalty in the first period because he was flatfooted. Don't get me wrong, he had flashes of that slippery, dynamic offence in this game. But he didn't convert on them, and when all of those scoring attempts were stopped, he just let his frustration take over. That makes me question whether he's worth drafting at all.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 25th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

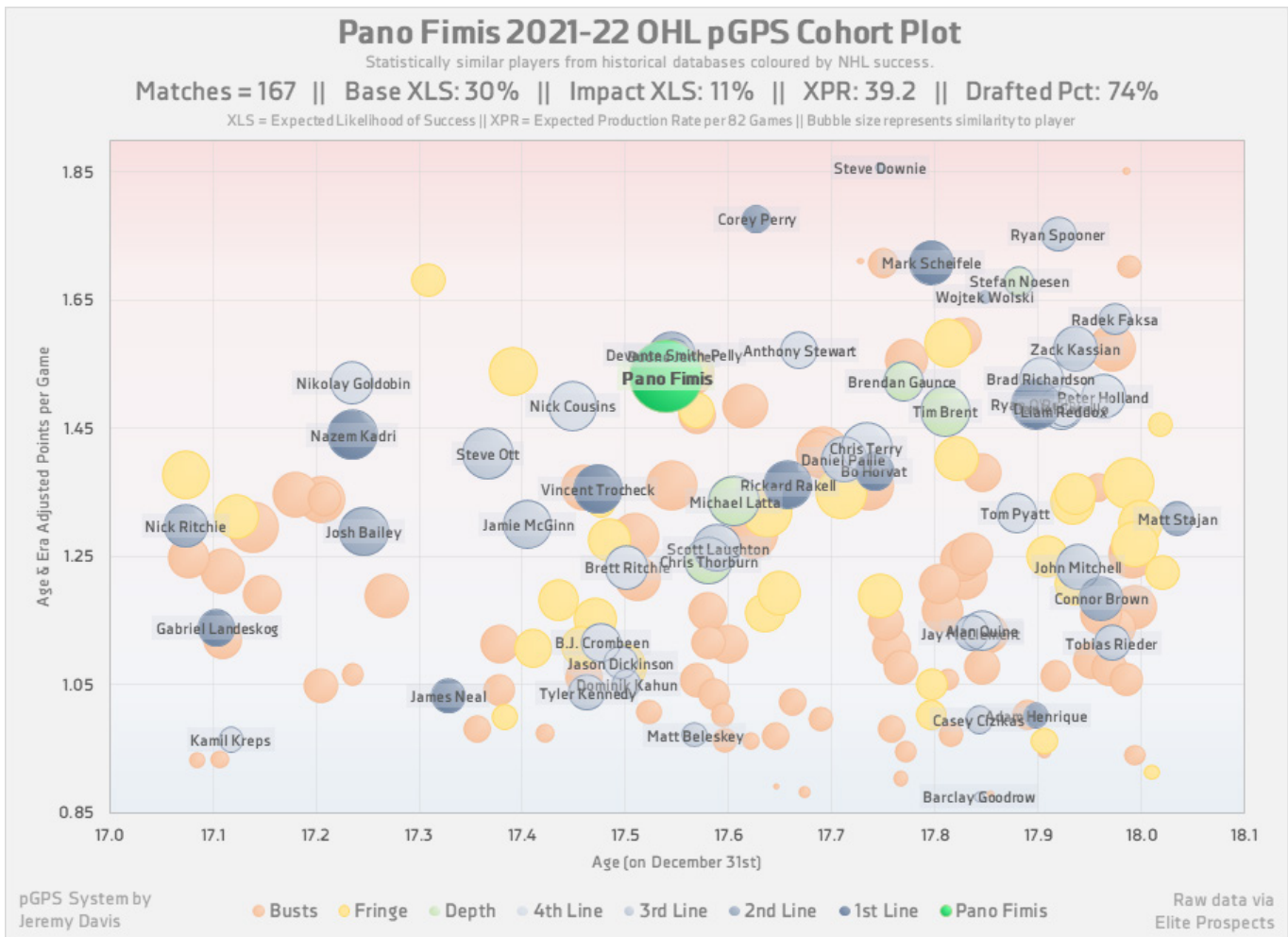
After Haight, Fimis might be the trickiest OHLer to get a read on. He has tools, no doubt. A highly skilled reactionary handler, a sound shooter from a mechanical perspective, and a diverse passer with a number of ways to access teammates through defenders. Fantastic night in puck pursuit, grabbing interceptions, steals, and eliminating threats. One sequence, he angled out an attacker then slammed him into the boards, taking away his feet first. The limitations in Fimis' game are more of the selection and fixation variety. He forces passes that simply aren't there, even when he has time and space to create a new opportunity. Off-puck offence is highly inconsistent, limiting his touches in dangerous areas. He has top-nine skills. He's definitely a draft pick because of the tools. How high? Not sure.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Fimis' skill is obvious. He turns bad passes into dekes and then a clean entry. Delays after gaining the zone and makes





look off passes through layers. Area passes and often leads teammates in space with cross-lane transition passing – that directly led to a (lucky) assist. Occasionally takes the middle and there are moments where he seems to understand the give-and-go game. However, he struggles with putting all of these ideas together. Several times, I was left wondering if he doesn't see options or if he just doesn't care – random clearances, awful deke attempts with no possible end goal, short-sighted entries up the boards. That's to not say that he doesn't care; he played well on the PK and had some strong defensive moments at 5-on-5. But his game holds many contrasts: a shooter who can't get open or put himself in positions to shoot, a playmaker who avoids using his teammates, and a highly-skilled handler who picks the worst times to use that skill. He's best as a reactionary player, even if he already has somewhat strong scanning habits with and without the puck. Lots of potential, but a long-term project.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 11th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

This was one of the best defensive performances I've seen from any draft eligible. Early in the game, Fimis anticipated a botched retrieval and ran through his check to correct his teammate's mistake. Shortly after, he drove an attacker

away from the point, got underneath their stick, and won possession. Multiple NZ steals through interceptions and strong backchecks. Didn't fall for the handling skill of his opponents. Instead, he kept his weight over his feet and knocked possession away as they engaged him. Offensively, this was a messy but promising showing. Fimis still doesn't consistently scan, has passing accuracy issues, and misreads his passing windows. But, he has plenty of passing skill: hook, slip, backhand, and he delays at the right times to open up windows. He dekes when he should pass, but he's a mechanically sound handler. Several scoring chances in this game, including an in-stride wrister with proper form (elbow up, chest up, jumping onto his shooting leg and landing on his heel for downforce, stable back leg) and pulling the puck away from the pile in front of the net and firing. Some of his best plays came directly off his defensive work. Looked like second-round pick in this game.

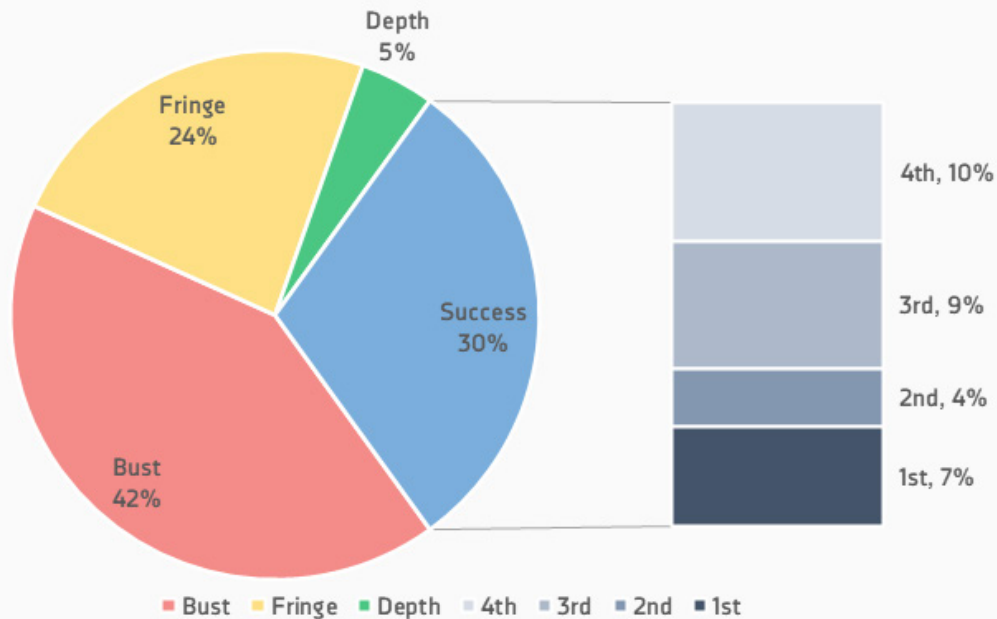
**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Honestly, Fimis was one of the worst players in this game. He never steps on the gas. He's always idling. He waits just outside of space, but never moves into it. If he isn't going to move into it, he should just stand in front of the net -- just

## Pano Fimis 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



do something. Never open in transition, he glides around while his linemates try to make plays without a third member. And then, late in the game, he scores with a picture-perfect drop-knee one-timer from the top of the slot. Alright then. I mean, I wouldn't pick him based on this game. Zero involvement. But the shot's legit.

Lauren Kelly: October 22nd, 2021

Niagara IceDogs vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

I still feel like Fimis is struggling to adjust to the OHL. He had a couple of good breakaway chances in this game that were both set up by Aidan Castle and turned aside, but that was about it. He showed good hands in tight on both chances, and flashes of the slippery offensive player he can be. But for the most part, Fimis wasn't all that noticeable. He was outbattled for pucks, got crosschecked into the boards, was slow coming to backcheck, and wasn't really involved in the cycle or forecheck. He was sort of just hovering in the offensive zone for most of the game. He made good reads on the penalty kill and was positionally solid when shorthanded, but his lack of tenacity and consistency in the offensive

zone is something that needs to change - he can't always be banking on the skilled plays and 1-on-1 opportunities to land him on the scoresheet.

Lauren Kelly: October 7th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Fimis was named the first star of this game, likely due to his goal and assist performance. But for most of this game I was left wanting more. He had a good pass to Gushchin for his assist, and showed really good patience with the puck before ripping it past the goalie for his first OHL goal. But I wasn't really seeing the dangerous, dynamic forward that he was hyped up as heading into the season. He looked tentative and uncertain, especially early on in the game - as if he was trying so hard not to make a mistake that he didn't want to do anything. He didn't look like an offensive threat. He was slow backchecking and would lose control of the puck in the neutral zone when he had full control of it. Fimis didn't look at all like his typical self in this game, but hopefully once he settles into the OHL he'll be able to show flashes of the offensive brilliance that we know he's capable of.



49  
Rank

4.5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

B  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

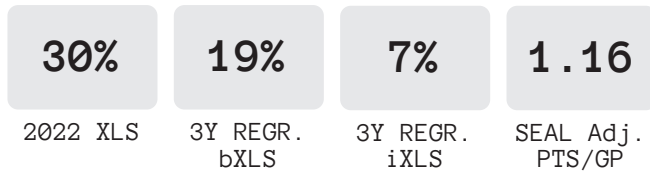
5.5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

# CAMERON LUND

C | GREEN BAY GAMBLERS

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. JUN. 7, 2004  
WEIGHT 192 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	62	25	25	50

> Committed to Northeastern Univ.

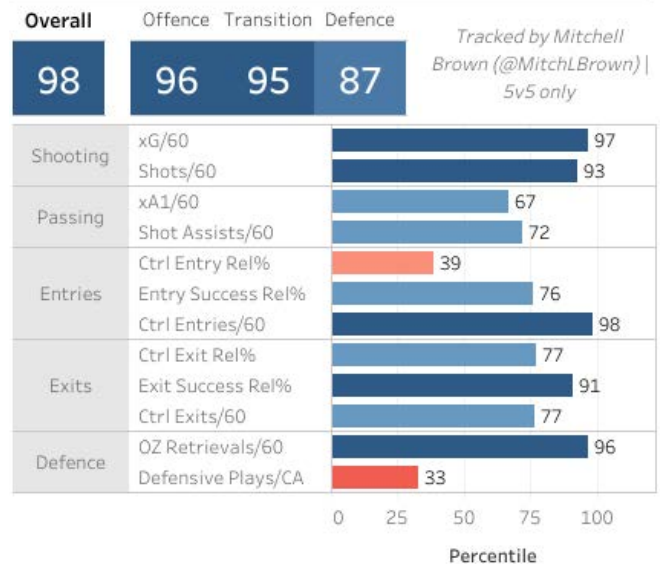
## Scouting Report

The evolution of Cameron Lund's game throughout the season was one of this draft cycle's most fascinating stories. At the start of the season, he was an off-puck shooter with a relatively simple game. By the end, he was a credible puck-carrier and playmaker to go along with his already-projectable shooting game.

Already armed with an NHL shot, Lund's a threat from distance in the USHL, but instead of settling for low-percentage shots, he's always looking for inside-lane opportunities. Without the puck, he flips same-side support readied for quick passes and sneaky far-post positioning for one-timers. With it, he baits defenders into chasing him wide, then cuts inside and shoots in one smooth motion. Lund's improved playmaking appeared across the ice by season's end, even if inefficiency lingers. Quick plays through defenders navigate pressure and create scoring chances. Where he previously rushed down the boards, he started slowing down to manipulate the nearby defender, then passing to the trailer. And he flashes a quick-possession passing that game that emphasizes his off-puck instincts.

"Excellent performance from Lund. He's not a great skater, he lacks the knee bend and ankle flexion to get any sort of power from his stride, but the way he handles the puck and sees the ice more than makes up for it," Elite Prospects American regional scout Joey Padmanabhan wrote in a February game report. "Lund constantly has his eyes up when handling the puck. He uses slick dangles to get the inside on overeager defenders and is great at drawing coverage before moving it to high danger areas around the slot."

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 116.7



While inconsistent, the physical side of Lund's game should become a strength in the NHL. As time and space on the sheet decrease, he'll become more dependent on the puck protection, body positioning, and the quick-possession plays that appear in spurts. Likewise, his highly variable defensive engagement should improve as the stakes rise, especially because he's a physical, proactive defender when he's engaged.

To make the NHL, Lund's skating and decision-making with the puck must continue to improve. High crossover integration overcomes some speed deficiencies in the USHL, but his lack of lower-body flexion could hinder his puck protection and agility moving forward. Do those, and Lund could become a third-line forward who couples system hockey with flashy solo efforts.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Chad LaRose YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 94%	2 Louis Leblanc YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 93%	3 Ryan Potulny YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 92%	4 Vinni Lettieri YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 92%	5 Justin Abdelkader YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 91%
6 Luke Johnson YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 91%	7 Seth Ambroz YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 91%	8 Jason Gregoire YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 91%	9 Corey Tropp YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 91%	10 Brock Trotter YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 91%

**Daniel Gee:** April 22nd, 2022

Madison Capitols vs Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Lund didn't have a good game against the Capitols. Very limited tempo and pace and uninspired handling of physicality plagued his shifts.

His transition sequences across the game were hit-and-miss. On some attempts, all you really got from Lund was careless handling and limited protection. On others, he attacked the inside lane, beat defenders with well-timed dekes, and pushed some delay elements. There's clear passing skill and execution here, however. On one first period entry he slipped a puck forward to a teammate working off the left-wing with speed, On another sequence he wheeled out of his zone on-puck, found a wing driver, moved into drop pass position and send a sharp angle backhand on net --not the greatest sequence but the right idea. Lund's best play was a stop up delay move that he used to find a teammate in an open seam up the high slot. While he fails to protect the puck often, there is some hip-pocket protection. In the third he walked down the near boards in his hip-pocket, executing a hope cross-crease pass to essentially no one. Most of Lund's sustained pressure shifts were on powerplay sequences -- he's a very static operator on the right-point. Some one-touch ability from the blue-line but pretty unremarkable in terms of activations. Lund had a couple shot opportunities -- mostly, he struggled to manipulate into open lanes which meant he had to send heavily leaned into wrist shots to shoot around defenders in blocking postures. This caused his elbow to be a bit too tucked to his hip. Lund scored a buzzer beater from the top of the point; a very low placed slider found its way in through traffic.

Didn't like his defensive effort in this game. Pace lacks on backcheck, he chases non-stop in his own zone, and he is very reactive. There are some supporting habits and he did pickpocket a puck off an attacker who was leveraging some space in the slot, but in general his defensive posture just isn't there often. Extremely soft on the perimeter of the ice in this viewing. Will need to expand on his pace to be able to leverage passing skill in faster leagues.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Another standout game from Lund, and considering the context (coach leaving and they can't win a game) makes it all that much more impressive. The shot is a clear NHL skill. Both hands well in front of his body, chest up, elbow up, and pushes forward through his shot. Scored with a perfect wrist in transition. Another NHL ability is how he attacks the inside. Scored by faking the outside lane attack, then cutting inside on the defender's heels. Blended the weight shot for the shot inside the cut. Underhandles the puck when necessary, and has the skill to pull pucks through and defenders when necessary. Consistently open in the slot, often finding creative solutions to tricky situations. He fakes one route, then goes in the other, or hangs out between checks. Overpowers defenders down-low. Playmaking has improved considerably; now he's making one-touch passes. Easy to see him becoming a third or fourth liner. He's be a fine second. Outside of the NTDP and HS players, he's my top USHL prospect alongside Ingram and LaStarza.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Lund wasn't great in this game, but he still accomplished a lot. His playmaking continues to shine. In this game, he won a retrieval, cutback, moved the puck, got it back, and then sent a cross-slot pass to a teammate. A couple of questionable shooting decisions but nothing with long-term implications. This, however, was mostly a straight-line, solo dash performance. Crossover integration remains high, which allows him to fake out defenders and gain the outside. But it's rare that he attacks the middle. Retrievals and physical game are strengths: wins battles from disadvantages, establishes positioning when in front, and consistently anticipates passes. He's not an advanced player, but his game is becoming more nuanced. He's be a fine late-second. Third or fourth line upside.

## Cameron Lund 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 34 || Base XLS: 30% || Impact XLS: 11% || XPR: 36.6 || Drafted Pct: 68%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

A tough outing for Green Bay, but Lund was solid as always. Playmaking is so much better. Where he used to shoot, he looks for teammates first. In one sequence, he beat a defender with a chip, gained the zone, handled the puck while showing shot, then passed back to the trailer. Picked up an assist on Green Bay's lone goal with a deceptive cross-slot pass inside crossovers. Uses the middle in transition. Changes the point of attack with cross-ice passes. Still a retrieval machine. Some poor plays, but that's the nature of a blow out game. Skating lacks depth but he's fluid. Likely a third or fourth liner, but he's diversifying his game. Could be more than just an off-puck shooter and puck-winner. He'd be a fine late-second, early-third.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 11th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Another standout performance from Cam Lund. The usual stuff from Lund was on display: the off-puck skating and route selection, timed movements around the net front, and ability to shoot under pressure. This was also an impressive transition and playmaking game.

He had 10 controlled entries, most of the solo attack

variety. Lack of depth remains an issue, but he uses crossovers and understands how to beat defenders with changes of pace. Cutback and hit teammates on the inside and set up a chance from behind the net. Consistently attacked the middle, using his hands to find a bit of space. Weight shift move helped him beat one defender, also showing off projectable handling form (top hand moves across his body to extend/shorten his reach). He's not a dynamic player, but that he's trying more advanced plays is a positive. Could broaden his game beyond the off-puck shooter projection I initially had. He could be a fine early-third on our board.

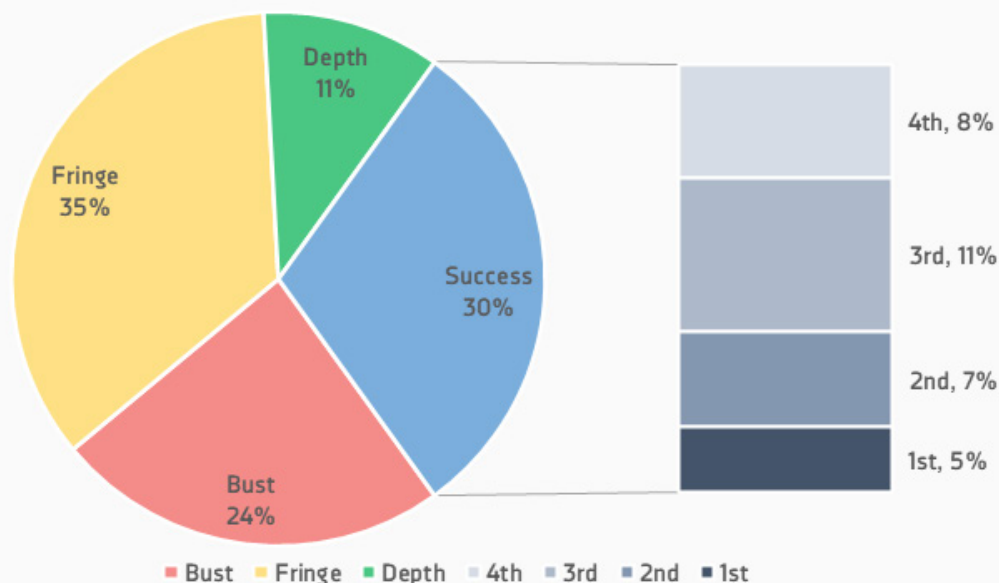
**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Lund's consistently impressive. He's a dedicated forechecker with a knack for steals when cutting off the top in DZC. A bit of skill as both a playmaker and shooter. Few strong off-puck offence sequences, with most of his offence from counterattack. Understands body positioning, attacks the inside, and stays on the puck, even after losing it. Looks to stretch the ice (it's how he scored his goal), but the skating stands out as a limiter. His strides are way too short and his stance lacks ankle flexion. Some crossovers

## Cameron Lund 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



are shocking good given the stride form, and he has the dot lane-crossing play, but skating looks like a weakness going forward. Passing is more of a reaction than a pre-planned decision, but his details are strong. The more I watch him, the more I see a capable third or fourth liner. It'll require time.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Simple, but highly effective performance from Lund. He's a consistent nuisance on the forecheck. It's not just from energy and strength; he understands how to funnel the puck carrier into a bad position to force plays and what to do with the puck after winning possession. Prefers to play a give-and-go game with possession. Without it, he's all about hunting space. He makes the simple reads around the net with timing. He made some more complex ones, like pushing off defenders just as the puck comes in or flaring wide into space behind defenders. The handling and skating lack independence. His game is not one of dynamism and his projection isn't about adding addition dynamic qualities. Instead, it's about being the starting and finishing point for the puck. I like his game, likely worth a third-rounder.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** December 31st, 2021

Madison Capitols vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Really an uninspired performance from Cameron Lund. Incredibly passive in his own end, with the puck on the half wall, he resorted to the same kind of chip every time to the strong side D, even after it resulted in turnovers.

Offensively, he was alright, he didn't facilitate much through this one, beyond coasting on the perimeter and making the occasional ten-foot pass. He's decent on the power play, he plays his strong side hand and does a good job circling up to the blue line and losing coverage before ripping wristers on net. His skating looks like it's a liability. There's no depth in his stride or his crossovers, he lacks sufficient power or edge control to put defenders on their heels or evade them. He's got size, doesn't really play the physical game though. Hopefully I'll see better from him going forward.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

I didn't see any individual skill from Lund. His skating, handling, and passing will be weaknesses at the next level. But he's a strong forechecker and off-puck presence. He's constantly moving around the slot, often in subtle ways to get open. Some of the reads are complex: he'll move away from the net to encourage a teammate to pass to him, he sprints to the inside at the right moment, and has some ability to play off contact to create space. I'm just sure not if he's a draft pick when putting it all together, but I appreciate his game.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Lund's game looked relatively simple in this game: win battles, take the extra stride on the backcheck, straight-line rushes up the boards, and find space off-puck. His forechecking directly led to a scoring chance, while his

off-puck movement was quite advanced. In one sequence where his teammate was driving the net from the corner, he moved to the high slot instead of hanging out at the far post – creating space for his teammate to drive across (by drawing pressure) and giving himself to space to recover a rebound and step in. The latter happened, which was his best look of the game. One of the better off-puck reads of the season. Based on those few players, maybe a later round player. But I need to see more.

**J.D. Burke:** September 24th, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Des Moines Buccaneers - USHL

Didn't really come away from this set of back-to-backs particularly impressed with Lund. This was doubtless his better of the two performances though. He threw a massive open ice hit in the middle frame, mixed it up after the whistle, and played the net-front a great deal. Made a great one-touch pass to set up a scoring chance -- that caught my attention. Overhandled the puck a fair bit though. Decently mobile for someone his size, but clearly, skating is a deficiency.

**J.D. Burke:** August 2nd, 2021

USA U18 vs. Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Really strong outing from Lund in this contest, playing second-line centre between Michael DeAngelo and Jonah Aegerter. Having said that, his skating is some kind of ugly, and I wonder if he'll be able to find success at higher levels without significant improvement. It's a high stride, which makes him easy to knock from the puck in spite of his 6-foot-2 frame, and he tilts at the hips. Showed some craftiness deploying the mohawk to open up his field of view on the rush and to change his speed to give a passing option time to get into the play – that was impressive. Moved the puck around the ice with equal parts pace and patience. Showed really high-end vision, often finding the trailer or getting the puck through traffic to his teammates in prime scoring positions. His quality as a playmaker was evident in this game, even if Lund failed to register a point.

**P**

"High crossover integration overcomes some speed deficiencies in the USHL, but his lack of lower-body flexion could hinder his puck protection and agility moving forward. Do those, and Lund could become a third-line forward who couples system hockey with flashy solo efforts."



50  
Rank

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

6  
Passing

B  
Grade

6  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

# DAVID GOYETTE

C | SUDBURY WOLVES

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAR. 27, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	66	33	40	73
WJC-18	4	1	2	3

## Scouting Report

This was a tale of two seasons for David Goyette, almost perfectly aligned with the calendar. In 2021, he scored just four times in 23 games. In 2022, he scored 29 goals in 41 games, to go along with an equally impressive 25 assists.

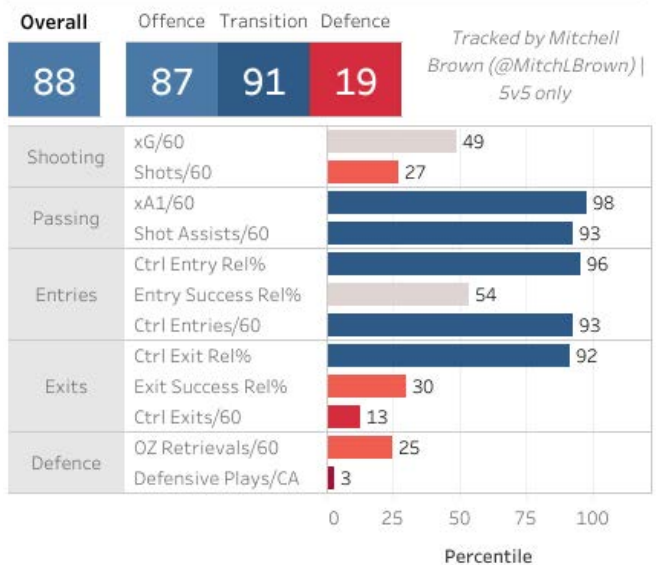
The massive shift in goal-scoring isn't solely percentages. Early in the season, Elite Prospects OHL Scout Lauren Kelly noted, "he doesn't recognize space in the offensive zone, and when he does, he's late." During the hot streak, it became clear that Goyette's awareness of pockets of space and lanes improved. "His off-puck offence looked solid, anticipating passes and finding space to get scoring chances of his own," Kelly wrote in a February game report.

The goal-scoring potential, however, isn't even Goyette's most exciting skill - it's passing. He's always looking for the high-value play, connecting with cross-slot passes through layers and backhand passes from the boards. At his best, he delays for the trailer, makes quick touch plays to fast-moving teammates, and deceives defenders to prolong passing lanes. Building upon those flashes could bump his passing grade up.

Goyette's also a dexterous, imaginative puckhandler, effortless sliding through defenders. However, it's the same handling skill that produces the first area for improvement in his game.

"Goyette tends to kill plays by overusing his hands; he attacks packs of defenders and loses the puck," Elite Prospects Lead Scout David St-Louis explained in an April game report.

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 135.4



Concerns of Goyette's inconsistent scanning, loose defensive game, lack of manipulation, slow decision-making along the boards, and inconsistent use of body positioning are shared across our scouting staff.

There's no doubt that Goyette has the puck skills to make this ranking look silly, but the present make-up of his game shares many commonalities with Quad-A players of years prior. If he uses his tools to manipulate defenders instead of trying to force his way through, he could become a top-nine forward.



## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Jeff Carter YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 94%	2 Nathan Horton YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 94%	3 Greg McKegg YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 94%	4 Ryan McDonough YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 94%	5 Rob Schremp YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY: 93%
6 Cody Hodgson YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 93%	7 Mike Richards YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 93%	8 Dan Fritsche YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 93%	9 Tyler Toffoli YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 93%	10 Brad Boyes YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 93%

**David St-Louis:** April 28th, 2022

Finland vs Canada - WJ18

Goyette isn't reassuring anyone on our team with his performance at the World Junior Under-18. His possession game needs to be refined: his decisions on the walls are slow and he wants to make the big play, instead of the one that will keep the puck in control of Canada. He also forfeits some battles, when he has the speed to beat defenders off the mark, slip in front of them, and win pucks. He didn't really get puck touches inside space in the tournament and, as a result, didn't have a chance to show his skill.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

I barely saw Goyette this game, which is pretty much what I expected would happen. Goyette needs favourable conditions to create; he's not the fast thinker under pressure that other draft eligibles are. He made a few poor passing plays in this game, throwing pucks in areas instead of connecting with teammates.

**David St-Louis:** April 9th, 2022

Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Goyette is a lot more effective as a pass receiver, shooter off-the-catch, than a play-creator. Contrary to Delic, who acts like the orchestrator on his line, Goyette tends to kill plays by overusing his hands; he attacks packs of defenders and loses the puck. That being said, he can also connect plays reasonably well, showing passing skills: hook and slip feeds. He cheats a bit offensively, at times. The skill is above-average for me.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 3rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

I don't know how Goyette keeps scoring. He had two goals in this one, finding space before tapping in Sudbury's second and then scoring the third off a one-timer on the power play. Sudbury spent a good chunk of time on the power play in this game (including four extended 5-on-3 situations) and I still felt like he wasn't making any offensive impact. Good to see him play the penalty kill because he doesn't normally, and had a nice shorthanded breakaway before passing off

to Delic for a chance. But he was really kept to the outside unless Sudbury was on the powerplay and was basically unnoticeable at even strength. Wrestled a Steelheads player to the ice near the end of the third (the game was wildly out of hand at this point), which I suppose was good to see he can play physically if the game warrants it. A lot of his attempts to make plays did not pan out and he's not a manipulative passer, which makes me question if the playmaking will translate. I'm willing to chalk up the bulk of his production to him being incredibly opportunistic and essentially burying every grade-A chance he has, because as far as generating the plays himself, those are few and far between.

**David St-Louis:** April 3rd, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

The hockey sense problems continue. Goyette has the skill but no idea how to use it properly. He doesn't anticipate plays, is majorly puck and dangle focused, missing much better plays he could make in a few sequences. One stuck with me. He had space to come in the offensive zone, receive a drop pass and attack the slot, but he decided to take on a defender one-on-one instead -- completely unnecessary. I appreciate his off-puck sense a bit more now, which could turn him into a scorer at some point, but I'm not sure he ever reaches his top-9 upside considering the play-reading limitations. There is no manipulation, no deception in his game, but I did see him adapt his speed to let teammates join him on the attack, and connect with them. Maybe he could develop better patterns. B/C prospect for me, even considering the scoring.

**David St-Louis:** March 25th, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

I have some pretty serious hockey sense doubts. He misses rotations, doesn't scan, very loose defensively, puck focused, tunnel vision offensively, and a lot of rushed plays. Rushed. This is how I would describe his game, a guy who outpaces the defence and outskills (he can really dangle through a defence; the hand skill is impressive, looks above-average), but the finer playmaking and off-puck reads, the support, the deception, and manipulation -- they're not there. At least not that I have seen. Even in his one-on-ones: it's all

straight-lines at the defender and try to dangle through feet. Goyette looks like a skilled Junior player who will have a lot of difficulties translating his game to the NHL. He's playing a ton of minutes but the patterns won't lead to sustainable offence, to me, at least not at higher levels.

**David St-Louis:** March 20th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Goyette has a lot of skills to offer. He can pretty much do it all: rush the puck up-ice, protect it along the boards, score around the net with two-touches, pass the puck through defenders. I'm just not sure the finer reads are in his game. Delic, a forward with a better sense for the game, helps him see some plays with his movement. That said, when Goyette gets clear opportunities in open ice, like a 2-on-1, he is generally capable of reading the situation and making the right decisions. He's also a scoring quite a lot. I'm not a fan of his game, but the skill makes him worthy of a pick, probably a third-rounder.

**David St-Louis:** March 18th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

A better performance from Goyette, but nothing to convince me he's worthy of a top two rounds pick in this draft. I like how he used teammates; a lot of pace in his passing in this game. He found solutions to coverage, used the boards, and backhand passes to connect with others. He was a bit better off-puck, better timing and he clearly has handling skills. I overrated his skating in other games. It's more of a 5 for me now: locked upper and lower body, kicking feet, lack of ankle flexion. Hockey sense is still a pretty big issue: misses occasions to manipulate, to improve advantages, late scanning inside moves. I really think his game falls apart in the pros, unless there is significant improvement to his scanning and processing and even to his skating (to become a checker).

**Lauren Kelly:** March 9th, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

This was a positive showing from Goyette, who was equally as effective as linemate Kocha Delic in this one. Picked up an assist on Sudbury's first goal (just won the faceoff, Delic did most of the work on the goal itself). Protected the puck well along the boards while under pressure. Also pressured puck carriers well, which he was able to prevent the breakout, force a turnover, keep the puck in the offensive zone and pass off for a scoring chance. I think his attention to detail has improved, but there are still moments where he looks lost defending in his own end. His production has masked some of the bigger issues with his game - I didn't see any

remarkable pass attempts from him in this one, he still lacks shift-to-shift consistency in his own end and he looked just a really strong checker.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 6th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

The improvements Goyette's made off-puck have elevated his game. He's actually a scoring threat now. He stops at the net, arrives into space late and adapts his route to become a passing option, and had a strong slot movement sequence. The shot remains a bit iffy: he leans back instead of dropping his weight down and keeping his chest up. Lacks shooting diversity and trickery.

Playmaking is still his NHL dimension, but the more I watch him, the more uncertain I am of it. Sure, he had several passes for scoring chances, including two cross-slot feeds on the same shift, and he delays at the right times. But I don't see the details, as he seems to lack deceptiveness, pace, and creativity. Too reliant on saucer passes, too. He just be a playmaking specialist at the next level, but lacking the details to bring that game to the NHL. Or maybe I'm missing something.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

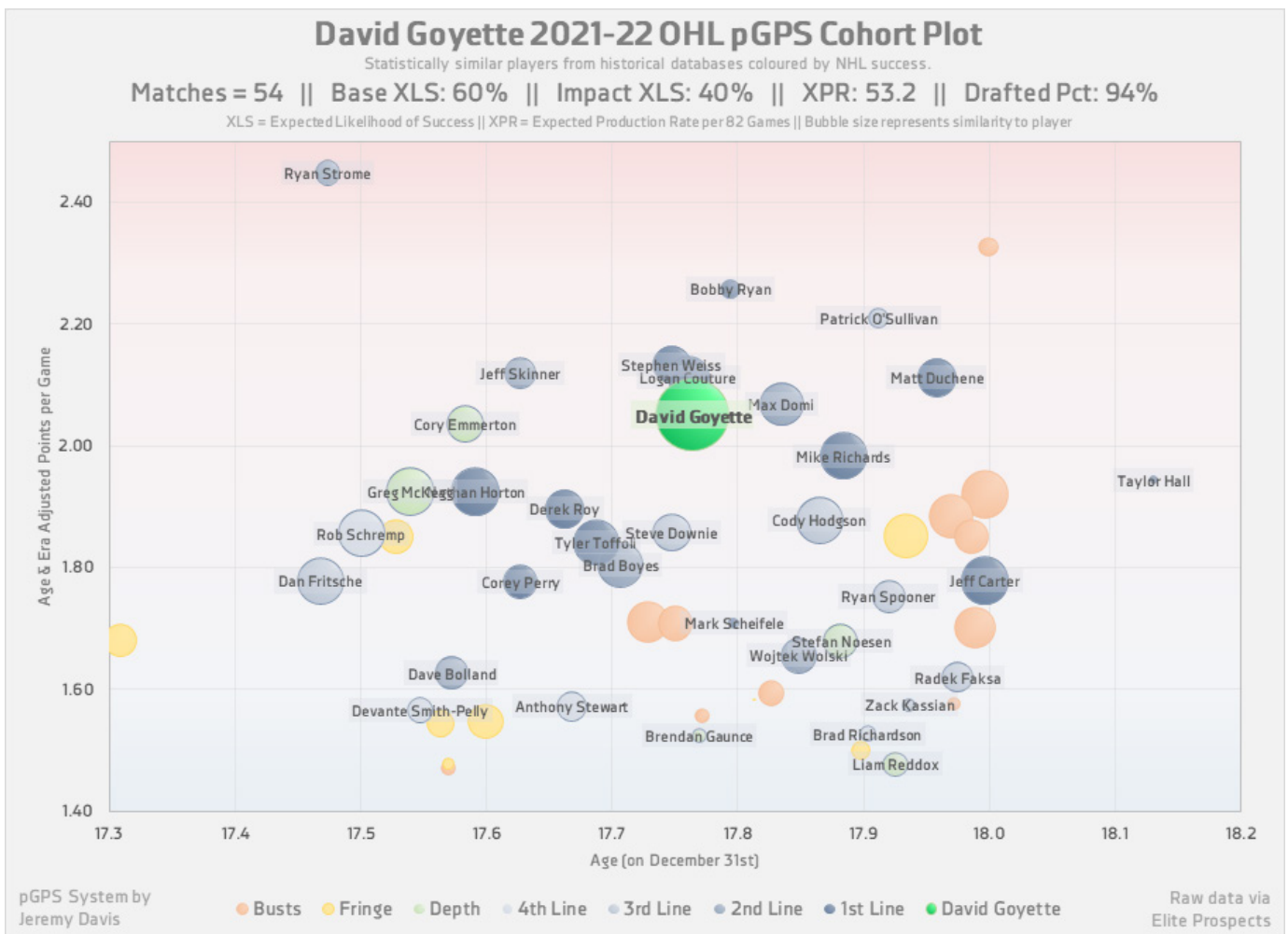
Goyette scored after parking himself at the side of the net, using quick hands to corral a rolling puck and shovel it into the empty cage. Had a couple of good pass pick offs in the defensive zone that he used to turn play up the ice. Also some good rushes where he'd draw opposing players to him to open up space for his teammates before passing the puck off. Bobbled the puck a couple of times and there was one instance where he lost defensive zone coverage on a player, which allowed North Bay to score. Really good offensive instincts, I just need to see more consistency in his own end. Late-first to mid-second round pick at this point.

**David St-Louis:** February 25th, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Not a great showing from Goyette. He seems to me like the typical skill-first, no planning, Junior forward. He dangles, but doesn't really know why he does it; defenders are just there and he wants to do it. He misses better plays, constantly, open spaces, teammates to kick the puck to, and it makes me doubt his playmaking instinct. Attracting defenders to create for others doesn't seem instinctual in his game.

The skating is hunched over which limits him a bit, but it's not a big flaw. I just doubt his ability to read the game overall, even if he has flashes of high-level technical ability.



He's not a player I would look to acquire if I was an organization, unless we're much later in the draft.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 21st, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Goyette didn't move the needle all that much offensively, but he was far from the worst skater on the ice. Had one shift where he lost control of the puck without being pressured, but he was also picking off passes and dodging pressure while maintaining possession. He was a little high in the DZ when the first Mississauga goal went in, but he also played the body to stop an incoming rush. His off-puck offence looked solid, anticipating passes and finding space to create scoring chances of his own instead of just setting them up. It was a solid viewing, but I'm not sure if I'd take him all that high based on this one game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

The more I watch Goyette, the more I'm unsure of his status as a top-45 pick in the draft. He might just be one of those CHL playmaking specialists whose passing skill isn't quite high enough to play the same role in the NHL and his game isn't diverse enough to morph into a new one. Of

course, much of the inefficiency could just be a product of not playing last season. Too many of his dekes originate from a glide or are overly optimistic that won't tangibly improve the play if they work. As soon as defenders apply enough pressure to disrupt his rhythm, he loses the puck. But he also sets up some moves properly with crossovers and then plays the puck on their heels or out of their reach. Deceptive in his passing set-ups, but he's not outright manipulative. Doesn't create lanes that aren't already there, and regularly forces passes. Then, he'll make a crafty drop pass or delay and hit the trailer. He's becoming increasingly confident attacking the middle, and he's far better at getting open and supporting the play than earlier in the season. The skating still requires a ton of work and he's not much of a defensive player. Maybe a late second-round pick.

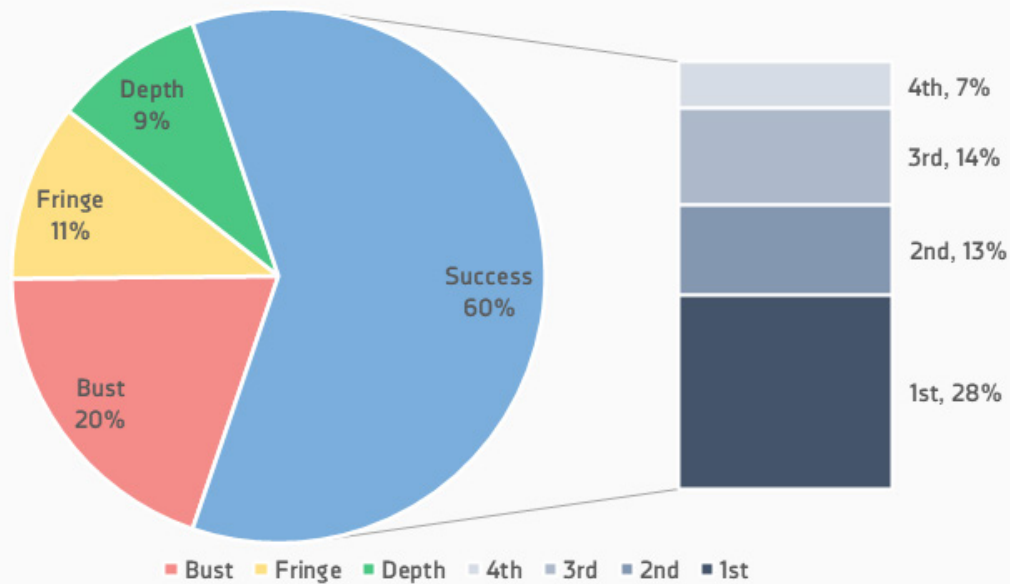
**Lauren Kelly:** January 14th, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Was this Goyette's strongest game of the season? The statline would suggest so - it's not every day a draft-eligible player puts up four goals in a game. He was flying to start this game, stealing pucks in the neutral zone, relentless on backchecks, and had a nice 200 foot rush where he stickhandled through several Frontenacs players before passing off to a linemate

## David Goyette 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



for a scoring chance. He was in the right place at the right time to score his first goal of the game, banging in a rebound on the doorstep. He scored a ridiculous second goal to put Sudbury up 4-0, stickhandling up the ice and protecting the puck well, going wide before cutting right to the net. His puck protection was a standout asset for him in this one, and though he didn't pick up any assists in this game, his passing was on display as well. He was engaged and winning most 1-on-1 battles. He followed the play up the ice and buried a rebound for his hat trick goal, and then sealed the game with an empty netter. It was nice to see him scoring goals and not just setting them up, as prior to this viewing I would've pegged him solely as an elite playmaker. Didn't see much of his shot in this one though.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Didn't see the playmaking ability I saw in previous viewings, but I saw some improvement in his off-puck offence. Nearly grabbed a chance by arriving into space late and between checks. Shortly after, scored a goal by stopping at the net and finishing off the play. More risk-averse playmaking than normal, but he also didn't get to do much with the puck. He's totally unaware of back pressure. He doesn't establish body position, he doesn't put any weight over his stick, and he reaches for pucks constantly, even ones that he should have under control. Hands work faster than his feet. Defenders easily take his stick away because he leans back and keeps

his hands too high, even when they're reaching in. Tries to dangle when he should just stop and wait for pressure to overskate him. And he generally avoids the middle with the puck, unless he's breaking pressure in the DZ. The skating's still concerning. He lacks ankle flexion and full extensions. Keeps both hands on his stick and over-rotates his upper-body instead of loading his weight off the pushing leg. Not a great performance; hardly draft-worthy.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 19th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. Ottawa 67s - OHL

Goyette's effort to at least try and get the puck back was a bit better in this game. He showed good intensity right off the bat, forcing a couple of turnovers using good reads and body positioning right on his first shift. Then he was reduced to a perimeter player until his third period assist. He lost a puck battle along the boards on Ottawa's first goal as it was won from him and passed up to the point. He showed good effort to box a player out in front of his own net while his defensemen were elsewhere before chasing that player to the boards and winning the puck battle and breaking the play out. For the most part though, he was stickchecking puck carriers in the defensive zone - sometimes it worked, but most times it didn't. On his assist, he protected the puck really well along the boards before spinning off a defender to get to the net and passing off to Quentin Musty for the goal. His confidence seemed to rise after that, but there was only half the third period left to play at that point. He carried the

puck up the ice and into the offensive zone, trying to dangle around defenders but his shot attempt was blocked. He did chase after the puck to the corner and come away with it, and tried to pass off in the slot but his attempt was cleared. The vision and passing skills are clear, but Goyette's effort level is inconsistent and he's not able to recognize space and isn't getting open enough in the offensive zone. He's late to plays when he doesn't have the puck. I still think the talent makes him a first round pick, but I'm not sure how much losing a year of development is holding him back right now.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 14th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Goyette really needs to figure out how to get the puck back. It's the biggest issue in his game right now. He's a fine worker, but lacks strength, awareness, and details to win battles or play a disruptive game. Turns away from space instead of following it, which leaves him late to space regularly. More specifically, he doesn't even seem to recognize space whatsoever. His teammates throw pucks towards him and then he chases them down; he's not actively getting open. There's definitely passing skill and vision here. He sees teammates on the weak side through layers, regularly sets up his passes with eye/body deception, and understands how to open up lanes if necessary. But if they don't connect, he's not getting the puck again. The passing looks like a first-round skill, but his off-puck game needs serious overhauling.

**J.D. Burke:** November 5th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

That was just a dreadful viewing experience, Goyette's fault or otherwise. No flow to this hockey game whatsoever. Not much in the way of offence either; we're talking about a 2-1 hockey game here. It must be said, though, that Goyette wasn't especially effective in his own right. There was no wall play or small-area success from Goyette in this contest. He couldn't maintain possession to save his life. Some of his best offensive sequences came off-the-puck, on the power play. Goyette would probe the defensive formation for holes from his position in the 1-3-1, and then skate into these spots and present as a shooting threat. Nearly picked up an assist on one such play, getting the puck, and then fashioning a hook pass to try and connect with his teammate in the slot. Took a few low percentage shots with better passing options – hockey sense, question-mark. Definitely has speed. Liked his defensive effort even if I didn't see any particularly advanced plays in that regard; he didn't scan frequently enough and was late to some of his checks. Looked like an early Day 2 pick for me.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 31st, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Fatigue seemed to be an issue for Goyette in this game, the third in four nights for Sudbury. He wasn't nearly as involved in the play as he was a couple of nights ago, and sort of hung back and let his linemates control the puck. He had a couple of good defensive moments, whether it was boxing out larger players in the slot successfully, using his stick to pressure on the backcheck, and using his body to help him win puck battles. Goyette had two assists - the first was some nifty passing that led to the eventual goal, and the second came off him grabbing a loose puck in the defensive zone and starting the breakout up the ice. I like his defensive habits and reads in his own end, but I felt like he was a bit sluggish in this one.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 31st, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Goyette has a solid outing as a transition puck-carrier and playmaker. Delayed at the right times, pushed the pace when necessary, and spotted options through layers. Takes and makes passes in motion, which led to his best set up of the night. Slick toe-drag around a stick before putting the puck back under the defender's stick and shooting -- clever play to ensure that he still gets a quality scoring chance. Very straight line, but multi-speed -- I think he'll add more directional changes with time. The passing and handling both looked like 5.5-or-6-grade tools. Some solid off-puck defence sequences, too. He looked like top-64 pick in this game.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 28th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Really good impression of Goyette right off the bat. He's a great skater, carries the puck with confidence and has great hands and passing abilities. He also showed strong play along the boards, whether it was protecting the puck or keeping players pinned against them while they battled for the puck. He came back to help cover defensively, and at some points he was playing really deep in his own end and deeper than some of his own defensemen. He had two assists in this game, the first was as he was being boxed out in front of the net and unable to get a shot off, but slid the puck to an open area for a teammate to bury. The second was a great pass on the rush to Chase Stillman for a goal. He also had a couple of good steals in his own end, including one where he forced a turnover to create an odd-man rush and found a teammate with a pass over the defender's stick. If I had

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**"There's no doubt that Goyette has the puck skills to make this ranking look silly, but the present make-up of his game shares many commonalities with Quad-A players of years prior. If he uses his tools to manipulate defenders instead of trying to force his way through, he could become a top-nine forward."**

one criticism from this viewing it would be that his shifts are way too long - they were anywhere from a minute and a half to nearly two minutes long, and you could tell by the tail end of those shifts he was slowing down significantly. At the start of his shifts he was flying around everywhere, but it felt like he was using too much energy up early. If he's going to stay out on the ice for nearly 1:30+ shifts for most of the game, he's either got to reign in his roving or up his stamina, because he was struggling to backcheck and keep up with the pace of play at the ends of his shifts.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 28th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Goyette's a 6 or even 7-grade passer. He connected with the smaller plays, like small-area forehand passes into space or a saucer pass on a 2-on-1. He connected with the trickier ones, like problem-solving a bad pass into a tap-in goal and an exceptional manipulation sequence where he faked the shot with his stick, body, and eyes, waited for the goaltender

and defender to commit, and then fired the puck cross-slot for a tap-in. I like a lot of his ideas as a handler, trying to make the defender move their feet and then cut across, but he gets a bit too dangle happy. He'd benefit from beating defenders without putting the puck through the triangle -- he already gets their feet moving. Defensive awareness through scanning and processes that information quickly. A couple of issues: skating and off-puck offence. He lacks ankle dorsiflexion, often significantly so, but still manages to complete many strides with a toe snap, recover under the torso, and push off laterally -- the posture might just be a strength issue. At least four times in this game, Goyette overskated the space and missed an opportunity to get a scoring chance. He doesn't adapt ever, he'll slow down but never stop or skating towards the puck carrier in OZP with his stick ready. Still, he looks like a first-round pick with playmaking with some defensive value.





51  
Rank

C  
Grade

5  
Skating

6  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

5.5  
Puckhandling

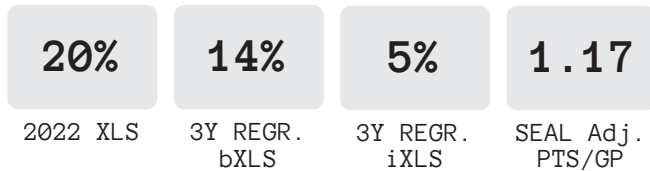
5.5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# DANNY ZHILKIN

C | GUELPH STORM

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. DEC. 19, 2003  
WEIGHT 196 SHOOTS ;EFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	66	23	32	55

## Scouting Report

Some players are really hard to pin down in a draft, and Danny Zhilkin was one of the best examples in this year's class. After a period of enthusiasm for his flashes of high-level skill, we eventually scaled back our admiration for his game as the limitations became clearer.

Zhilkin's stickhandling and processing abilities were never in doubt, though. The Guelph Storm forward can recognize and make plays instantly during offensive zone sequences. He can link give-and-gos and tic-tac-toe plays and finish them too, with powerful catch-and-release shots and one-timers.

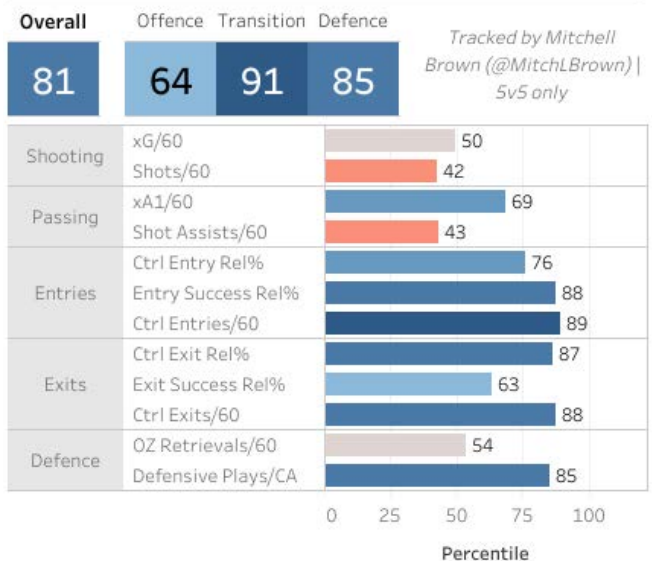
There is also a lot of deceptiveness in his game. With a succession of feints and precise handling moves, Zhilkin can manipulate defenders out of passing and shooting lanes.

"Zhilkin drew the defender to the perimeter, cut across to gain the middle, and then shot an almost in-stride wrister for a goal," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a January report. "Later in the game, he used a similar sequence to nearly set up a teammate with a cross-slot fake out of the shot fake."

In some games, Zhilkin also showed that he could anticipate the rotation of players on the ice and plan his moves accordingly, an ability that led to us bumping his hockey sense grade as high as a seven for parts of the season, a mark that would place him among the smartest players in the draft. The inconsistency in his reads in other performances, however, forced us to lower that number.

Zhilkin's lack of east-west mobility could prevent him from pulling off many of his offensive plays at the next level. His

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 115.9



weight is mostly locked between his two feet; he can't easily shift it to explode in a new direction. As a result, he handles the puck way in front of him and plays the game mostly in straight lines, relying on outside speed to beat defenders and find plays between the dots.

This is a style of game that will continue to bring him success at the Junior level, but that won't work as well in the stop-and-start, fast professional game, where defenders can easily match the footwork of attackers.

Improving the finer mechanics of his skating would unlock more options on the ice for Zhilkin and maybe a role in an NHL team's middle-six.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Ryan Kujawinski YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 98%	2 Jordan Morrison YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY: 98%	3 Casey Cizikas YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 98%	4 Michael Fine YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 98%	5 Philip McRae YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 98%
6 Garrett Wilson YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 97%	7 Chris Marchese YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 97%	8 Matt Beleskey YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 97%	9 Jeffrey Doyle YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 97%	10 Cole Cassels YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 97%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 10th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

Zhilkin was more involved in his team's offence than usual, but somehow only left the game with a single scoring chance to show for it. He gained the zone, beat defenders himself, and used give-and-gos. The skating looks a bit better than usual, completing punch turns and two-foot cuts. Still, his lack of depth makes him easily knocked off the puck inside the movements. Skilled handler with the narrow radius his skating provides, using his hands to emphasis his skating manoeuvres, setting up shots with toe drags, and attacking the space around defenders' sticks. Another impressive defensive performance, mostly through intelligent off-puck positioning. I still see his projection as mostly skills-based, not hockey sense. Lots of work to be done on the mechanics. He's a fine second round pick.

**David St-Louis:** April 2nd, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

I probably pushed Zhilkin too far up our board in the previous meetings. The limitations scare me more now. He plays a style of game, a lot of pace, a lot of straight lines, that doesn't really play to his strength: his hockey sense. And I also overrated that hockey sense aspect, giving him a 7, when that lack of self-awareness sometimes and his style of game and the passes he forces, and the slight miscues defensively tell me it's a bit lower than that. He has no agility, probably from the problematic skating mechanics, and this limits his ability to cut east-west and to manipulate defenders. In general, he makes the right plays, knows how to approach defenders and makes them turn their feet, and his handling skills are pretty high. I think he's a top-50 guy, but not a top-32 one.

**David St-Louis:** March 27th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

Not a great game from Zhilkin, but it's not like he had many plays available to make. There were none in most of his offensive zone sequences. And that's also the issue with Zhilkin. I don't think he has the overall mechanical ability to

dominate defences even at this level. Plays have to be there for him to take. His shot is dangerous: catch-and-release and there is power there, but overall most defences can easily control him when he carries the puck.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 16th, 2022

London Knight vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

I still don't see much from Zhilkin when it comes to high-end ideas or instincts. He's mostly a skill projection with variable impact. A give-and-go play nabbed him an early goal. He's clearly a skilled handler, able to turn tricky passes into shots and access passing lanes some plays can't. Anticipates the opposition's breakout pass and gets the interception as a result. Finishes his off-puck routes and mostly chooses the best route. Timing lacks sometimes. He scans regularly, but his lack of depth prevents him from spinning off checks. Too often, he defers. The puck doesn't find him because he takes more passive off-puck positioning. The skill and flashes of more are worth a second-rounder.

**David St-Louis:** March 11th, 2022

Sarnia Sting vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Zhilkin's skating is limiting, to the point where he has trouble escaping opponents in tight quarters. The speed is fine when he gets going, but don't expect cutbacks or smooth crossovers. There are no outside edge moves in his game. He gets going, can mohawk somewhat, and then he has to hope he has enough options and support to start a manipulation sequence. Otherwise, the play dies. The skating even affects his vision and his decision-making. He's limited. I still believe in him, but Zhilkin is a scary pick to make as the skating mechanics, the high stance, lack of weight shifting ability might suggest some actual body limitations, too. He's older in the draft and not scoring, too. The things I like are still the same: the anticipation, the timely supporting game, his ability to scan inside movements, the manipulation ability, the way he recognizes opportunities instantly, even ahead of time... His shot shone in this game. He can catch-and-release and pull the puck inside his feet off passes to beat goalies before they have time to reposition and deceive them.



**Lauren Kelly:** March 4th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Zhilkin's skating is still an issue - it's not ever going to be a strength, and he kept up with the pace of play well in this game, but he would really benefit from increased acceleration, especially from his first two steps, to pull away from opponents quickly after he's stolen the puck. He plays a very strong support game and complements more highly-skilled players like Sasha Pastujov. He picked up an assist in this one, intercepting a pass in the neutral zone, cutting back over the blueline, dodging a defenseman while maintaining possession before drawing defenders to him and passing off to Matthew Poitras on the doorstep. His strength is far beyond a lot of his peers on the ice at the moment and when he uses it to his advantage, he wins a lot of battles and creates the necessary space for himself while carrying the puck. Limitations to his offensive game are probably going to see him slide a bit - he's probably going to get snagged in the second round at the earliest.

**David St-Louis:** February 27th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

Very interesting performance. Zhilkin clearly processes the game incredibly fast. His choice of plays, his ability to ID teammates in an instant and recognize that they're in a better position than he is. Super impressive. He makes give-and-goes, supports plays, and because of that, fits the bumper position on the powerplay. He's deceptive, too. Some bad decisions and the skating looks to be a problem (which is common at his size), but he could be a top-45 pick.

**David St-Louis:** February 25th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. Windsor Spitfires - OHL

Zhilkin's skating is a problem. It affects his handling; he has trouble balancing himself, crossing over, and striding while keeping his stick on the puck. There is no upper and lower body separation. Because of that, there is a high risk that his pro game becomes all straight-lines. His passing game stands out. He can stretch pass, give-and-go, delay to hit teammates. He's also engaged defensively. I still see him as a top-45 pick based on his hockey sense, passing game, and handling skills.

**David St-Louis:** February 18th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Zhilkin's handling skills are above-average, but it's really his play-reading and effort that I find so interesting. His hockey sense is a 6.5-7 grade for me. Top-end processing speed,

anticipation, and ability to leverage a good scoring chance into better ones. He tries defensively and, given a chance, can wow you with some of his moves, like at the end of the game where he pursued a defender, stole the puck from him, and beat the goalie one-on-one. I'm not sure how effective he is at using his size. The skating is problematic, crab-like a bit, and he might lack balance in tight.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

The tools came together in this game. Zhilkin drew the defender to the perimeter, cut across to gain the middle, and then shot an almost in-stride wrister for a goal. Later in the game, he used a similar sequence to nearly set up a teammate with a cross-slot fake out of the shot fake. Another chance from an in-stride wrister in transition. Give-and-go use and consistently skated hard to finish off-puck routes. Some great details: adjusting speed, stick presented to his teammate, and putting himself between two teammates to immediately make the next play. Avoids shooting off his outside leg when possible; always reorganizes weight before shooting, too. Definitely room for improvement there. Defensive value mostly comes through supporting reads. If he keeps combing his off-puck game with puck skills, he'll get back into the first-round picture. For now, he's probably more of a mid-to-late second.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 21st, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Zhilkin was the best draft-eligible player on Guelph in this game. He'll never be a dynamic, offensive presence, but he puts himself in the right areas to help generate plays and he comes back to support his defensemen way more than most of his teammates. He plays well with Sasha Pastujov but isn't driving play. He protects the puck well, showed some good stickhandling abilities, and was robbed on the doorstep on the powerplay. Drew a penalty after he was taken down trying to go around a defender during a chip and chase. He also had a breakaway chance where he corralled a rolling puck at the blueline before firing a rather harmless shot five-hole that was stopped easily. Limitations to his offensive game make me wonder if he's a first rounder at this point, but he's definitely a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

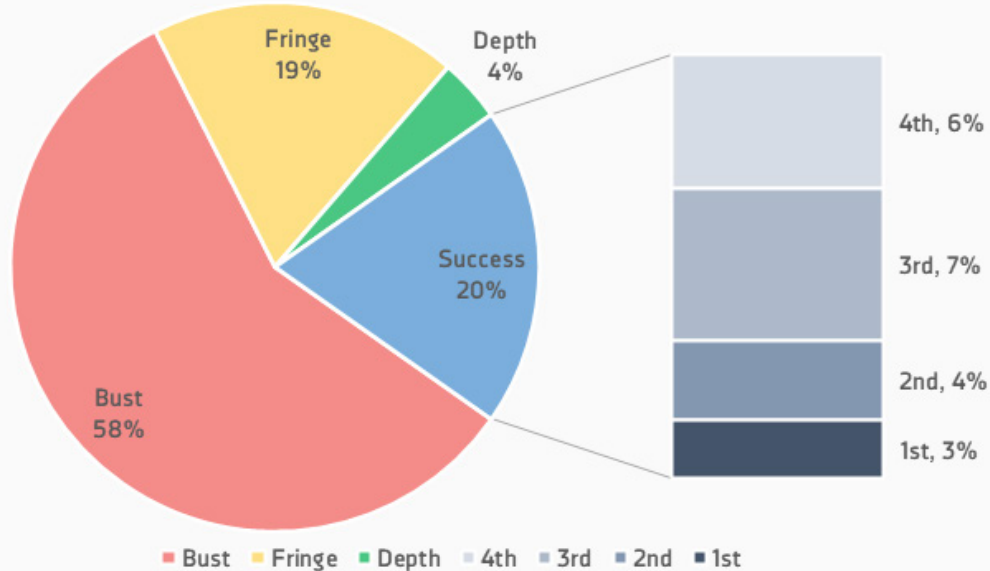
Saginaw Spirit vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

I keep waiting for Zhilkin to start using his tools, but it never comes. He had one solid, but easy set-up on a broken 3-on-1 in the midst of an extremely underwhelming game.



## Danny Zhilkin 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



to open up new plays. He's all inside edges, no cutback or hard turns in his game, which means the options have to be there when he skates in a straight line. His forward stride is somewhat projectable to an average grade as, despite the wide recovery, he loads his legs properly and goes full extension, but the lack of agility is a severe problem. He's older for this draft class and has built his entire game around that limitation. He was loose defensively all game. In the right spot, but a couple of strides short of making an effective play. He's a B prospect for me.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 5th, 2021

Guelph Storm vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Zhilkin's strongest asset is his, well, strength. He looked like a man amongst boys in this one, whether it was protecting the puck on rushes, using his body to separate players from the puck along the boards, and being difficult to stop on the forecheck. His positioning is really good at both ends of the ice - he doesn't overcompensate and isn't too aggressive, but he's constantly scanning and adjusting. He was using his stick to break up plays or check players. His acceleration continues to be a concern, but I honestly don't believe it will hold him back from being successful at future levels - Zhilkin moves around the ice quite well for a larger player. Increasing that explosiveness with his stride would help him be a much more effective player, but he's still quite agile and his edgework is solid. Another question would be his offensive production at future levels, and whether that holds him back from being a first round pick or not, because Zhilkin wasn't really that dangerous in the offensive zone in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Guelph Storm vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

On one hand, Zhilkin should probably be better than he is. On the other, he missed nearly an entire season and has some really standout tools: shooting, passing, puckhandling, and even skating once he gets moving. He's a reasonably solid defender, mostly effective in this game through supporting reads and positioning rather than aggression. I like how he makes the pass in transition and spots the trailer even though layers. Occasional accuracy issues suggest scanning issues (read: overly deceptive at times). Mostly, I just find him too passive. He waits for the puck a lot, and mostly plays the facilitator role. Pastujov was awful in this game and didn't seem to want the puck. Zhilkin could've taken control. He didn't. I don't have a great read on his decision-making, offensive feel, or even skill level beyond tools at this stage.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 28th, 2021

Guelph Storm vs. Windsor Spitfires - OHL

Zhilkin's all tools with some details but lacks in the decision-making department. The positive: he flashes a delay game in transition, owns a refined wrister with proper mechanics (elbow up, hands in front, distance between feet, chest up), uses his teammates, and establishes the middle early in transition. Top hand free from his hip while handling for a massive range of motion that he combines with weight shifts and developing awareness of manipulation. He moves defenders' feet, but doesn't always execute at the right times. He's a reasonably sound defensive player, combining frequent scanning and effort to disrupt plays and intercept passes.

**"This is a style of game that will continue to bring him success at the Junior level, but that won't work as well in the stop-and-start, fast professional game, where defenders can easily match the footwork of attackers. Improving the finer mechanics of his skating would unlock more options on the ice for Zhilkin and maybe a role in an NHL team's middle-six."**

Some high-level defensive reads, too, like a timed breakup deeper in the zone and reading switch-offs in advance. The skating seems more like a strength than weakness, pushing his knees over his toes, completing many of his strides, a forward-driving recovery under the shoulders, and high crossover integration with the puck. Hes sinks into his stride immediately, limiting his accelerating phase (higher hips, out-facing toes, narrower recovery are the goal here). Looks for teammates in scoring position and shows creativity with his deliveries, but he didn't scan before passing in this game. And when he did, he took too long to pass afterwards. I have some questions about pace and decisions, which makes me wonder if he's more of a mid-second than a late-first.

**J.D. Burke:** October 19th, 2021

Kitchener Rangers vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Just a real nothingburger of a game from Zhilkin. Failed to make much of anything happen in this contest at either end of the ice or in transition, short of an opportunity that found him at the net-front and failed to result in even a particularly threatening scoring chance. The Rangers defence, an especially physical bunch by OHL standards, just manhandled Zhilkin along the boards, dispossessing him of the puck with relative ease at every opportunity. This seemed to frustrate Zhilkin to the point that he more or less stopped competing in this hockey game. Found himself on the ugly end of a third period goal against, failing to pick up the trailer on a play and watching him deposit the puck in the back of the net as he glided back towards his zone. He's a

really top-heavy skater, but he covers ground sufficiently if not at a slightly above average level. Didn't even look like a player who warranted late-round consideration in this game.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 8th, 2021

Kitchener Rangers vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

I was really impressed with Zhilkin in this game. He played alongside OHL rookies Valentin Zhugin and Sasha Pastujov, and his previous league experience definitely stood out compared to his linemates. Zhilkin didn't really contribute much offensively; but his impact was really felt at the other end of the ice. He was constantly coming back to support his defensemen, either through backchecking, or sliding back to help cover them while they (mostly Daniil Chayka) jumped up into the play. Zhilkin protects the puck well and is a great passer - he didn't shoot all that much in this game, but on the few times he did, they weren't all that dangerous, or he was whiffing on tap-in opportunities. He was sort of at fault on the overtime winner - although he got back in time to somewhat disrupt the pass across, he wasn't able to clear the puck away and then plowed into his goalie, forcing the puck over the line despite the initial save. Zhilkin's pretty mobile for a 6'2" skater, but he does lack the acceleration at times that can plague larger players. When he does get moving though, he's difficult to stop, especially if he has the puck. He's got great defensive zone positioning and he's not stationary in either end. He didn't shy away from physical play but was more focused on using his stick to separate players from the puck, which he was very successful at doing.



52  
Rank

5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

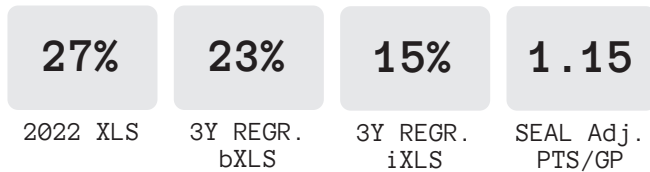
# JORDAN GUSTAFSON

F | SEATTLE THUNDERBIRDS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JAN. 20, 2004  
WEIGHT 179 SHOOTS LEFT

"I grew up playing wing, centre, and a little defence. I've played mostly centre this year... Playing defence helped my two-way game. 100 percent. It stays in the back of your head. Whether you're backchecking or covering for the 'D'. It helps a lot."

- Jordan Gustafson in April 2022



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	58	23	29	52

## Scouting Report

Nearly Jordan Gustafson every game report reads similarly: details, details, details. And it doesn't hurt that he has scoring upside and projectable tools, either.

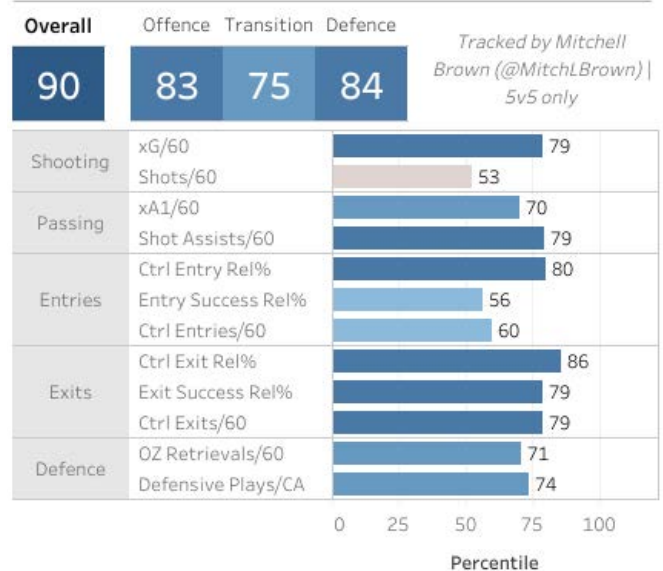
Gustafson's a proactive player in all three zones. He anticipates openings and changes of coverage, fills passing lanes, and supports every play effectively. Where most players chase, he subtly angles or eliminates an off-puck threat.

In the offensive end, that proactiveness appears in Gustafson's well-timed dashes into the slot and between-defenders positioning, capped off with a projectable shot. Given space, he takes pucks directly into his shooting pocket and fires off the pass. Without it, he still fires off threatening catch-and-release shots, even if he receives a tricky pass.

With the shooting threat comes a projectable physical game. "Along the boards, he uses well-timed punch turns over either leg, but knows to step off the boards and make a play inside," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitchell Brown wrote in a late-April game report. "Off-puck, he couples his off-puck instincts and body positioning to keep his stick."

Not one to hang onto possession for long periods of time, Gustafson prefers a give-and-go, play-building style. Where many deke, he cuts inside, makes a quick pass in-motion,

Games Tracked: 11 | Minutes Tracked: 143.7



then sprints for the return feed. Instead of forcing plays, he cuts away from pressure and waits for the trailer.

At times, it seems like Gustafson's game lacks individual skill. He's not a dynamic puck-carrier, long-range shooting threat, or manipulative playmaker. When he tries more advanced puck-carrying sequences, he doesn't make defenders move their feet, leading to turnovers. But there are flashes of deceptive playmaking, such as a fake shot and look off to

prolong a passing lane.

That Gustafson lacks the high-level skills characteristic of top-six forwards puts his projection in the bottom-half of the lineup. But his combination of tools and details could

make him an effective NHLer, adapting his game to fit in a variety of roles, structures, and teammates. If the deceptive flashes become manipulation, he could surprise.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Chris St. Jacques YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 95%	2 Tim Bozon YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 95%	3 Oliver Bjorkstrand YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 94%	4 Jarret Stoll YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 94%	5 Ben Maxwell YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 93%
6 Michal Repik YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 93%	7 Quinton Howden YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 93%	8 Ty Rattie YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 93%	9 Emerson Etem YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 93%	10 Brad Ross YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 93%

## Game Reports

**Daniel Gee:** April 29th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Gustafson's pace may be average, but his combination of tools and above average sense creates a really nice player. Gustafsson possesses a bunch of positive habits in transition. He drives the centre lane off-puck, attacks retrievals below the goal line, and is a constant threat to up his pace to create odd-man rushes. On-puck there is clear passing skill. Slip passes, one-touches. In the first he slipped a puck ahead, funnelling the puck into the slot. Stripped a couple of pucks in transition as well. Ended up scoring on a 2-on-2; Gustafson filed, took a pass on the left-hand-circle, and spun as he faced pressure and rifled a shot top shelf. In the third he even forced a turnover in the neutral zone with a wall seal; fed his teammate on a 2-on-1 for the assist (secured the win).

He processes play extremely well in sustained-pressure. In one second period sequence, Gustafson was able to jump on a bobbled puck, and instantly fed an open teammate with a cross-ice pass. Pretty inside-focused in terms of positioning -- lives in the slot. Has some manipulation habits in the cycle -- flakes low rings and pushes pucks into the middle of the ice. Fights through pressure extremely well. Pretty impactful on the powerplay; Gustafson passed off a puck and jumped into the slot, from there he found a free centred puck and just about scored on his backhand -- toe save.

On the defensive end of the puck Gustafson is a fairly committed backchecker in terms of harassment. He sometimes stacks defensively and doesn't really have the edges to push dynamic pressure -- especially laterally. Late on a second period read on a 2-on-1 against but did recognize the developing play earlier than others. Scanning habits need some development. Looks like a top three round player.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Well-rounded. Gustafson set up two scoring chances in this game, including a goal. Raced down the boards, cut, then passed around the defender for a cross-slot look. More commonly, he makes quick passes off the boards to the middle. Aware of options, passes under sticks, and generally chooses the type of pass. Consistent off-puck player, as normal. He's disruptive, intelligent in support, and consistently gets open around the slot. More timed movement to the inside will bolster his shooting opportunities, but he's adaptable (changing routes and speed on the fly) and quite creative in how he gets open. Gustafson doesn't exactly scream a play-driver in the NHL. But as a solid secondary player on the third line, I think he'll add serious value. Could be a fine late-second, early-third.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 20th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

More of the usual Jordan Gustafson stuff. One-timers after getting open just outside the inner slot, quick plays to the inside, and off-puck impact. Nothing advanced, but fundamentally sound with flashes of more. Overall, this was a quieter performance from Gustafson than normal. He tried to beat defenders himself a bit more regularly than normal without much success. It's not that he's limited mechanically; it's that he has difficulty reading defender's feet and making the right handling decision. Not a big deal. He's better than this. Still would be a fine late-second, early-third.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

More of the same from Gustafson. Best sequence: cutback followed by a give-and-go to get a point-blank shot. He knows

# "That Gustafson lacks the high-level skills characteristic of top-six forwards puts his projection in the bottom-half of the lineup. But his combination of tools and details could make him an effective NHLer, adapting his game to fit in a variety of roles, structures, and teammates."

his strengths and weaknesses. If the pass isn't an option, he shows projectable handling skill (change of pace, top hand moving across the body, some rolling out the back). In one shift, he delayed, cut inside, set-up a shot. He doesn't rely on speed or skill advantages he won't carry to the next level. To make the NHL, he'll have to lean a bit more in the off-puck game. More defensive value, for sure, but more timed off-puck movements to the inside of the slot instead of hanging out in supporting position. Minor tweak. Could just be coaching. I wish he'd take control of the game a bit more often to get a better sense of tools, but he's a fine late-second, early-third all the same. Won't be flashy, but he could score a bit in the NHL on a third-line.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Spokane Chiefs vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

I no longer have anything new to say about Gustafson's game. PPG with a tap-in - he's consistent about establishing body positioning in these sequences. Deked through two defenders with a toe drag, gained the middle, then started a give-and-go. Once receiving the return pass, he cut off the defender's hands combined with a backhand-forehand into space as he drove the net. NHL sequence. I like the defence, pace of operation with the puck, and understanding of his game (he's better off-puck and he plays like it). I'm just not sure how it results in an impactful NHLer. Late-second, early-third. He has the tools, but not sure about the skill level and creativity to make it work in anything more than a bottom-six role.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 29th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Gustafson's skill level goes through dramatic shifts through

out the course of a game. He scored twice in this game: a far-side wrister while falling and a lightning-fast catch-and-release wrister unpressured. Set up a couple of chances from down low, the most impressive of which was a steal immediately followed by a pass from his knees. Impactful on the forecheck through both his ability to win battles and his off-puck positioning. In OZP, prefers to find space just outside the slot or slot slowly work from the outside-in as the defence collapses. He's slick about it, but I wonder how it will translate to the NHL. If he could translate that movement and timing to off-puck movement around the net, I'd feel a lot more optimistic about his projection. The transition game is quite simple: straight line, single attacks that don't change lanes or threaten the feet of defenders. Maybe a late-second or early-third based on his shooting skill and flashes of playmaking.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

Every Gustafson viewing has basically been the same: the odd clever pass, a scoring chance or two after trailing and finding space between checks, and activity off-puck to regain possession. A little bit less handling and passing skill compared to previous viewings. Ran himself out of space multiple times. Doesn't manipulate defenders but has the tools. He's not an advanced off-puck threat, although his timing in low-scoring areas at the next level is advanced. Not convinced that equals a top-nine forward in the NHL, but I've seen better from him.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 14th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

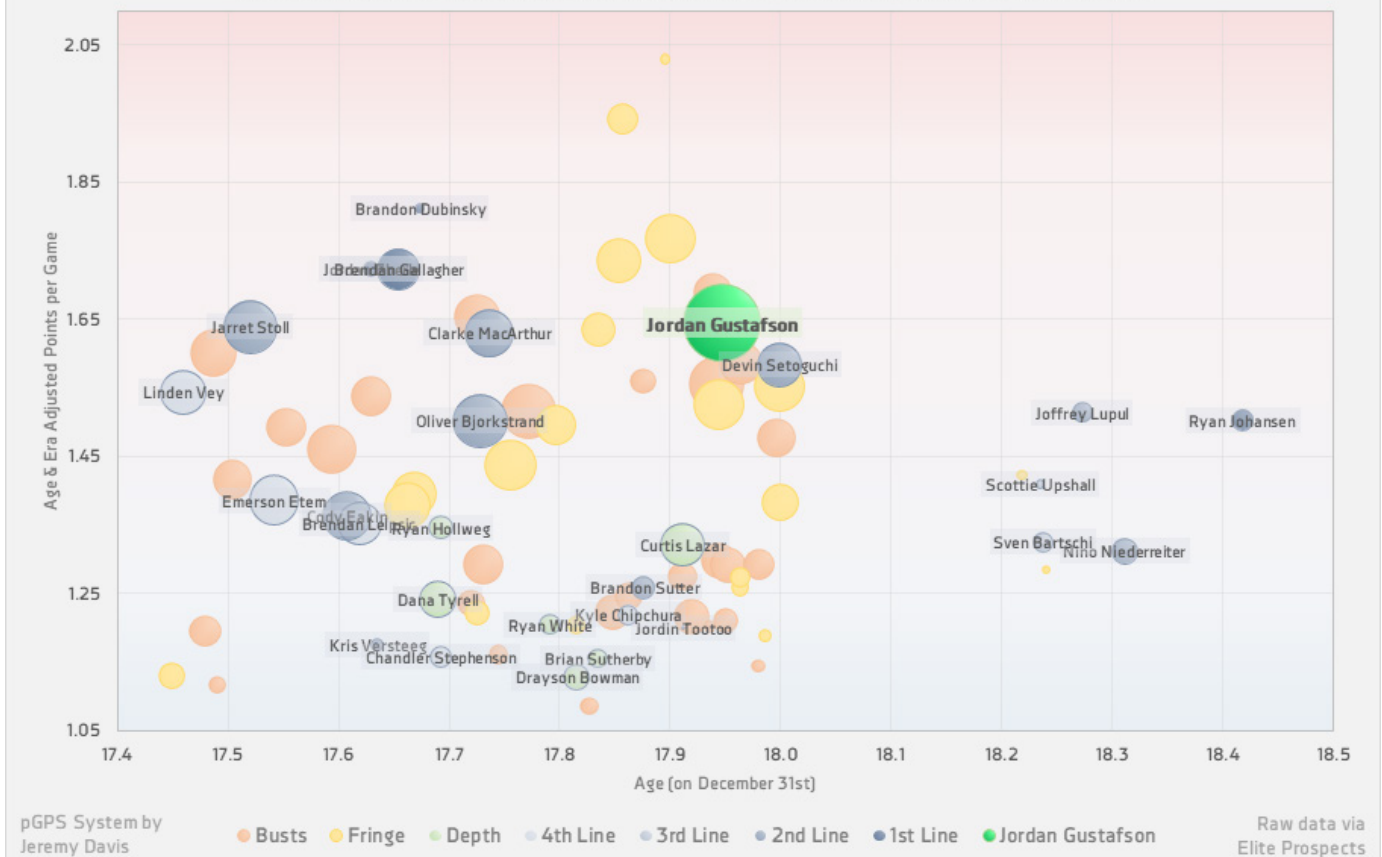
Gustafson might've been the best player in this game. Al-

## Jordan Gustafson 2021-22 WHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 77 || Base XLS: 27% || Impact XLS: 18% || XPR: 40.9 || Drafted Pct: 87%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



ways active in pursuit, but he was able to weapon that into offence in this outing. Some quick deception allowed him to set up a pair of chances: eyes and feet pointing towards the net with the puck in his hip pocket before passing. The shooting remains the most exciting part. Scored with a near-perfect in-stride wrister: jumping onto the heel of his inside leg, loading the stick, and launching the puck into the top corner. Balances support and scoring positioning well, but he does his best work finding space in the medium-danger areas. Trails in transition to arrive into space late, and in OZP, he veers away from the net front and towards the faceoff circle, for example. Now, that's not inherently bad, but I wonder how much he'll score at the next levels without adaptation. Looks like a solid late-second.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 3rd, 2021

Victoria Royals vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Not any closer to figuring out was Gustafson is. He had two of the better set-ups in this game: a retrieval turned pass into the slot for an assist and a pass to the activating defender after stepping to the middle and drawing defensive attention. The lack of manipulation, deception, and notable skills at high pace is concerning, but there were flashes in this game. He's an intelligent off-puck player who just didn't

get the puck back in this one for no fault of his own. Active in pursuit, but not an overwhelming energetic presence. He's a draft pick, but not sure if he's a second-round candidate or end-of-board type.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

A breakaway goal was the highlight of this game, but I didn't much that suggests NHL player from Gustafson. For the most part, this was a straight-line, single-speed game without notable offensive or defensive contributions beyond some activity down low. There was the inception of an inside game, trying to cutting inside a couple of times but failing. Seattle was getting forechecked into oblivion -- probably not a great showcase game.

**J.D. Burke:** November 5th, 2021

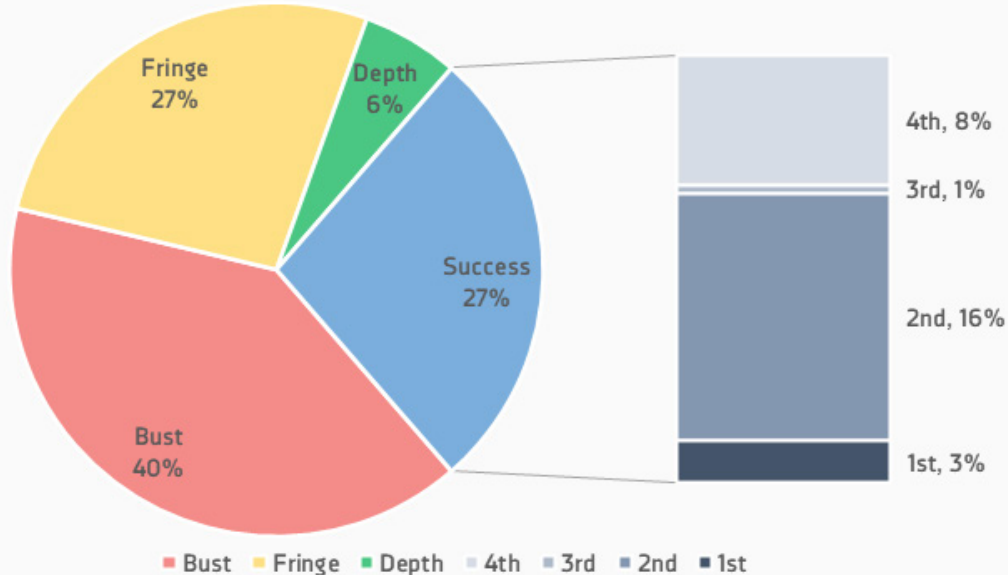
Tri-City Americans vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Really strong showing from Gustafson. Picked up an assist on the power play with a one-timer that turned into a rebound helper, and nearly added a goal with a deflection at the net-front on a rush play. Really high off-puck pace in this contest, identifying soft-ice for shooting opportunities and timing his entrance into those parts of the offensive



## Jordan Gustafson 2021-22 WHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



zone perfectly for chances. Tried taking the puck to the net on a few occasions and flashed real small area skill in the process. Actually drew a penalty on one such occasion. Really high defensive work rate in this contest, too. Looked like a high-end B-grade prospect in this one.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Gustafson's definitely an NHL prospect. More handling ability than I saw in my first viewing this season, which he used to great effect on the breakout. Showed problem-solving instincts that I doubted, beating defenders on the pass reception and cutting inside. Sets moves adequately, and he played off the threat of the shot to set-up a teammate in the offensive zone.


Diverse attacker with a transition passing/give-and-go game. Scored twice on the PP, highlighted by an NHL-calibre one-timer from the circle against the grain. Lacks high-level off-puck instincts, but understands how to trail the play and arrive in space at the perfect time.

Defensively, he's active but usually doing nothing of note -- not that he defended much anyhow. Looked like a classic

second-round pick in this game: Shooting skill, some instincts, handling skill, and energy.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 8th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Spokane Chiefs - WHL

Gustafson was mostly the beneficiary of Roulette playing out of mind in this game. Still, he had some moments. The off-puck offensive game was his best element, consistently getting lost in the NZ and then arriving in pockets of space untouched. In OZP, those instincts taper off significantly. Hit a through pass for a scoring chance, but unpressured and obvious. The shot's really impressive for a few reasons: How he takes the puck in shooting positions and when he can't, how he shots from tricky positions anyhow. Powerful catch-and-release shot with the puck in between his feet, using his top hand elbow and ankle flexion to fish the puck out and shoot in one motion. Throws pucks away in the DZ, failing to scan for options or running straight into pressure. There's a lack of problem-solving skills here, and I don't think he plans plays to offset it. He's active on the backcheck and forecheck, often funnelling the puck carrier into support and then reading their next play. Looks like a pick. 



53  
Rank

C  
Grade

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

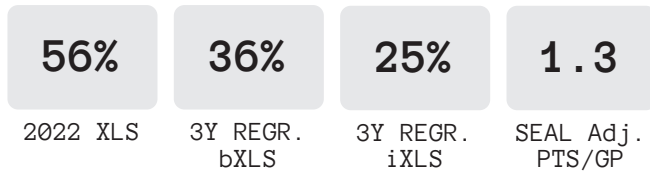
5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

# NICHOLAS MOLDENHAUER

C/RW | CHICAGO STEEL

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAY 25, 2004  
WEIGHT 170 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	41	18	25	43
WJC-18	4	1	2	3

## Scouting Report

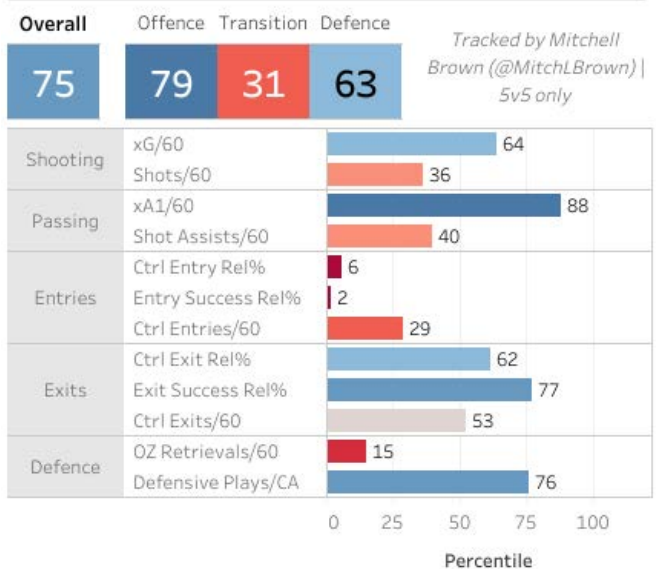
For most prospects, missing the first quarter of the season means playing catch up. But Nicholas Moldenhauer didn't just catch many of his peers down the stretch, he surpassed them. By the end of his season, his 1.02 points per game led all non-USNTDP first-time draft-eligible USHL skaters.

Moldenhauer's skills are readily apparent. He's a dexterous handler, especially in tight spaces. Backhand, forehand, and slip passes feature regularly, even in-motion and under pressure. And the shot's just as impressive, with the lower-body flexion and hand placement to generate significant force, and the elevated elbow and craftiness to change the angle inside his release.

The way Moldenhauer links these skills together makes his game nuanced and projectable. After passing, he dashes into space for a return feed. Where many players sprint to the net, he stops in space to improve his odds of receiving the puck. He slips in front of and behind defenders in the high-danger areas, timing these movements with the play around him.

The physical game also projects as a strength in the NHL for Moldenhauer, provided he continues to get stronger and deepen his skating stance. "His ability to power through contact, even at full speed, stands out: he gets low, driving his shoulder and hips through the defender," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in an April game report. "Consistently establishes body positioning on players in every situation, creating space with the puck

Games Tracked: 10 | Minutes Tracked: 130.5



and presenting himself as a passing option without it."

Moldenhauer's still searching for an identity in transition, where he bounces between unimaginative chip-and-chase and poorly executed dekes around defenders. Still, he attacks the middle and shows flashes of a give-and-go game. Skating refinement and targeting defenders inside crossovers and at an angle (instead of a straight-line glide) should also help his transition game.

While Moldenhauer doesn't project as a dynamic player in the NHL, his combination of off-puck offence, shooting, passing, and physical skill could make him an effective third-liner.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 R.J. Umberger YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 91%	2 Kyle Okposo YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 90%	3 Johnny Gaudreau YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 89%	4 Austin Cangelosi YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 89%	5 Chris Collins YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 88%
6 Matt Nieto YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 88%	7 Chad Rau YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 88%	8 Zemgus Girgensons YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 88%	9 Jason Gregoire YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 87%	10 Chad LaRose YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 87%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 30th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

A bit of an ugly game from Moldenhauer. He still had his chances, but he was forcing dekes through defenders and turning the puck over every other touch. I wouldn't consider them projection issues; they're more a player trying to broaden their game. That's fine. But he's lacks the mechanical and skill refinement to keep playing this game. He's best when he's making the quick play and relocating. Shot's highly projectable. Lots of ankle flexion with his elbow elevated and chest up. Adaptable. The physical game projects as a strength in the NHL, too. He's probably a bottom-line or third-line player, but the more I watch, the more optimistic I am about him achieving that upside.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Moldenhauer's progression has been impressive. This was another performance where he looked like a top-64 prospect in this class. His body positioning and puck protection remain a couple of the most exciting skills, although his skating might mean he loses that advantage at the next level. Still, he powers through checks without issue. Consistent playmaking impact, using give-and-gos, identifying teammates in better positions than himself, and connecting with a crazy pass through multiple defenders for a tap-in. His decisiveness as a passer is deceptive. Without the puck, he gets open the slot by slipping behind defenders or pushing off into space. Tends to stretch out and leaning over his stick when shooting, but the puck comes off his stick with power still. Release speed will benefit from a narrower release. He plays a bit of a loose game in transition with the puck than the rest of the Steel, but he still attacks the middle. It won't be a strength in the NHL; instead, his path to the NHL is likely as a off-puck threat, playmaker, and puck protector with some defence. Not a bad piece for a third-line.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** April 1st, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Exactly the kind of performance I was looking for out of

Moldenhauer. Keeping it simple, advancing the puck quickly, maintaining good off-puck timing, being hard to play against along the walls. Had a couple of apples including a nice one where he sucked in a couple of defenders and sent an area pass to a teammate waiting in the slot. He used his hands in conjunction with his skating to create pockets of space to handle the puck before dishing to a teammate or firing on net. He's so intelligent without the puck too, darting into dangerous areas and beating defenders to spots. More performances like this and he's a surefire top 80 guy.

**Cam Robinson:** April 1st, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

This was my first iso viewing of Moldenhauer and it was far more impressive an outing than I've seen from in him full game outings earlier in the season. He was powerful all around the ice, inflicting his path while transporting it by protecting the puck and leaning into the defenders. Had a terrific A1 where he fought off the check and managed to send it cross-slot. The posture was deep and facilitated the strength and balance. Had his head up and assessed the landscape well and decisively. Honestly, this looked like a player who has aspiration for the the top two rounds.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Another impressive performance from Moldenhauer. His ability to power through contact, even at full speed, stands out. He gets low, driving his shoulder and hips through the defender. Consistently establishes positioning on players in every situation – think his physical game will be a strength at the next level. Directly involved in four goals in this game. The best saw him fight off two defenders then shovel a cross-slot pass to Plante – he's regularly making these plays reaching around defenders. Cut to the inside, handled through the defender's triangle, then passed cross-ice for another assist. Give-and-go sequence on the PP – gaining the zone, passing back, spinning around for the return pass, deceiving on hte pass reception, passing back into the slot – suggested an ability to link ideas together. Between checks positioning

## Nicholas Moldenhauer 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 16 || Base XLS: 56% || Impact XLS: 39% || XPR: 51.2 || Drafted Pct: 75%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



and timed off-puck movement benefits both his playmaking and shooting. He looked like a top-50 prospect in this game.

### Mitchell Brown: March 26th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Moldenhauer has turned a corner. He had the best shift of the game. He took a pass across the body, using it to load his weight shift. As the defender pivoted, he cut inside. Instead of planting his inside leg on the ice, he pushed off immediately for the shot – that’s like a 7-grade shot, at least. Then grabbed his rebound, established body positioning, and cut to the middle. The rest of his shooting wasn’t quite as impressive, he tends to drop his chest towards the ice to generate the necessary downforce instead of engaging his lower body. He’s a bit bunched over and requires space to operate, so he struggled to complete zone entries, too. But he’s also inside driven, has handling skill, and puts in the work defensively. Disrupted a ton of plays through motor alone, even if he’s tripping over his feet to get there. Creative passes, including a one-touch backhand to the inside for a goal and a pair of cross-slot passes that led to goals. This game, Moldenhauer looked like a top-50 prospect with third-line upside.

### Mitchell Brown: March 18th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Without the puck, Moldenhauer sinks into a projectable stride: knees pushed over toes, hips engaged, chest up, full extensions and proper recoveries. With it, he straightens his legs and drops his chest towards the ice. Prefers shorter, choppy movements over full crossovers and strides. In one sequence, he beat a defender to the inside, established body positioning, and chipped a puck across for a high-danger chance. In the offensive zone, he looks like a top-64 pick. He gets open, moves the puck at the right times, extends OZ time, and shows some shooting skill. Relentless pursuit and quite disruptive. In transition, he’s not a factor. He missed options, forced plays, and couldn’t beat defenders. He’s a pick for sure, probably in the 70s.

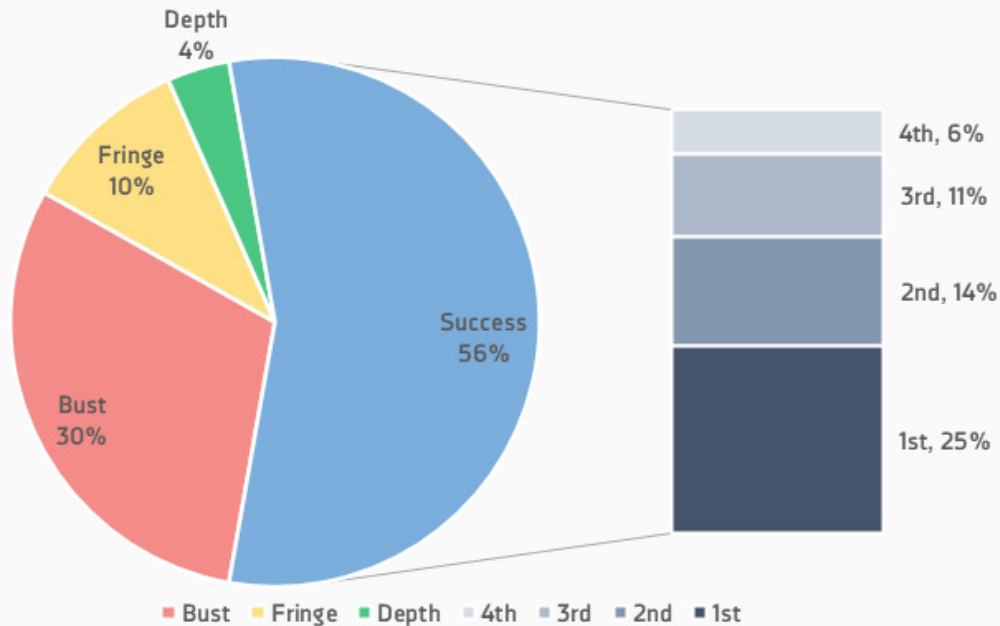
### Joey Padmanabhan: March 11th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Cedar Rapids Roughriders - USHL

Moldenhauer is an interesting prospect. Most of his game runs through his hands and when it works, it can be spectacular, but when it doesn’t, it often leads to bad turnovers and rushes going the other direction. He has a great sense of off-puck timing, darting to areas around the slot to get feeds from teammates. Had a couple nice goals

## Nicholas Moldenhauer 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



in this one, the first a slick deke using his reach to bait the goalie before pulling it cross crease. The second was a nice tap in where he lost coverage and broke into open space. He really struggles in physical battles and along the walls, this was something that was especially clear in this game. He'll need some development if he's going to make it as a pro but there's some skill here.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** February 5th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Tough game for Moldenhauer, who was just overwhelmed physically. He's got some good skill; most of his game runs through his hands and he certainly has some creativity, but he lacks the mobility or strength to create separation through his stride or a tight turn. Defensively, he was incredibly active, picking up sticks and tying up opponents. Along the wall, however, he got bullied and it was clear that the Muskegon defenseman were learning that he could be shut down by taking the body.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Moldenhauer was mostly the tertiary player on his line in this game. There were moments: flipping between short support and scoring positioning, off-the-pass shooting while under pressure, and some intense pursuit on the backcheck. He lacks timing in his movements and he reaches when engaging, instead of taking the extra stride. Lacks pace with

the puck, causing him to miss options. I didn't see a ton of draftable qualities in this game, but there's plenty of time.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2022

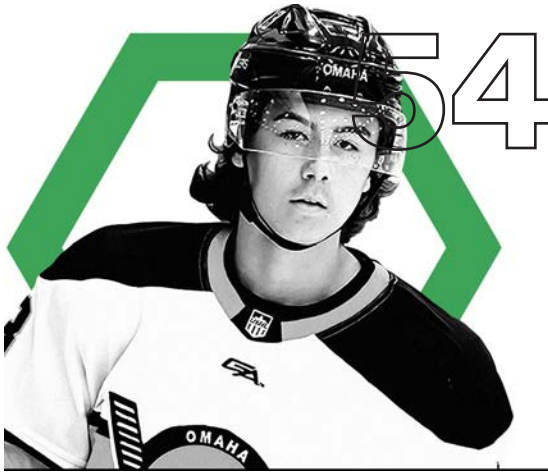
Madison Capitols vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

A lot of the same issues appeared in this game: poorly-planned chip-and-chase, straight-line gliding dekes, and missed opportunities in transition. But Moldenhauer was using his teammates in the offensive zone, creating speed differentials in transition, and showed even more ability as a shooter and puck protector. Has a lot of projectable elements: powering through defenders, getting inside positioning, and off-puck instincts. When he moves into space, he gets positioning and then presents his stick. Movements are often timed. Looked like a potential late-second in this outing.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 26th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Moldenhauer has the right ideas along the boards, but he gets overpowered easily. Some of that's skating (he's too upright). With the puck, he stands out because he doesn't do a lot of the Chicago Steel stuff: he dumps the puck in quite often, tries to deke through defenders inside straight-line glides, and looks off his teammates to shoot or handle. The shooting game has some qualities: he uses quick handles to mask his release if he can't shoot off the pass and has some off-puck instincts in transition (stopping inside space, controlling speed). Fourth game of the season for him. Need to watch more.



54  
Rank

4.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

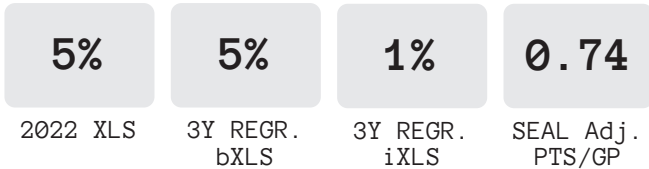
5.5  
Hockey Sense

6.5  
Physical

# DAIMON GARDNER

C | WARROAD HIGH

HEIGHT 6' 4" D.O.B. JAN. 18, 2004  
WEIGHT 201 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHS-MN	30	45	38	83
USHL	14	3	1	4

> Committed to Clarkson Univ. ('23-24)

## Scouting Report

Hailing from Eagle Lake, Ontario, Daimon Gardner is already extremely well-traveled at 18-years-old. Believe it or not, he has spent time in Winnipeg, Nebraska, and Minnesota over the past five years.

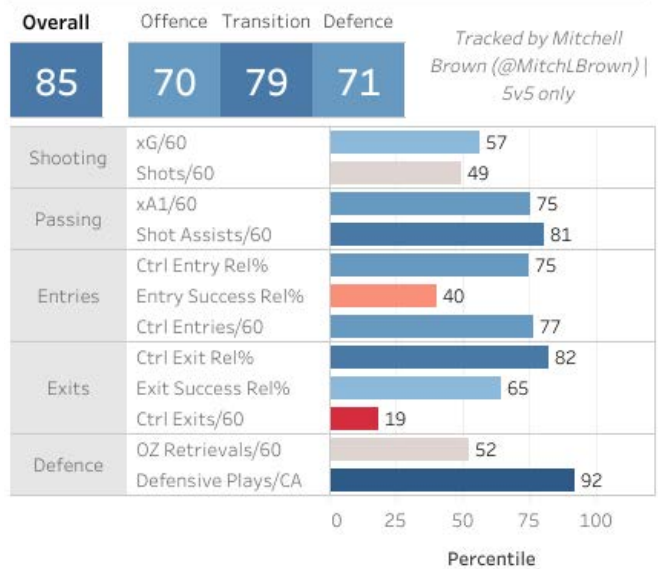
The 6-foot-4, 201 pound centre, was an overwhelming attacker at the high school level, so dominant that he scored 45 goals and 83 points across only 30 games played with Warroad. That same dominance failed to reveal itself on the scoresheet across his play in the USHL, where his minutes never really reflected his overall impact.

Always inside-focused, Gardner's sense prevails across his shifts. He drives middle lanes, exploits his frame advantages to protect against defenders, and has handling, shooting, and passing skills that all blend into a relatively sophisticated offensive package.

"As he activates to the inside, he patterns into a delay game, bumping pucks to trailers," Elite Prospects crossover scout Daniel Gee wrote in an April report. "No-looks, eye-line manipulation at use, Gardner always seems to hunt for defence-to-offence opportunities.. He is frankly a monster on the walls, pinning and pressuring Lincoln defenders into scramble breakouts.... Off-puck, Gardner is a constant rotator, who jumps in willingly to help win battles or bully net front defenders to create screens."

Gardner is talented in transition. Whether he is holding the puck in his hip-pocket to set up triangle-focused dekes,

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 75.0



or working from the outside-in to power on net, he always is working to create mismatches with opposing defenders. Possessing a clear second gear through his crossover integration to create separation when he carries the puck. He can even shoot in motion, and possesses significant power through his frame, balanced torso, and wicked wrist-roll release. Despite Gardner's success in high school and short, but encouraging USHL stint, he's a long-term projection. That's he's going to the BCHL next season speaks to that. But the pay-off could be significant: a skilled, intelligent third-line centre who brings a bit of impact to all three zones.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Jack Downing YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 97%	2 Christian Hanson YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY: 96%	3 Nick Oddo YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 96%	4 Will Kessel YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 96%	5 Zac Larraza YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 95%
6 Mark Langdon YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 95%	7 Tyler Thompson YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 95%	8 Andreas Nodl YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 95%	9 Zach Cohen YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 95%	10 Garrett Gamez YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 95%

## Game Reports

**Daniel Gee:** April 23rd, 2022

Lincoln Stars vs Tri-City Storm - USHL

Gardner only played 11 minutes, but he was incredible in this viewing, recording two primary points and a handful of high-danger chances. It's shocking how much he generates from a shift-to-shift, sequence-to-sequence basis. So smart and too big to handle.

Transitionally, off-puck, Gardner is always driving the middle lane working to get behind defenders to open up passing lanes, but his genius really occurs on-puck. He's still inside oriented as ever, exploiting opponents' mistakes through weight-transfers and always seemingly protecting the puck with his frame, boot placements, and hip-pocket holds. On another shift, he broke through a near-boards defender's coverage and snapped a hard shot in motion off the wing. As he activates top the inside, he patterns into a delay game, bumping pucks to trailers. No-looks, eye-line manipulation at use, Gardner always seems to hunt for defense-to-offense opportunities. On one second period shift he poked a puck away from a Lincoln carrier, skated onto it, scanned, weaved outward and fed a teammate for an easy 2-on-0 goal. On another shift he waited on the OZ blueline, upped pace to pressure the puck-retrieving goaltender, and managed to steal the puck behind the net, just having a quick forehand wrap-around saved.

In sustained pressure, Gardner was just as strong. He is frankly a monster on the walls, pinning and pressuring Lincoln defenders into scramble breakouts. Gardner jumped off the bench to join some sustained action, instantly jumping backdoor wide open, ready for the centering pass. After his end-board teammate passed the puck to a teammate higher in the slot, Gardner grabbed a deflection, spun and wired a shot glove side -- goaltender unable to read his release.

Habits wise, the protection has been as immense as seen in other viewings, his edges, dropped shoulders, and back holding off defenders. He absolutely leveled a Lincoln player

on the near-boards to win a puck back. Off-puck Gardner is a constant rotator, who jumps in willingly to help win battles or bully net front defenders to create screens. Just excellent stuff. Even defensively, Gardner pushed high-end sequences. He angled off numerous entries with his back pressure, working in tandem with defenders to kill rushes. Gardner will rotate, skate backwards, just to have a better body position to the oncoming attackers. Constant pick-pocket threat. He got lost on one shift, wasn't able to pick up a secondary target, but all he did in this game was positive. Shuttering to think what he would have done with more minutes. Looks like a B-grade player.

**Daniel Gee:** April 16th, 2022

Sioux Falls Stampede vs Tri-City Storm - USHL

Gardner played under 15 minutes in this viewing but while he wasn't as nearly as dominant at this level, he displayed flashes of ability throughout the game.

His best sequence occurred transitionally in the second; breaking in on the right-wing, Gardner delayed, pulling the puck away from an oncoming defender (hip-pocket) while cutting into the high slot. As he reached pressure Gardner popped the puck back to an activating trailer who nearly scored on a clear lane to the net. Another sequence saw Gardner intercept a neutral zone pass, breaking into the OZ with speed on the near boards behind the defense -- he managed to get a shot off the wing shortside -- mechanics were really nice (arms in front of body, wicked wrist-roll release, balanced torso, devoid of a lean to the right.) Showed he could up his pace at this level to be a threat off-puck on the rush; available for a pass on one sequence but his teammate's hook pass was disrupted.

He was dominant on the boards, constantly working pucks against the grain, reversing possession to avoid defenders -- particularly useful retrieval harasser. From there, he had multiple redirection chances, born out of timing net front

activations; in two sequences he tipped the puck wide. Threw his weight around in these sequences as well. He can kind of just occupy any area of the ice, getting his stick free to attack rebounds. Basically lived inside the dotted-lines when he could. Solid defensive performance in his limited minutes. Gardner ran a really smart pick in the first, subtly limiting a middle lane attacker. Later in the game he guided an attacker all the way to the end-boards while on the back check. Scans all the time. Still looks like a second-rounder; sense and physical profile are too interesting.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Gardner has a couple of interesting players in this game, including a slot cut followed by a drop pass. Consistently getting open in the slot, even showing some timing and craftiness to his off-puck movements. Off-puck actions around the rest of the ice remain positive: he supports the play, alters his route/speed to become a passing option, and disrupts plays defensively. Stride is much better than earlier in this year: knees over toes, hips engaged, chest up. Is it consistent? No, but he's a 6'4" 2004-born player; it should come with time. Really, his biggest skating issue remains the edges. He uses them, but he's too upright to engage the front of his blades consistently. To continue being an effective cyler and inside-lane-attacker, the edges need to take a significant step forward. To be fair, he's an intelligent player on the boards. He puts defenders on his back, passes through them into space, and generally chooses the right play at the right time (i.e., advances inside when he doesn't feel the defender, prods regularly, and extends the cycle if he's drawn multiple defenders). Not dynamic, but he could become an off-puck attacker with playmaking, board play, and small-area manipulation. He'd be a fine second-rounder, even with all the uncertainty in his projection.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Omaha Lancers - USHL

This is best Gardner's skating has looked. Knees pushed past the toes, hips engaged, chest up, and near-full extensions. Maintained that posture with the puck, especially early in shifts. The posture falls apart after the early stages of his shift. And he doesn't maintain the depth through crossovers and cutbacks. Doesn't get much push off on the inside leg of the crossover, but he's a high-volume crossover use. Some difficulty on his outside edges, but that doesn't stop him from trying. Nearly fell trying a punch turn because he was too upright, but recovered by turning into a one-foot stop. Then immediately set-up a shot with a spin pass. A crafty

off-puck sequence saw him rush the net, anticipate space in the higher slot, retreat, and get a chance. He's always looking to get inside positioning on defenders, then connect with a teammate. Delay game only appeared once in this outing. A couple of times, he tried to outrace pressure and got trapped to the boards as a result. Perhaps that was just a product of playing on the wing. Either way, it wasn't a great look. The projection's a towering, patient playmaker with manipulation potential. If he's not doing the patient part, he's probably just a generic 4C. I've seen better, but there's not much go on, even after watching all these USHL games.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

More of a shooting game from Gardner; that was nice to see. Followed up a loose puck for a scoring chance, then dashed to the net and turned his body for a deflection. The hands, the stride, and playmaking all look like projectable elements. The stride, in particular, has improved so much. Knees over toes, full extensions, chest up. The average skating posture is still too upright. His cutbacks are usually just heel-to-heel turns or very wide punch turns, but he tries to make skilled skating plays. A consistent presence on the defensive end, especially on the backcheck. When he's not getting above the puck, he's applying relentless pressure. Threw a monstrous hit late in the game, and his puck protection potential looks quite high: he gets low, establishes positioning, and constantly seeks to put defenders on his back. He does it with heel-to-heels, cutbacks, and changes of pace. He hardly plays, but I'm all but convinced at this point. He's a top-50 guy from North America this year, no doubt.

**Daniel Gee:** February 26th, 2022

Warroad Warriors vs East Grand Forks - USHS-MN

First impressions of Gardner -- he's big, looks dominant at 6-foot-4, and exploits every advantage he can against smaller high school players. Second, his sense is probably his strongest attribute. This package creates a pretty interesting player, one who is very inside-focused, and has some real translatability as a centre.

Gardner possesses a tonne of positive habits transitionally. Hip-pocket protection and the incorporation of his frame to protect pucks, constant inside rush-patterns, triangle manipulation, and a heightened on-puck pace (second gear) permeate throughout his numerous carries in this viewing. On one shift he increased his pace, intercepted a neutral zone pass, slipped a check, and looped around the net after the inside lane was covered, starting a cycle -- he almost never threw pucks away inefficiently. In the second, he read poor body

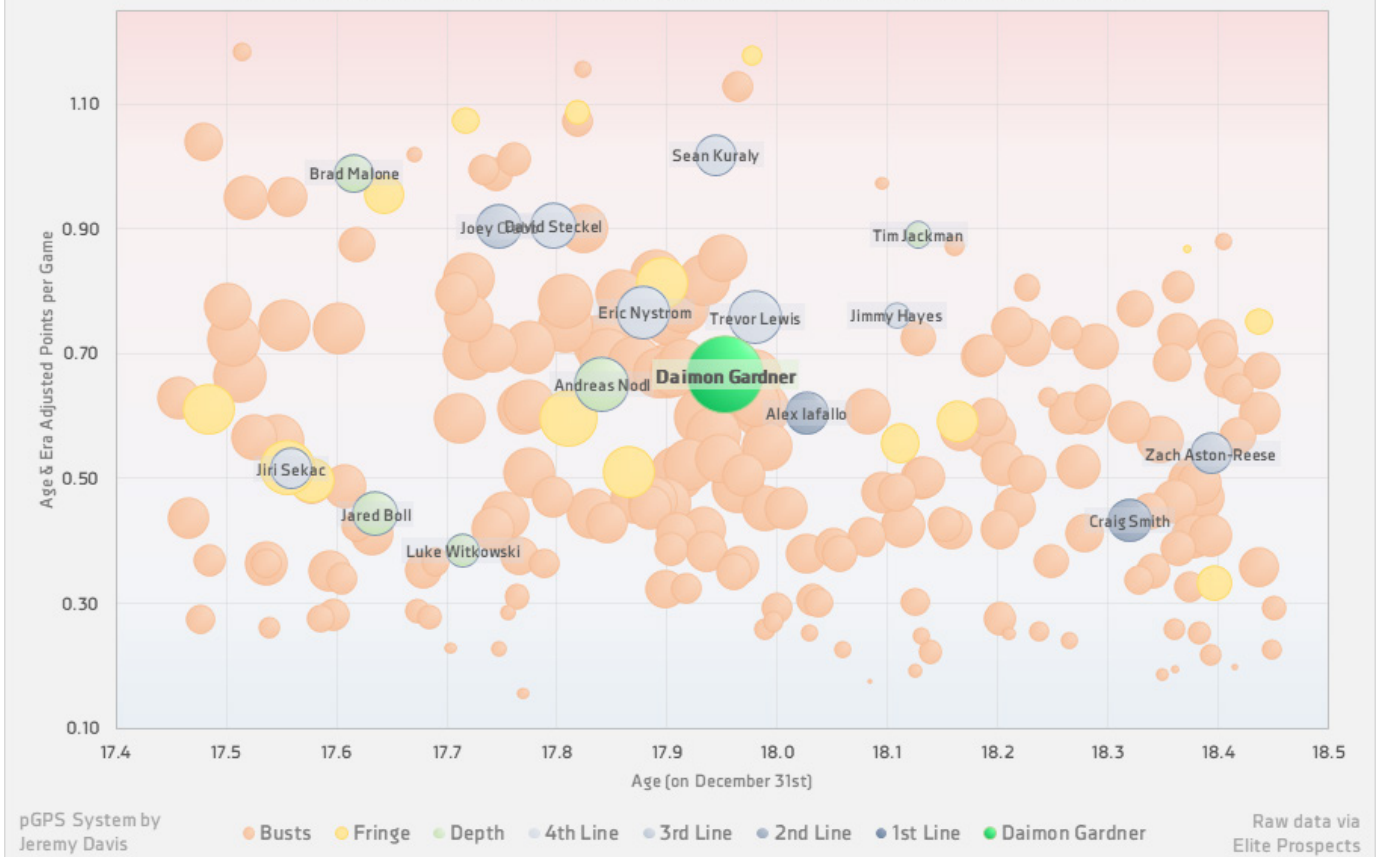


## Daimon Gardner 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 218 || Base XLS: 5% || Impact XLS: 1% || XPR: 22.3 || Drafted Pct: 25%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



positioning on two recovering defenders, upped his pace and split both of them, popping into a wide base (on his heels), executing a backhand tuck that was somehow saved. Showed some ability to funnel pucks into the middle using saucer passes and deliberate shots-off-pads. A straight up menace in this game really.

Showed to be a sneaky volume shooter in sustained pressure. Waits (delay game) for screens and places shots in awkward spots -- don't think it's inefficient puck management in this case but he gets chances in both high and lower danger areas. Physical frame remains a huge factor in the cycle and on puck retrievals. On one shift he clamped down on an opponent's stick on a retrieval, pulled the puck out from the near boards and walked it into the slot -- missed the net badly on a cross-body attempt. By nature, he holds the puck away with his reach and drops his shoulder. Constantly rotated in support off-puck. On one shift he popped into the mohawk to cut laterally into open space and took a heavy wrist shot. [slow release due to a long load up but a lot of power generation through his weight-transfer] In the third, Gardner read and intercepted a ring-out. Instantly chucked a hard cross-ice pass to a teammate in the crease (no look) and recorded an assist.

A pretty committed defender who hyper focuses on man-

on-man coverage. Regularly takes out secondary threats and eliminates tip possibilities with stick tie ups. A bit too disengaged as a backchecker. I really like his scanning habits -- constantly shoulder peaking. Had a wonderful sequence where he took out an activating defender.

Skates well for his size. Sometimes struggles to achieve a 90-degree knee bend and his pace off-puck is less than desirable. Somewhat falls into his crossovers -- his real separation stride. Cut above many of the others in this HS class -- probably a B prospect for our board.

**Daniel Gee:** December 18th, 2021

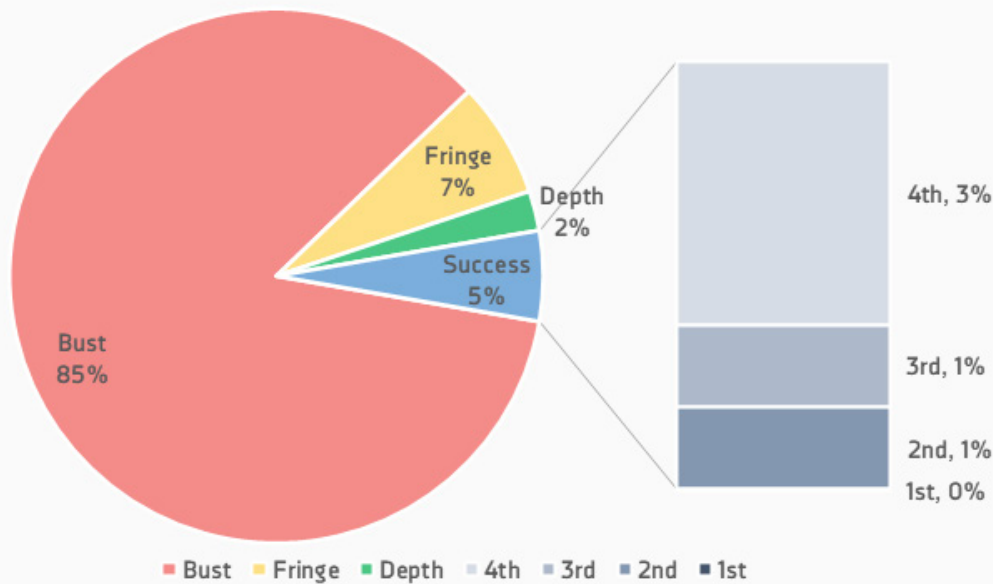
Warroad High vs Rogers High - USHS-MN

Gardner was a monster in this viewing. Scoring chances every other shift, dominant physically, dominant tool-wise... clearly a step above others in terms of his sense-grade.

Pushed almost every tool imaginable in transition. Weight-shift and shoulder drops on-puck, in-tight handling plays past F1's, full passing compliment. On one first period shift, Gardner deked out a defender on a 1-on-2, broke the defender's ankles, and took a hard in-stride shot off the wing. On a subsequent play, Gardner made a backpass in the opposite direction he was traveling in the neutral zone. He then sliced through the slot, shifting to the near boards to lay out a puck

## Daimon Gardner 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



retrieving defender. Gardner is almost too big to handle at this level. On a 2-on-1 he upped his pace to get behind the defense, scoring on a 2-on-1. In the third, he even sent a 50 foot saucer on the backhand to send a linemate in on a breakaway, recording a primary assist. So inside focused, so many options, and a manipulation/protection blend.

In sustained pressure he had two high-danger chances from winning battles on the end boards, which he instantly translated into wrap-arounds. He connected on a near-board to backdoor pass, layering the pass through a bunch of Rogers high defenders. Really strong at rolling off of the circles, and firing in the slot -- shot looked better than I have seen, unlocked arm, wicked wrist roll. Found soft areas all night -- on one shift he was stick-lifted on a tap-in.

Looks like a B prospect for our board. Super exciting base here. Has separation gear via his crossover work.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Fargo Force vs. Omaha Lancers - USHL

A very quiet game from Gardner, although he was relegated to 4C duty. Mostly a forechecking and defence game as a result. He scans, gets open, and builds speed below the puck. Where most players stretch the ice or try to get behind the defence, he shrinks the ice to become an easy-to-hit passing option. Threw away his only favourable touch in transition. Almost achievably a projectable stride a couple of times in this game, pushing his knees past his toes. Not quite far enough, and his average depth is still straight-legged.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 16th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Omaha Lancers - USHL

Gardner hardly plays relative to his impact. In one shift, he created three shots. First, he attacked the outside lane, drew defenders towards him, and connected with a pass through them and up the middle. Then, he won a battle, passed for a point shot, then picked up the puck, drove the middle, and made a pass off his backhand. Constantly establishes body positioning players; always looks to low and inside on and off-puck. Uses c-steps to put the defender on his back, then removes or shifts his bottom hand up his stick to use his full reach. Tends to drop his chest, rather using ankle and hip flexion to establish positioning, and he often enters a glide to establish positioning when a crossover to the inside would've worked better. Delay game, both in terms of cutback use and physically slowing down to encourage defenders. He takes a touch too long to complete some of the passes he tries, but his delay game looks legit. While his ankle flexion lacks, he's a skilled skater. Uses cutbacks, double cuts, and c-step to shield the puck, win battles, and find a bit of separation. Always supporting the play, whether that's by getting open in the slot or building speed under the puck. Doesn't rely on advantages he won't carry to the next level. Looks like an easy second-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Omaha Lancers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Gardner really only played one period, and what a period it was. Gardner set up two scoring chances, both by driving play to the inside. Puck patience, waiting for pressure to

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**"Always inside-focused, Gardner's sense prevails across his shifts. He drives middle lanes, exploits his frame advantages to protect against defenders, and has handling, shooting, and passing skills that all blend into a relatively sophisticated offensive package."**

arrive before the making the next play. Linked defence to offence with supporting reads and instant recognition of the subsequent play. Drew defenders to the outside, then cut to the middle. In one sequence, his centre-lane attack opened a teammate up along the boards. Skating is limited mechanically (lacks depth) and skills-wise (lifts his inside foot when turning, can't fully punch turn). Inconsistent depth gives him some troubles while handling the puck, but he's clearly skilled within his mechanical limitations. This will improve with time. Tons of NHL skills here: delay game, manipulation potential, playmaking, and off-puck instincts. Looked like a potential late-second.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 1st, 2021

Omaha Lancers vs. Des Moines Buccaneers - USHL

Gardner was the best player in this game by large margin. He's a hockey genius by USHL standards. He just doesn't just plant his feet and wait for the puck; he takes in active hand

in getting it back through his routes. He shrinks distance to the puck carrier to become an easy-to-hit option, builds speed laterally and under the puck to receive the pass in motion, and makes advanced supporting reads in the defensive end. Where most players sprint, he fakes, then delays and finds the middle-lane driver. Several times this game, he took a puck off the boards, gained the middle, and passed for a chance. Backhand and slip passes both featured in his game. Hands look like potentially like a 5.5 or 6 projection, as he moves his top hand across his body inside moves, uses his reach to keep opponents away, then leans into them with a shoulder to establish positioning. Even the skating has moments, but he lacks ankle flexion. Gets low by dropping his chest then exploding upwards. But that he's always in motion, thinks a step ahead of the play, uses crossovers, and has skating skills suggest the mechanics will catch up. Missed the best play a couple of times. He looks like a top-50 pick in this game.

op



55  
Rank  
C  
Grade

5.5 Skating  
5 Shooting  
5 Passing  
5.5 Puckhandling  
5 Hockey Sense  
6 Physical

5th  
Best Straight Line Skater  
4th  
Best Motor

# PAUL LUDWINSKI

C | KINGSTON FRONTENACS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. APR. 23, 2004  
WEIGHT 183 SHOOTS LEFT

17% 2022 XLS  
11% 3Y REGR. bXLS  
4% 3Y REGR. iXLS  
1.15 SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	67	16	27	43

## Scouting Report

The list of better straight-line skaters than Paul Ludwinski in this year's draft is a short one. Only four players by our reckoning, as accounted for with his fifth-place finish in this year's scout's poll in that category.

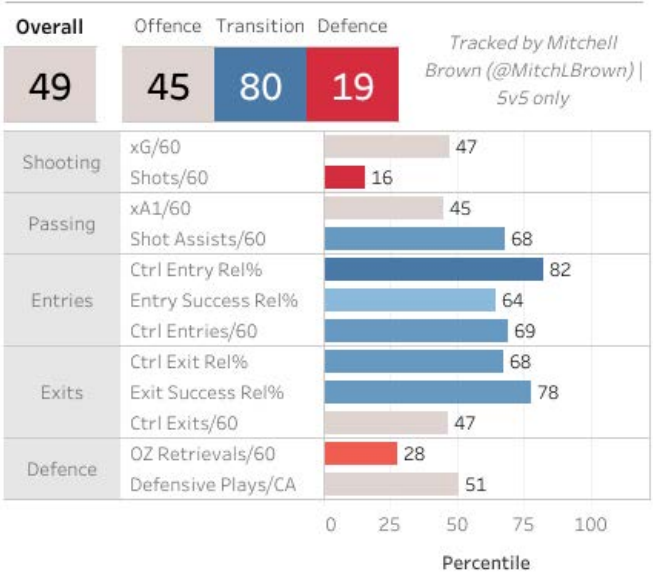
"What stands out immediately is Ludwinski's skating," Elite Prospects OHL scout Lauren Kelly wrote in an October game report. "He gets up and down the ice so easily, with great acceleration and edges (he favours the mohawk stance sometimes). Ludwinski used his skating to get in on the forecheck, beating out defenders to the puck. He also controls the puck well at his top speed when he's moving north-south (his lateral puck control can get a bit chaotic and over-the-top at times)."

Best of all for Ludwinski, there's actually a pretty straightforward path to improvement, too; it's already an NHL-calibre tool, but it could get even better with further refinement. A lack of core engagement at present limits his depth, but he more than makes up for that with a high stride rate and a crossover-heavy approach. It's not a stretch to suggest he could be one of the NHL's fastest skaters in time if he builds on that foundation.

Not just a set of rocket skates, Ludwinski is an able handler, too. His mechanical form is, again, nothing to write home about, but the 5-foot-11 pivot cradles the puck with precision, speed, and creativity around defenders.

What sets Ludwinski apart from his peers, though, is how his defining characteristics -- his breakneck pace and handling skill -- sometimes work against him. It often

Games Tracked: 13 | Minutes Tracked: 184.0



seemed as if the Pickering-born centre was playing at a pace that most of his OHL linemates couldn't match, regularly rushing passes before plays could develop or mistiming his off-puck routes by arriving into space too early.

This limited his overall effectiveness and contributed to a pretty unremarkable 43 points in 67 OHL contests last season. It also limits the extent to which we can confidently project him to a top-six or even a top-nine role at the NHL level. One-speed players often struggle to translate their offence to the next level, which is the unfortunate reality of Ludwinski's game.

If nothing else, there's an NHL future in the cards for Ludwinski as a bottom-of-the-lineup checking centre. At

least, there's a high probability that he could get there. His defensive reads and work rate are already reasonably advanced for an 18-year-old, and they're only going to get better with time. His skating stride alone will make him an excellent penalty killer, too.

There's no telling where Ludwinski will go in the draft, but our team feels that his fairly safe projection to the bottom of an NHL lineup makes him a worthy mid-round pick. It wouldn't surprise us to see an NHL team bet on his tools early and try to figure out the rest later, though.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Michael Sgarbossa YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 96%	2 Ryan Rupert YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 96%	3 Brett Parnham YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 96%	4 Matt Rupert YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 95%	5 Craig Kennedy YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 95%
6 Philip McRae YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 95%	7 Nick Moutrey YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 95%	8 Jason Dickinson YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 95%	9 Adam Henrique YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 95%	10 Daniel Erlich YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 95%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 10th, 2022

Peterborough Petes vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

I'll echo Mitch Brown, Ludwinski plays too fast for his own good, above the OHL pace, and arguably up to an NHL one already. It helps him create sometimes, but mostly, he is too ahead of the play or rushes his decisions. He can't complement what Shane Wright tries to create on the ice, the rush patterns especially. I like his give-and-go attempts and his net-drives. The tools look above-average. You can see him clearly becoming an effective NHL checker who will get first touch on loose pucks, pressure the opposition, and create with speed off the rush. Still a C prospect for me. I'm not sure about the overall sense.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

I don't know if I've ever seen a clearer example of a player playing too fast. He cutback before even touching the puck (reaching), threw passes two or three strides ahead of his teammates, and sprinted past loose pucks and open lanes. He settled down throughout the game, eventually connecting with a cross-slot pass after delaying. As soon as he was pressured, he reverted back to outrace at all costs. Some dekes and flashy stuff, but nothing that will work in the NHL (straight line set ups, trying to beat defenders with a glide). Scored a tap-in. Some notable off-puck instincts in this game, finding space behind defenders and adjusting his positioning to ensure that he'll have time to shoot before defenders close in. His energy is admirable. Skating is all stride and crossover rate over mechanical soundness. No flashes of the puck protection I saw earlier in the year. He'll definitely score a lot in the OHL. Beyond that? I'm not sure anymore.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Not much from Ludwinski in this game. He set a chance early by pressing the inside with crossovers, then flaring wide and passing back to the middle. His pace is valuable in all three zones. He applies pressure on the puck carrier, disrupts point shots, and eliminates threats. Makes the odd boards-to-inside pass on the breakout. But there's little else here in terms of ideas and skills. The tools are notable (skating, handling in particular), which probably keeps him inside the top-64.

**David St-Louis:** March 31th, 2022

Peterborough Petes vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Ludwinski picked up two assists by firing on net and getting his shots deflected. He has passing ability, but that ability only shows up in evident situations, like the time he got the puck on one side of the net and had a teammate on the other side; he faked the shot and moved the puck laterally. Otherwise the main attractive elements of his games are his motor and energy and his speed. The skating mechanics aren't perfect, but the stride rate is high. His one-on-one abilities are limited by his vision and the way he sets them up (only looks at the D and heads straight at him). For me, he's more of a C prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 30th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

Ludwinski's small role limits his game. He's an inefficient player; few minutes means that he has less to work with compared to the other (numerous) inefficient players. Of course, does that doesn't improve his projection. He's likely playing the same role (3C) if he makes the NHL. The inefficiency is visible in how he uses his handling skill and pace.

One sequence, he sets up the move inside crossovers, waits for the pivot, and then cuts inside (translatable). The next, he changes straight at defenders and tries to break them down with his hands alone (untranslatable, and also doesn't work at this level).

As a playmaker, it's clear he spots teammates on the other side of defenders and even has a bit of deception. But he doesn't change the positioning of the puck before passing, leading to turnovers. Too much of his game is focused on beating defenders into space and lanes with speed alone. It leads to mediocre results in the OHL. It won't work going forward. He's probably more of a third-rounder.

**David St-Louis:** March 27th, 2022

Peterborough Petes vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

I continue to only see pace and a lack of self-preservation. He reminds me a bit of Will Bitten in the way he constantly tries to outspeed. Bitten ended up developing his playmaking in subsequent years and it could happen to Ludwinski. He has some nice passing ideas, seems to spot teammates behind him or anticipate them. He scored while on a breakaway, flying to the ice. The skills, especially the skating, look clearly above-average. The hockey sense? More of a 5 for me.

**David St-Louis:** March 25th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Pace, pace, pace. Apart from that and his play on the penalty kill, Ludwinski didn't flash anything really interesting. His skills look potentially above-average, especially the skating. He was zooming all over the ice without a clear plan. He handles in front and heads straight at Ds, not really understanding how to isolate them to create numerical advantages off the rush. At five-on-five, he looked disengaged defensively at times. The very low scoring is worrying, but I see some explanations.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Very few of Ludwinski's plays resulted in shots, but he had a solid outing. The tools continue to be impressive. This was a better performance in terms of rush patterns and handling decisions than normal. He set up dekes inside crossovers or just underhandled when attacking space. The puck control as top speed continues to impress. His best flash was a between the legs deke, set up with a crossover, then passing back to a teammate on the inside. But instead of passing into space, he passed to where his teammate was – which allowed the defenceman he just beat to intercept the pass. It's those offensive details that limit his effectiveness – not

leading his teammates in space, forcing individual skill plays, and accelerating when he should slow down. His projection is entirely based on projections. Role is a bit limited, too.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Ludwinski has so many tools and ideas, they're just compartmentalized. He outraces defenders in one shift, and then cuts back and finds the trailer on the net. He easily blends his handling movements inside cuts backs and turns, although his rushes tends to see the puck in front his body. The down-low playmaking, puck protection potential, and backhand passing skill all shines, but at different times. He fades into the background because he chooses a good play in isolation at the wrong time. And he definitely defaults to outrace when faced with a numerically equal or outnumbered situation. The potential is high because of his tools, but if he doesn't turn the skills into actual impact on the game, it won't mean much.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 12th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Ludwinski was quiet in the first two periods but came alive in the third. He was playing a bit more physically in the first two frames, laying a good hit to separate a player from the puck, and then was on the receiving end of a hard hit that sparked a fight. He was driving the net on zone entries when he didn't have the puck and drew an interference penalty with his speed as he tried to turn a play into an odd-man rush. He had a couple of good assists in the third, including a great give-and-go with Shane Wright on the seventh goal and starting the tic-tac-toe play on the eighth. I would've liked to see him establish himself a little earlier on in this game, but better late than never.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 3rd, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

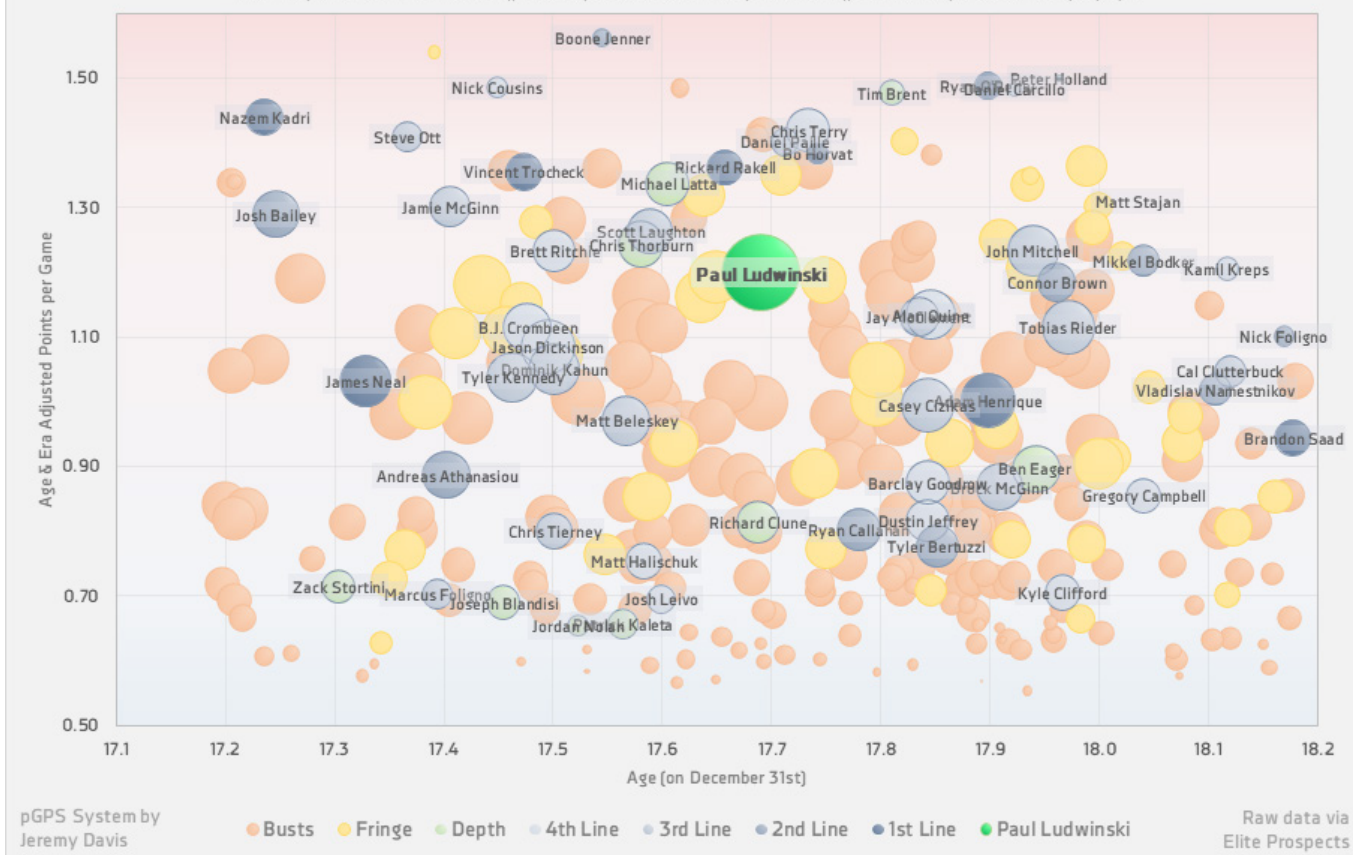
This was a vintage Ludwinski game. Hard on the forecheck, winning 1-on-1 battles, picking off passes and forcing turnovers, rushing the puck up the ice. He did take a delay of game penalty in the first period when he chucked the puck over the glass with no one pressuring him. But that was just about the only poor play from him in this one. He started the rush on Kingston's third goal, drew players towards him and then funnelled the pass back to the point for a shot. He really seemed to establish himself more in the offensive zone, whether it was crashing the net, getting down low to help win puck battles, or finding teammates with quick passes. If he can keep up this level of performance in each

## Paul Ludwinski 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 292 || Base XLS: 17% || Impact XLS: 6% || XPR: 35 || Drafted Pct: 50%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



game for the rest of the season, he's going to climb his way back into the first round.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 28th, 2022

Oshawa Generals vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Ludwinski's good, but he probably should be a more consistent offensive contributor by now. The good news is that he's not too far off, as this game showed. Turned a strong backcheck into a near 2-on-1 chance: built speed under the puck, did some weird pre-touch fake out, took the middle, blew past the defender with three deep, driving crossovers, and a look off pass that the defender deflected. Sets up teammates with the early pass after gaining the zone and attracting attention. Consistently open around the slot, but made a poor shooting decision - he should've cut inside instead of shooting off the pass. With that said, he consistently attacks the middle in transition, and has the handling skill, speed, and vision to make it work at the next level. Adding a delay game should be a long-term focus, but for now, he'd benefit from hanging onto the puck an extra half-second. Should be a big scorer next season.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

If Ludwinski learns to play a bit slower, he'll become a force. Right now, he plays so fast that he's often pushing his tools their limits. He mishandles the puck at full speed, fails to set up his dekes properly, and misses passing opportunities, but his pace allows him to overcome and still create some chances - well, at least in this game. But it also makes him an inefficient creator, and when the touches don't come, he's unable to create. Perhaps the boards are the most obvious example: he's a mechanically sound puck protector and handling who understands that to escape pressure, get it on the back. But, by the time he's cutback twice, the defender's only reacted to the first one, putting himself back where he started with a well-gapped defender on him. With Ludwinski's offence comes physicality, defensive awareness, and a strong forechecking game. Should be a big scorer next season. He'll be a fine second round pick.

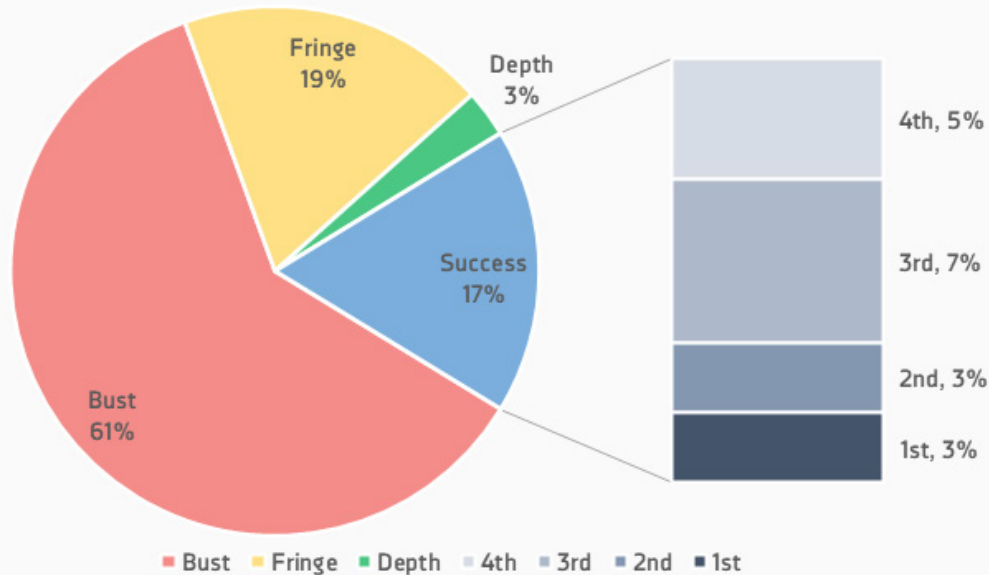
**Lauren Kelly:** January 14th, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

This was Kingston's first game back in about a week and it showed, because Ludwinski was hot and cold in this one. A lot of his passes misfired and his general offensive timing

## Paul Ludwinski 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



seemed to be off. It didn't stop him from rushing the puck up the ice and dangling between his legs on the way to the net before sending a backhand back through the slot. But he wasn't that noticeable for the majority of the game aside from a couple of individual moments. Not the most effective on the forecheck, along the boards, or pressuring puck carriers that are typical hallmarks of his game. He worked well to find space and get himself open in the offensive zone, but the puck never seemed to find him. Nothing special about this viewing.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 5th, 2021

Ottawa 67's vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Only a few moments for Ludwinski in this game. He resets in the NZ to build speed underneath the puck. Consistent off-puck offence in this game; timing his movements into space around him. In one sequence, he turned supporting positioning into a dash to the middle for a scoring chance. With the puck, his game lacks details. He attacks defenders in straight lines and didn't sue his teammates consistently. Moments are strong board play and puck remain: he times his cutbacks well but seems unsure of what to do next sometimes. Heavily involved in pursuit this game, turning forechecking pressure into backchecking steals. Looked like a mid-second or later in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 2nd, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

Ludwinski scored the winning goal with a powerful outside leg wrister, after preparing his hands, body, and feet

to shoot immediately off the pass. Overall, he's a mechanically-sound player. He pushes his knees over toes, finishes most strides, owns a properly leveraged outside leg wrister, and lets his top hand move across his body while handling the puck. Without the puck, he's a relative advanced thinker, showing anticipation, foresight, and a high motor. He pops into space at the right times, flares wide in transition to get open, delays and adjusts his course when necessary, etc. With the puck, he's painfully simple. He usually looks for a low-risk, low-reward plays up the boards or easily accessible teammates. Defers a lot in transition. Didn't see any top-six skills with the puck: he was just an OZP extender at this stage. That has some value, but he needs to start trying to bring pucks to the middle, use give-and-goes, and try to pass through defenders. Looked more like a mid-to-late second in this game.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 28th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Ludwinski picked up two assists in this game - he didn't really possess the puck on the first goal but it was enough for a point, but then he had a great pass down low on the game-winner after winning a puck battle along the boards. He had a good rush up the ice and side-stepped a check in the neutral zone to get the puck in deep and was strong in the slot and hard to push out of position. His defensive zone positioning was solid and he made good reads - there was one instance where his pass back to the point was picked off, but he made a tremendous effort on the backcheck to help prevent anything more than a weak shot on goal. (I



wrote this in Wright's report too for this one) Ludwinski and Wright were back on the same line at times in this game as the Frontenacs mixed up their forward groupings to find some chemistry with players off at another tournament, and they didn't seem all that effective together. Ludwinski looked more dangerous when he was on the ice without his captain. Not sure if that's actually telling of anything, but I did have a similar impression when the two were on the same line to start the season. Ludwinski looks way more comfortable playing down the middle than on the wing. Definitely a draft pick, looking more and more like a first rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

One of the better displays of puck protection and board play I've seen from a draft eligible this year. Ludwinski deceived before even getting the puck by turning his toes in one direction, throwing a shoulder shake, and going in a different direction. He bends at the hip to compensate for his lack of ankle flexion, which means that solid defenders will predict the cutback and knock him off-balance with ease, but he has a few tricks. He angles towards the middle, but keeps sufficient distance between himself and the defender to minimize the odds of getting touch and his handling skill acts as problem-solving tool. He moves the puck at the right times instead of needlessly extending the cycle, and the way that he receives passes - in motion, behind him, on the backhand, however - and easily knocks them to his forehand makes these sequences projectable. Now, actually making the best play from these sequences remains a work in progress. He'll shoulder-check too late (want to see him glance to the inside towards the end of the cutback), causing him to miss options. Some of his passes are poorly timed, and since he knows he's easily overpowered, he doesn't use space that would further the condition of the puck. Terrific manipulation sequence in the third period where he baited the defender to reach out and dangled through him for the scoring chance. With a bit more confidence, refinement, and improved timing, he could be a star in the OHL. Looked like a top-45 player in the draft class, for sure.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 13th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

This was an up-and-down viewing for Ludwinski, but he was instrumental in getting the Frontenacs back into the game. He was sort of invisible for the first bit, but had a few solid shifts, including tying up an open man on a Mississauga rush to prevent a scoring chance, and pressuring puck carriers in the neutral and offensive zones. He came back to settle

the puck behind his own net before starting the break out, but he also got spun around in the offensive zone slot as he drove through with the puck and lost control of it. He showed solid hustle on backchecks. Ludwinski scored Kingston's first goal after they were already down by two, going straight to an open area in the offensive zone and burying the loose puck. His confidence seemed to rise after that - he stripped Zak Lavoie at his own blueline before skating in on a partial breakaway and powered his way around the defenseman to the net. He also had a sweet feed to Wright for a chance to win it in overtime (it was good to see him actually play in the extra frame this time). One area of concern was faceoffs (he was 5-for-15 on draws).

**Lauren Kelly:** November 7th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

Ludwinski may have only had one assist in this game but he was far and away the best and most consistent Frontenac on the ice. He was very active and involved with play in his own end, whether it was making a tremendous effort to get back to support his defensemen when play went the other way, going back to retrieve the puck (and shoulder checking the entire way), scanning for options to break the play out, or constantly pressuring and stickchecking opponents all game long. He read the play well in his own end, tying up an open man in the slot before a pass came through. His defensive positioning and reads were a real standout. At first I was thinking that Ludwinski was playing a bit too passive in the offensive zone, but he got a lot better in that end as the game progressed. He protected and controlled the puck well under pressure, including a strong move through the middle of the ice to split the defense and get a shot off, and his ability to hit teammates with passes so consistently from anywhere on the ice was impressive to watch in person. Ludwinski played on both special teams in this game but was a surprising omission from overtime - I thought we might see him on the OT power play, but he didn't play there either. Moving Ludwinski to his own line away from Wright really gave him the opportunity and responsibility to take charge on his line and dictate and impact play - he was no longer the passive player I watched in the first couple of games this season. His lone assist came off a shot that was tipped in the slot, but it was his play away from the puck (being a menace on the forecheck, relentless in board battles) that continued to impress.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 3rd, 2021

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

I have no strong thoughts on Ludwinski from this game in

either direction. The off-puck movement was there, directly leading to the only scoring chance he created at 5-on-5. He wants the puck, demanding through his positioning and also by screaming for it. I respect it. Understands that occupying space between defenders creates time and confusion. In transition, he's simple. Sometimes, too simple. When looking to create, he misdirects forecheckers and then looks to change the point of attack with a cross-ice pass. I think there's a chance for him to become more dynamic, especially if he starts using weight shifts to sell the move. Stride lacks some hip engagement, but it's close enough to an NHL-calibre projection. Not enough puck touches or plays to really get a good feel for his status as prospect, for no fault of his own.

**J.D. Burke:** October 15th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

A pretty unremarkable performance on the whole. Some of Ludwinski's tools strike me as NHL calibre, his skating and hands foremost among them. His habits as a puck-carrier seemed NHL projectable. He has a knack for driving between defencemen and forcing them to make a decision, cutting across the defensive front on entries, and setting up his moves well in advance of executing them. Struggled to connect on most of his passing plays. Work rate stood out as a distinct positive. Left this performance thinking that Ludwinski projects as a fourth-line wing at the NHL level. Enough skill and range to make it, but not enough touch or creativity to do so in an especially productive capacity.

**EP Rinkside Staff:** October 10th, 2021

Ottawa 67s vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Ludwinski is going to be a coach's dream at the next level. He doesn't stand out all the time, but when he does, it is because of the details. He makes simple plays in transition, uses his speed to attack and follows up on plays consistently. He was tenacious on the forecheck and caused the turnover that led to the first goal. On the PP, he's their net front presence and adjusts himself to be in the eyes of the goalie. On the PK, he was all over the place in his own end, but made a fantastic play coming back in transition to deny

a scoring chance. On a few occasions he was caught puck watching in his own end and it led to quality chances against. The little details of forechecking, winning puck battles and closing down players in transition are all transferable to the next level.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 10th, 2021

Ottawa 67s vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

This game was more of the same from Ludwinski, but there were less instances where he stood out and at times was more of a perimeter player. That could be from fatigue due to playing three games in three nights, because he was also caught puck watching on a couple of plays that led to quality scoring chances. Still, Ludwinski would be the first in on the forecheck, put pressure on the goalie handling the puck, and got in on a couple of breakaway attempts. Saw a much more physical side to his game in this one.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 8th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Ottawa 67s - OHL

What stands out immediately is Ludwinski's skating. He gets up and down the ice so easily, with great acceleration and edges (he favours the mohawk stance sometimes). Ludwinski used his skating to get in on the forecheck, beating out defenders to the puck. He also controls the puck well at his top speed when he's moving north-south (his lateral puck control can get a bit chaotic and over-the-top at times). He used his strong acceleration to beat out Jack Matier and get in on the breakaway, and used a quick release to beat the goalie. I'd definitely like to see him shoot the puck more. Ludwinski has great hands in tight and protects the puck well when pressured, but a lot of his passes didn't hit their mark in this game. Where Wright plays down low and further back in the neutral zone, Ludwinski is thinking offense first, roams high in the neutral zone and deep in the offensive zone. He's fast enough to get up and down the ice efficiently so I'd like to see him come back a little deeper to help his defensemen out and not just rely on Wright to do it, because when they weren't on the ice together, Ludwinski was coming back deeper in the defensive zone to help.



56  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

4.5  
Passing

C  
Grade

4.5  
Puckhandling

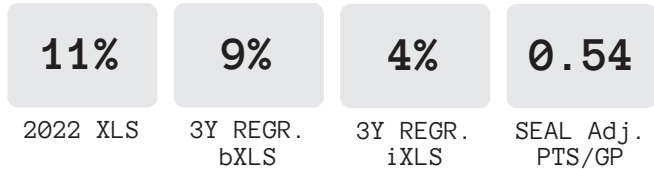
4.5  
Hockey Sense

7.5  
Physical

# NOAH WARREN

D | GATINEAU OLYMPIQUES

HEIGHT 6'5" D.O.B. JUL. 15, 2004  
WEIGHT 225 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	62	5	19	24

## Scouting Report

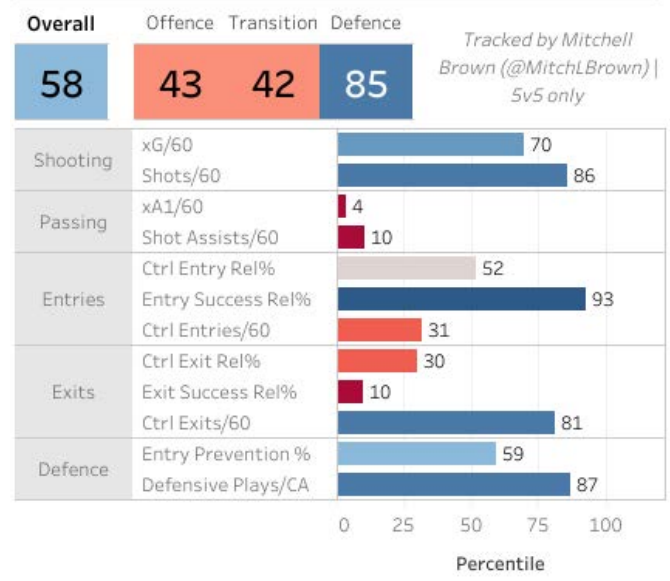
There are three components of Noah Warren's game that will doubtless make him enticing to NHL teams in this July's draft: his size, skating, and age.

Warren may tower over opponents with his 6-foot-5 frame, but he moves like many of his smaller, shifter peers. He has no problem flexing his limbs to get into an explosive posture. His above-average mobility and length give him one of the biggest defensive ranges in the entire draft; attackers simply can't speed away from him.

The next step in Warren's defensive development is learning to resist the deception of the QMJHL's top forwards. His above-average tools should allow the defenceman to take in more information before he reacts to a defensive situation and to wait out the fakes before reacting. He has the jump and the recovery ability to quickly close out on attackers, so he may as well use those skills, right?

"I underestimated Warren's shot, both his wrister and slap-shot," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in a March report. "He had a goal taken away from him. The puck shot so fast and so hard off his stick and off the post that many, including him and the refs, thought that it went in. It didn't. He's heavy on his release. Every slap shot he fired from the point looked like a dangerous scoring chance, as the goalie struggled to absorb them. This is another projectable element of his game."

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 118.1



Warren's powerful shot and occasional slip passes on breakouts suggest that there might be another layer of skill in his offensive game. A layer hidden by a lack of finer handling ability and confidence at this stage of his career, two elements that could develop as he matures in the QMJHL. An improved success rate on breakouts would go a long way to improving his offensive fortunes, and in turn, his likelihood of developing into a full-time NHLer.

If he gets there, Warren would still likely be better suited to a conservative, shutdown role on a team's bottom-pair.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Philippe Garnier YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 98%	2 Alex Grant YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 95%	3 Joel Chouinard YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 94%	4 Brent MacLellan YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 94%	5 Artyom Sergeev YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 94%
6 Jordon Southorn YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 94%	7 Maxime Gravel YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 94%	8 Drew Paris YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 93%	9 Luc Bourdon YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 93%	10 Konrad Abeltshauser YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 93%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 15th, 2022

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Warren's best when defending the rush and pinching, which is a solid combination. For all the work that he does to extend offensive zone time without the puck, he's awful with it. He made a couple of plays to the inside, showing his tools. But he's unaware of options. He'll wind up big shots when there's a wide open teammate with a runway to the net. Forget creativity, he's not aware. It's the same story on breakouts. Mistake-prone. He scans, but then just throws pucks into the closest lane he just looked at. Path to the NHL is clear: he's tall, physical, and owns a projectable stride. He clearly wants to be a difference-maker when he steps on the ice, and that counts for a lot when it comes to projecting defence. He's a pick, for sure.

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

There was a time this season where I thought Warren might develop more offence with time, but I'm back to seeing him as a future n.6 defenceman, a shutdown one, who makes simple passes and fires from the point. If his shutdown element becomes good enough, he could rise in the lineup and complement a more shifty, offensively-oriented defenceman. His kind of mobility at his size is pretty rare and worth a lot. The handling skills are a bit worrying at times; he lost the puck without pressure a couple of times this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Warren has some interesting ideas with the puck, like delaying before passing to the inside or turning a shot into a pass for a deflection. Nothing too advanced, but he could become at least average with the puck if the hands improve. Still, too many turnovers in his game. Scanning's infrequent and the slightest amount of pressure causes him punt on the play or reverse to no one. Can't make a play on his backhand. Kills rushes with a combination of mobility, tight gap, and physicality. Takes away the middle early, then pivots to close the distance laterally. He's not angling, but he's close.

The defence is probably the path to the NHL. Not only does he try, he shows some instincts in more complex defensive situations. He'd be a fine candidate for the end of our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Warren played a more controlled game than I've seen from him previously. He made short-range passes, moved the puck effectively, and joined the play a couple of times. Went for skate to the middle, dangling around one forechecker while fending off another in one sequence. Completed a couple of in-motion passes. Pinched at the right moments. Defence remains the most exciting part, although he has a lot of work to do there, too. Missed help defence opportunities and ends up chasing too often. Maybe an end-of-board candidate.

**David St-Louis:** March 19th, 2022

Rimouski Oceanics vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

I underestimated Warren's shot, both his wrist and slap-shot. He had a goal taken away from him. The puck shot so fast and so hard off his stick and off the post that many, including him and the refs, thought that it went in. It didn't. He's heavy on his release. Every slap-shot he fired from the point looked like a dangerous scoring chance, as the goalie struggled to absorb the release. This is another projectable element of his game. I didn't see any great defensive plays from him, but the forwards were doing such a good job of limiting Rimouski's off the rush offence that he didn't have as much of a chance to showcase that facet of his game.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Blainville-B. Armada - QMJHL

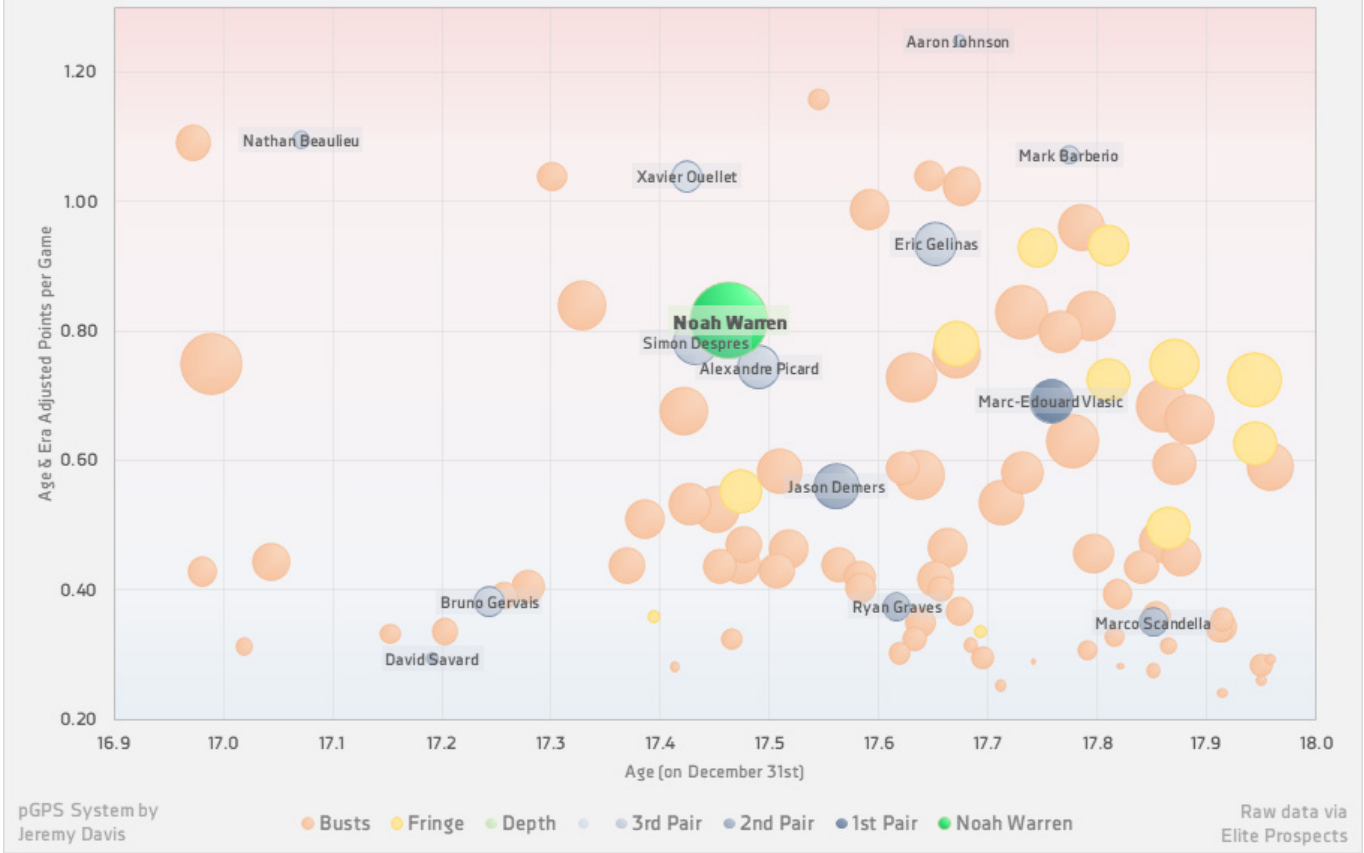
Warren read the hand-off along the boards, kept the puck in his hip pocket before smoothly transferring it to his backhand, and then threw the puck away. That's really the perfect description of this performance. Ideas appear inconsistently, but the execution is consistently bad. For the most part, he just throws pucks away as soon as pressure arrives. Some of his reads are awful – multiple easy-to-hit passing options but instead he dumps the puck out. The defensive potential

### Noah Warren 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 99 || Base XLS:10% || Impact XLS: 5% || XPR: 24.9 || Drafted Pct: 57%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



is the most exciting part. He hits people and tries to close space fast. It'll require a lot of work to become an NHLer. Not sure he's a candidate for our board.

**David St-Louis:** February 27th, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs Rouyn-Noranda Huskies - QMJHL

Warren makes simple plays. His handling and skating project as average (or maybe his mobility a bit higher than that considering his summer birthday and size an already good form; there is potential for him to add speed and quickness), but he is effective in his type of shutdown, aggressive game on the wall. The hockey sense projects as below-average. That, or he plays below his skill-level. I like how he underhandles on breakouts. Based on tools, or potential tools, he could be a B prospect, a third-rounder.

**David St-Louis:** February 6th, 2022

Dummondville V. vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Warren was Warren again in this game: a physical and mobile rush defender above all else. His skating is definitely an above-average grade for me at this point and the physicality a significantly above-average grade. He can kill plays, almost literally, between blue-lines. I also liked his activations down the zone to attempt backdoor plays. His vision and control

with the puck is relatively limited, however; some of the problems come from a lack of confidence in his skill, I believe -- that might fix itself, but he also doesn't really know how to create advantages for others either. Forced into a situation that he has to resolve with his skill? He can sometimes do it, like the play where he thread the puck around the stick of a forechecker that got into his range.

**David St-Louis:** December 11th, 2021

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Warren's strengths lie in his...strength, his physicality, and his decent mobility for his size. He hits, uses his stick to deny space, and closes forcefully forwards on the wall. He lacks a soft touch when he receives and he can't really beat opponents one-on-one, but he rushed the puck up-ice in this game and even faked a defender at the offensive blue-line to open up a lane. His size, physicality, skating, and some offensive flashes probably make him a pick.

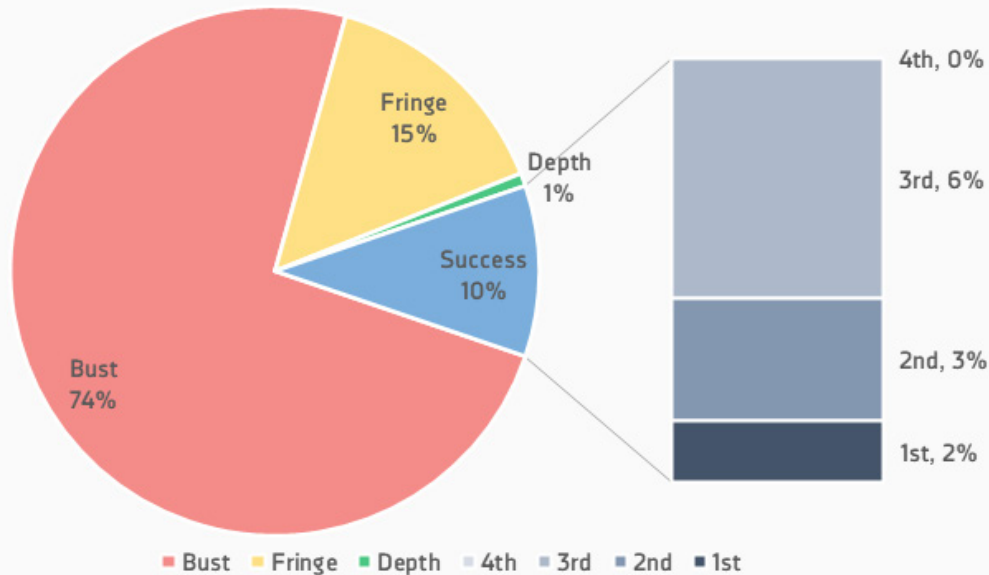
**David St-Louis:** November 24th 2021

Victoriaville Tigres vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Warren could become an average NHL skater or even above-average, but the handling skills worry me. The technique seems good but he loses the puck and his feel for puck

## Noah Warren 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



positioning is off. He misses plays and his handling breaks down, at times. With his summer birthday, he has more development runway than most, however, but the hockey sense, which seems to project as below-average, might continue to limit him.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 21st, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Good plays weren't common from Warren in this game, although the ones that he made were interesting. Connected with a couple of long-range breakout passes, including one from the boards to the middle. Killed a couple of plays early, including one with a well-timed hit just as it seemed the attacker might sneak past. Offence is simple plays: point shots and the like. Defence can be reactionary, but he tries. Closes space quickly. Too many reversals to no one and dump outs with better options. Fights the puck constantly, even if his technique suggests that probably should be more capable with the puck. As a result, feels like his ideas are being let down by the hands. Not sure what to make of him.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Drummondville V. - QMJHL

Warren was Lamoureux but turned up to 11. His defensive skating issues were even more obvious, despite having better form. He takes the bait on simple moves, stops moving his feet, and gets beat. Doesn't load his pivot leg. Takes his sticks out of lanes too early. With the puck, he doesn't scan. Throws

away possession a ton: reversals to no one, dump-outs with options, and missed passes that split two teammates. Can't handle forechecking pressure. Offensively, he did nothing. Didn't look like a pick in this game.

**David St-Louis:** March 20th, 2021

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Olympiques Gatineau - QMJHL

Warren is surprisingly mobile for his 6'5" size and surprisingly confident moving around the ice. There is awkwardness to his move; they feel calculated, suggesting a higher-end coordination and proprioception (again, for someone his size). He didn't make many plays, dumping most pucks that can connect with his stick, but I saw a couple of nice passes from him. There is upside there, just from straight tools.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 24th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Warren lacks consistency but I'm impressed by his fluidity. His mechanics are mostly sound and he shows some skating skills that already well-integrated into his game. With the puck, he understands how to draw in pressure or make controlled plays, but he doesn't always deliver the puck into the right area. Active from the point, trying to activate off-puck or step-in before firing. Shooting mechanics are mostly broom-like, but there was a quality wrister in this game that shows he has access to better mechanics already. Tools are interesting, but I didn't see any notable defensive plays.



57  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

4.5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

6.5  
Physical

# ELIAS PETERSSON

D | ÖREBRO HK

HEIGHT 6'2"

D.O.B. FEB. 16, 2004

WEIGHT 185

SHOOTS LEFT

27%

2022 XLS

8%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

4%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.57

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J18 Reg.	9	4	9	13
J20 Nat.	37	10	8	18
SHL	17	0	1	1
WJC-18	6	0	0	0

## Scouting Report

There's no mystery to Elias Pettersson's game. Not this Elias Pettersson, anyway. What you see when you glean his Elite Prospects player page is what you get; his low boxcar stats a reasonably accurate reflection of the player in question.

Still, there's something to be said for a reliable shutdown defenceman, and we felt that Pettersson distinguished himself enough in this regard to warrant consideration in the middle of our board. You don't get 17 games with an SHL club like Örebro HK if you can't keep things honest in your own zone.

"Pettersson is a durable defensive prospect with good size and speed," Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin remarked in his season-ending report. "He plays physically and shows a lot of poise under pressure, using his mobility and reach to close gaps, occasionally with force. Everything is there for him to be defensively effective in the NHL in a bottom-pairing role."

Points may prove elusive for Pettersson at the NHL level,

but he won't be completely out of his depth as a puck-mover. He already has some pro-concepts baked into his breakouts, whether it's the occasional flash of a delay game, equal parts quick feet and strong skating habits, and the use of contact to gain space on defensive zone retrievals. The accuracy on his passes may vary wildly from one game to the next, but that can be fixed with time -- in theory, anyway.

"Pettersson is a capable puck-carrier and quick on his retrievals," Hamrin noted in his player report. "He can drive play from the backend with a strong first pass, but also as a heads-up handler in space."

You have to keep your expectations in check with this player, but if you go into this draft with the notion that Pettersson could one day be a credible play-stopper with some utility in transition at the bottom of your team's defensive depth chart, then you'll likely be satisfied with the return on investment with a mid-round pick here.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Johan Motin

YEAR: 2008  
SIMILARITY: 95%

2 Ludwig Bystrom

YEAR: 2012  
SIMILARITY: 94%

3 Simon Bertilsson

YEAR: 2009  
SIMILARITY: 93%

4 Robert Hagg

YEAR: 2013  
SIMILARITY: 93%

5 Fredrik Styrman

YEAR: 2009  
SIMILARITY: 92%

6 Lawrence Pilut

YEAR: 2014  
SIMILARITY: 92%

7 Tobias Enstrom

YEAR: 2003  
SIMILARITY: 92%

8 Petter Granberg

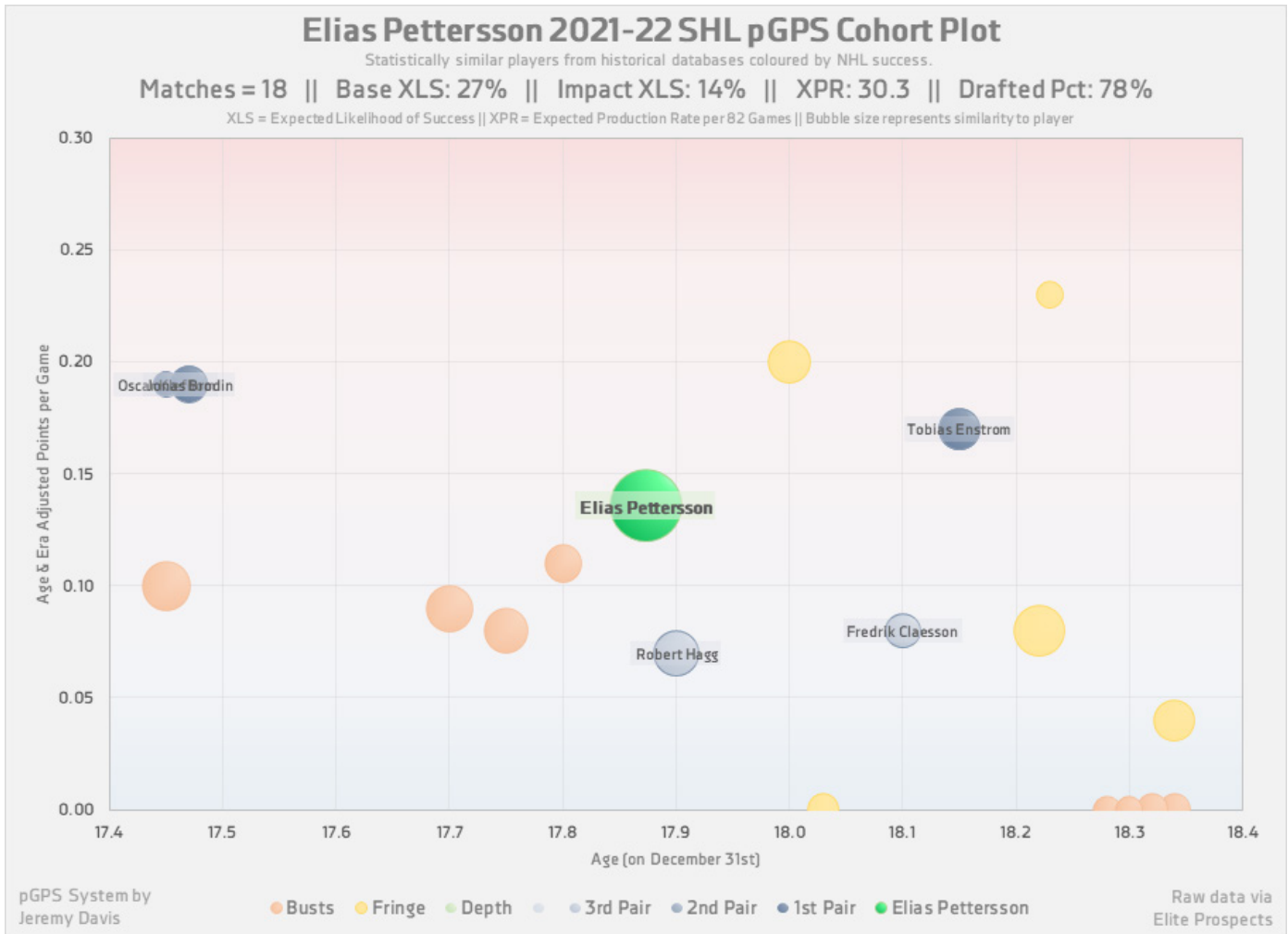
YEAR: 2011  
SIMILARITY: 91%

9 Jonas Brodin

YEAR: 2011  
SIMILARITY: 90%

10 Wilhelm Westlun

YEAR: 2013  
SIMILARITY: 90%



**Jimmy Hamrin:** May 1st, 2022

USA vs Sweden - U18s

Pettersson had a solid defensive performance in the gold medal game. He paired with Calle Odellius and those two were very effective in keeping USA to the outside with excellent rush defending. USA dominated the possession and Pettersson's breakouts rarely changed that. He either threw out the puck for the USA to start over or skated out with the puck and pushed down deep in the USA zone. These sequences explain what's good and bad with Pettersson's game. His play reading with the puck is at best average and does not have puck skills to open other options than what is presented in front of him. Still, his competitiveness, reach and mobility makes him a valuable shut down player. His speed also helps him skate out of trouble and to be the first player to the puck. When the play is stuck in his own end he had one or two bad reads where he impatiently went on his instinct rather than take control of the situation with smartness. The few times he got to play a longer sequence in the offensive zone he was active and mobile and that has value for the offence making it more dynamic and harder for the opponents to cover. Pettersson always wanted to take charge of the game. He will learn details and develop some degree of smartness

with more experience. Highly competitive players often tend to maximise their potential and that makes me believe that Pettersson is a future defensive defenseman playing on a second or third pair. Defensive speed and gap control are valuable in the NHL.

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - WJ18

I have generally liked Pettersson's game so far this tournament, but it hasn't been exciting. He's killed plays off the rush with relatively strong gaps and he's physical, again, off the rush, but also in his zone. He limits himself to simple plays with the puck generally. Is that valuable? Maybe. There are more skilled defenders who play his style of game that are available.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 9th, 2022

Linköpings HC vs. Örebro HK - J20 Final four

Elias is a good skater with a long stride. He can travel with the puck and is quick out to the corners. Elias is very involved in the game and drives it with a strong first pass or puck travelling. He has good control and his head up. His vision and skills with the puck does not stand out and he





was not a strong player on the power play where he played the point position.

His defensive vision is better. He uses mobility and reach to close gaps and likes to shut down with a hit too. Offensively I like his rush play. He engages and likes to change position when the play is in the offensive zone.

Elias is not only physical, he is highly competitive in his own end too. When his team needs him he steps up. He had some shifts where his head burned after a goal from the other team and he made some risky choices going for a hit. He will need to learn how to use that energy better. He is at his best when he plays a smooth, mobile and physical game.

I really like his chances to get picked in the second round. A good defensive prospect.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 9th 2022

Djurgårdens IF vs. Örebro HK - J20 Nationell

A big time game for Elias. He played almost 26 minutes and was used in all situations. He started the game poorly and was beaten due to some lack of gap control. He got stuck on long shifts in his own zone versus Djurgårdens top players who were flying. The longer the game went the more of a stud Elias became. He showed that he learned from some

early mistakes, adapted his neutral zone defensive play and was not beaten the second half of the game.

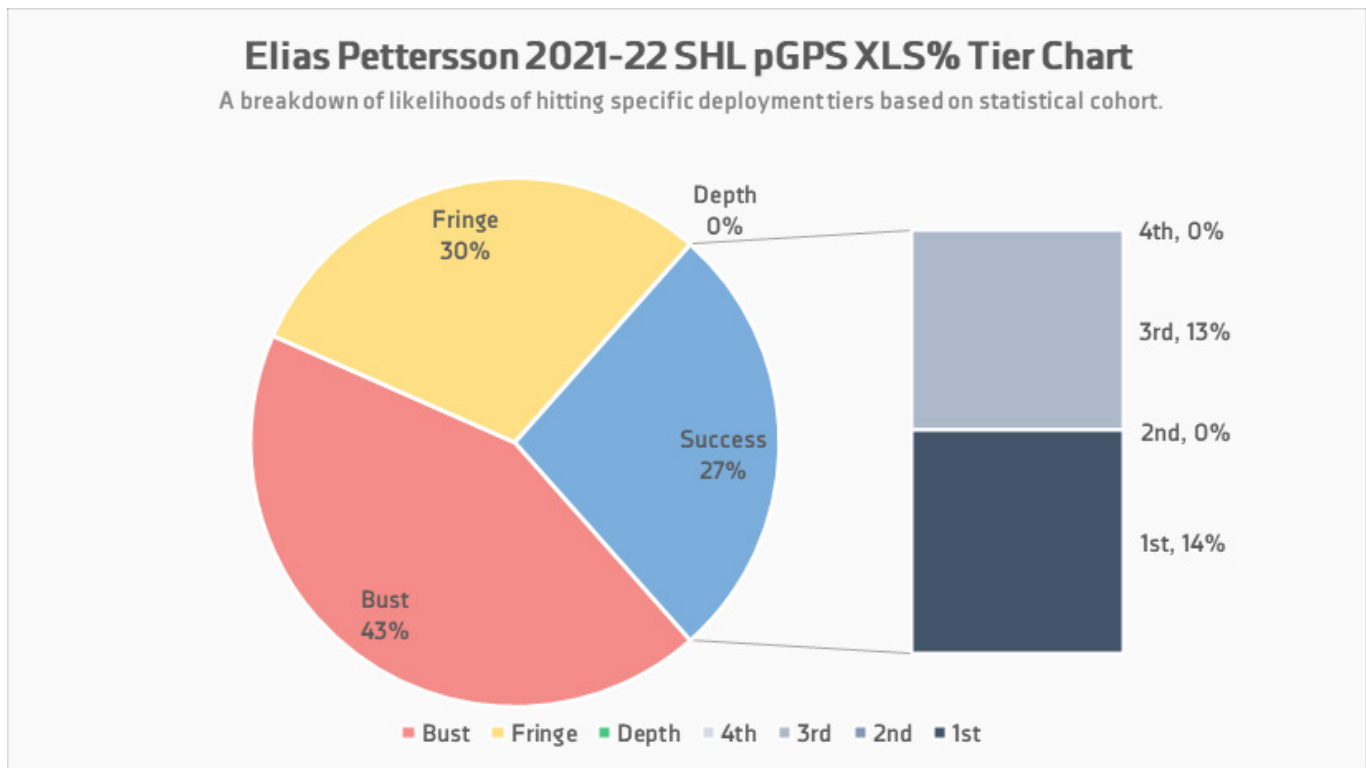
Elias is a strong skater. He has good technique, he can skate fast with ease and he is mobile in all directions. He has strong balance and can use his skating to his advantage and as a weapon, both with and without the puck. With the puck he can carry it up the ice with his head up and skate away from danger. Without the puck he can shut down plays and pinch effectively with his reach.

Elias puck skills are average. He handles the puck okay, has a good first pass and power to his shots. He will not deke his way out of a situation and can look awkward under stress or if his balance is off. Some of his passes could have better quality to them, but mostly he moves the puck well. His defensive stick work is impressive. He uses all his reach and times it well. He often does not need to use his physicality to shut down plays. He has strong balance with a stick far out from his body and he combines shutting space, using his body and playing towards the puck in defensive situations.

The best part of Elias' game is his instincts. He engages himself on both ends of the ice, he learns from mistakes and competes hard. He moves well in the offensive zone and shows awareness. He probably will not be a strong point

**“He played well in the winter but kind of faded in the spring. He’s got good size and mobility, seems to have some competitiveness to his game, but only about average sense. Interesting player.”**

*Eastern Conference executive, May 2022*



producer on higher levels since his puck skills are average but he will be helpful in puck support. In his own end he detects danger and no hesitation to compete for the puck.

Elias is a good bottom pair prospect with a high chance of reaching the NHL in that role. His combination of skating, size, hockey sense and competitiveness will make him a modern defensive defenseman.

**J.D. Burke:** January 27th, 2022

Örebro HK vs. Rögle BK - SHL

Really strong defensive performance from Pettersson. Keeps his head on a swivel off-puck, knows when he has sup-

port and can leave his station to offer a numbers advantage, and holds up well physically in puck battles. Defended the net-front exceptionally well, establishing inside body-positioning on forwards and boxing them out with ease. Couldn't connect on a breakout pass to save his life, though. Really grim showing on the breakout. Some interesting elements in that phase of the game, though. Takes passes in motion. Uses a delay game and contact to create space. Skating looked about average. Looks like a mid-range B-grade prospect. Someone who is probably going to play but not especially high in an NHL team's lineup.





58  
Rank

C  
Grade

4.5  
Skating

6  
Puckhandling

5  
Shooting

5  
Hockey Sense

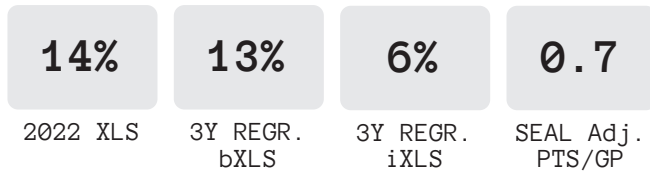
5  
Passing

5  
Physical

# RYAN HEALEY

D | SIOUX FALLS STAMPEDE

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. MAY 19, 2004  
WEIGHT 179 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	59	3	18	21

> Committed to Harvard Univ.

## Scouting Report

Production's dependent on context, especially for blueliners, where high-value offensive events are far less frequent. It's context – playing on the lowest-scoring team in the USHL – that explains why Ryan Healey posted meagre point totals despite being one of the draft's most overtly dynamic blueliners.

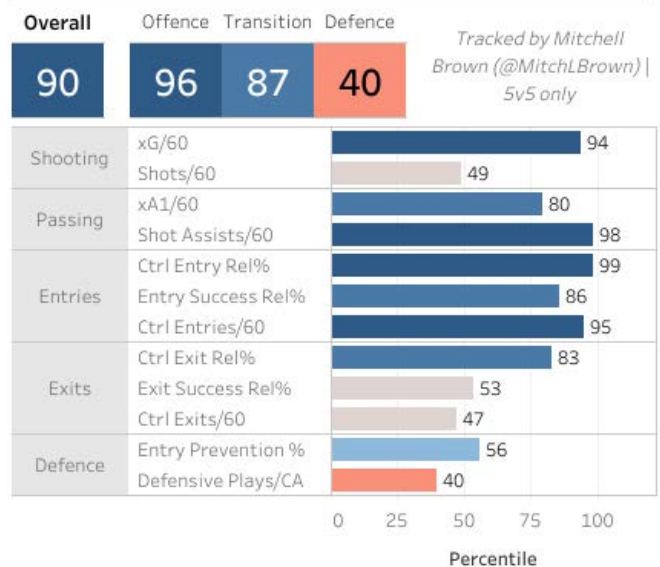
In the offensive zone, Healey follows the script laid out by the NHL's most dynamic blueliners: Move through every pass reception, watch the feet of the incoming defender, then attack in the opposite direction. From there, his hands do much of the work. He dekes through and around defenders with shocking ease, showing quick hands in reactionary situations, and carefully setting up defenders by pushing the puck into their space, then pulling it away as they reach in.

Combined, the activation and handling skill enable the rest of Healey's skills to shine. He pulls pucks around defenders and shoots in one, smooth motion. Similarly, he effortlessly dekes around one defender, then passes under the stick of another to create a scoring chance.

When Healey's not joining the play, he's keeping a tight gap through the neutral zone to kill plays and looking to crunch players along the boards. Despite his energetic style, he must eliminate his tendency to wander away from his check. And often ends up too far ahead of the play or fails to pick up his assignment altogether.

On breakouts, the manipulation ability that makes Healey's offensive game exciting doesn't appear. His handling ability

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 120.1



appears as a reactionary skill, instead of a proactive one – leading to turnovers. On retrievals, dump-outs and rims are his preferred plays, even with options. Moments where makes plays to the inside or draws in the first forechecker encourage optimism, even if he's strictly trying to outrace forecheckers.

Healey isn't an explosive skater with inefficient hopping crossovers, which will prevent him from accessing the same spaces in the NHL. Still, he has dynamic potential through his activation and handling skill. If his breakouts improve, he could become a No. 4 or 5 defender with power play ability.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Ian Young YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 93%	2 Corey Schueneman YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 92%	3 Daniel Heath YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 91%	4 Travis Walsh YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 91%	5 Jeremy Dehner YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 91%
6 Kody Mintenko YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 91%	7 Kyle Bushee YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 91%	8 Matt Gens YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 91%	9 Greg Pateryn YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 90%	10 Philip Samuelsson YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 90%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

A quiet game from Healey beyond one shift, where he evaded pressure, gained the zone, then passed to the inside for an assist. Details remained (in motion passes and receptions, but he didn't execute in this game. Doesn't manipulate on the breakout; just makes the simple play. Too many rims and clearances when he has other options. Beat several times defensively through poor scanning or positioning. Mostly reacting too late in this game. Perhaps a third or fourth rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Healey was best draft-eligible in this game, yet again. He constantly activates. On puck, he beats defenders by moving inside with the pass, stopping, and accelerating down the boards. Fakes them out with handling skill. Reads the feet of defenders and consistently looks to move in the opposite direction. He's not manipulating after beating the original defender, so this might just be well-executed scripts. Still, this is enough to make it work in the NHL on occasion. Mechanically, he tends to stay on his heels. Gets thrown out of some moves or has his acceleration disrupted. Joins the rush regularly, hitting a post with an wrister masked with crossovers. The defence wasn't nearly as impressive in this outing. Committed early and beat. Still, this was an exciting performance. Looked like a potential bottom-pairing defender. Third round, maybe.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Healey outplayed Rinzel, Cardona, and Geary in this game – that's impressive. Highlight was activation sequence where he stepped to the inside with the pass, hit the brakes, burst down the outside, then attacked the net for a chance (and a pass leading to another chance). Tried to create from the blue line every touch. Now, some of those were bad. It seems like he's just running scripts, as he goes ahead with his plan even if space is closed. He's always on his heels, too. That

prevents him from exploding out of his moves. Tends to stay on his inside edges when possible. Breakouts are limited by similar mechanics, but the ideas are sound. Spins puck from the boards to the middle in battles. Looks for options cross-ice and tries to change the point of attack. Pressured into dump-outs because of the skating and handling. Not a decisive angler on the defensive end, but he times his engagements and denies access to the middle. More scanning will shore up the DZ coverage, but it's clear he tries. He looked like a late-rounder in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Des Moines Buccaneers vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Finally, Healey didn't just fake the inside and then (try to) beat defenders along the boards. In this game, he faked the inside, faked the attack along the boards, then cut inside. From there, he showed off his handling and reactionary skills. Had a couple of chances, including a curl-and-drag wrister, a backhand shot after beating a defender to the net, and a quick wrister out of a stickhandle. Shot's limited by his tendency to lean back at range, rather than loading his weight over his stick. Doesn't get enough lower body flexion either, and his release isn't quick enough to offset it. Joined the rush regularly, leading to his assist, a cross-slot backhand pass. Breakouts remain an issue at this level, although he was looking inside and cross-ice for options. He doesn't manipulate or plan; he just reacts and often chooses wrong. Took advantage of some particularly bad defending throughout this game, but he showed enough skill to believe he's in that early-third range.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Sioux Falls Stampede vs. Lincoln Stars - USHL

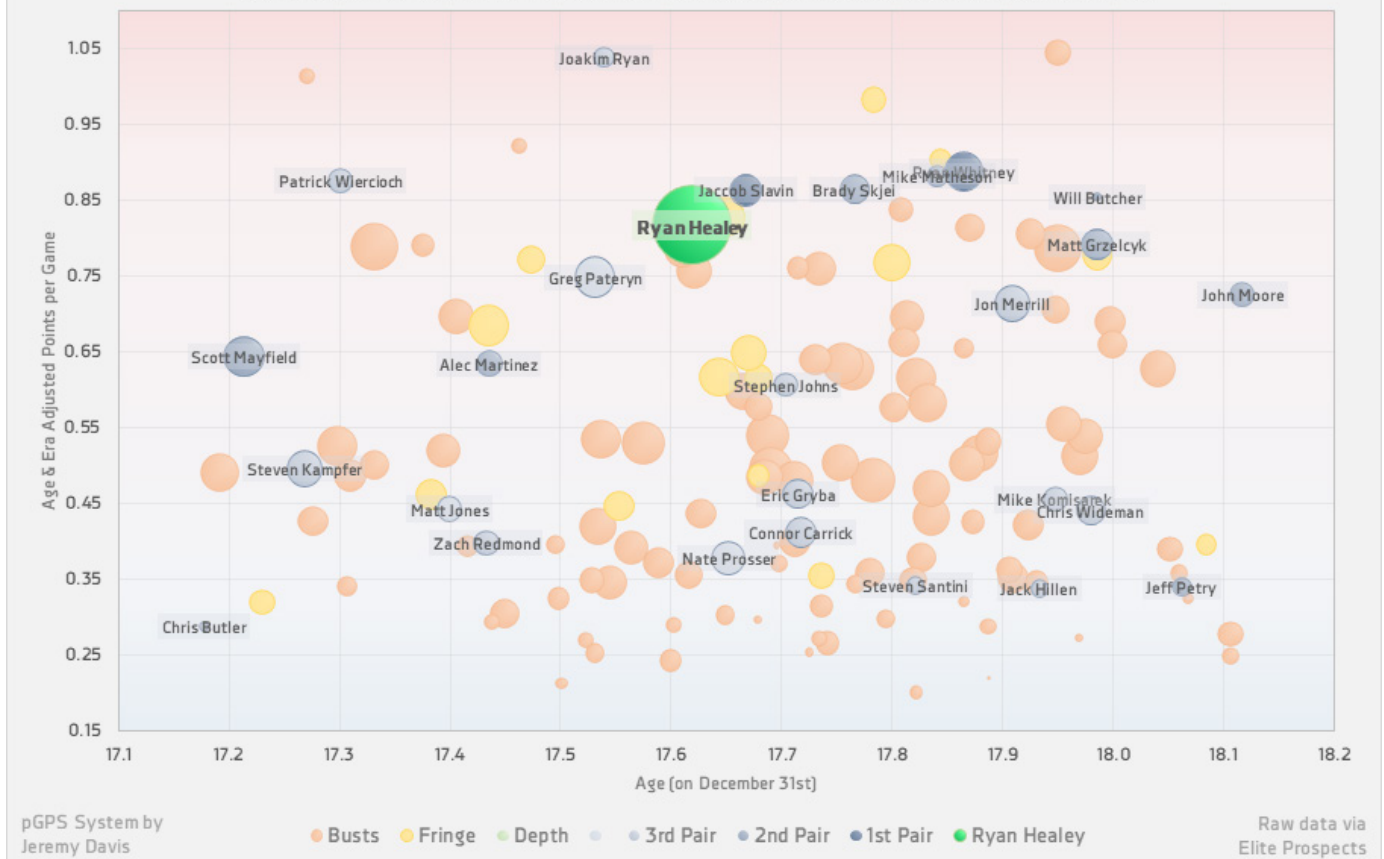
A different game from Healey in this one, although it was a blow out. He used space before shooting, but mostly moved the puck to his partner on the blue-line. Showed some deception on a couple, an avenue of his game that exists, but he needs to explore more. In transition, he was much more patient with the puck. Didn't throw pucks blindly into

## Ryan Healey 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 140 || Base XLS: 14% || Impact XLS: 7% || XPR: 23.4 || Drafted Pct: 40%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



space when under pressure or deke needless. Instead, he skates into space, then made the next play. Not complex, but if his breakouts are average projection, he could become a second-rounder. Defensively, his gap was a bit tighter than normal. Rewarded with a couple of stops, including on a half-ice 2-on-1, where he predicted the pass and threw his stick in the lane at the perfect moment. Not an explosive pivot or backwards skater, but I keep scribbling notes about his footwork: wide base, uses partial crossovers to generate speed while managing risk.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 23rd, 2022

Fargo Force vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Healey doesn't use his handling skills on breakouts in the same way he uses it from the point. Instead of manipulating, his hands serve as a reactionary skill to escape pressure. It usually results in turnovers as a result. Then, he default to simple plays like rims or dump-outs, leading to more turnovers. The breakouts are going to be a major issue, but I'd like to see him outside Sioux Falls. A much better defensive game than normal from Healey. He killed plays in the neutral zone, even angling a couple of attacks with his projectable defensive skating. Timed his engagements in the defensive end, scanned, and used physicality to kill plays along the

boards. Offensively, he's the same player: lots of activation, but traps himself with the puck. Connected with a cross-slot pass from the point. Joined the rush a bunch, often in different ways: up the middle as the trailing, getting ahead of his forwards, give-and-gos to take control, etc. There are holes in his game, but he has legitimate tools to back up the experimentation. Could be a third-rounder.

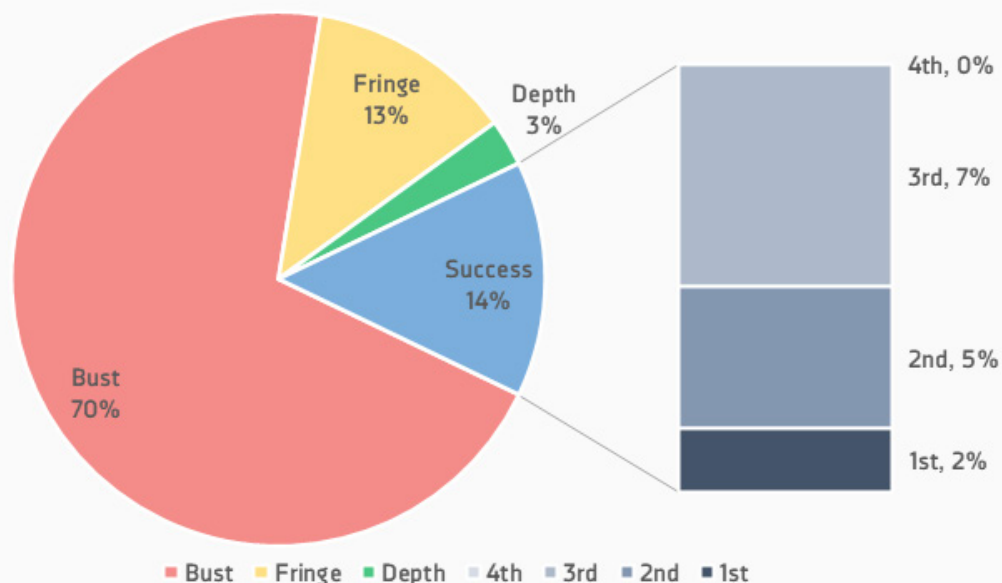
**Mitchell Brown:** March 20th, 2022

Fargo Force vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Healey keeps trying to lead his teammates into space with passes, but it never works. The puck's always too far. Not sure who that's on, but he could benefit from slowing down on breakouts. He's always trying to out-pace defender, whether that's out-racing them with his feet or beating them into passing lanes. Doesn't manipulate incoming pressure on breakouts. Retrievals are a mess with inconsistent scanning and an overreliance on moving the puck immediately. The point activation usually just leads to a low-percentage shot because he relies on the same move (attacking the inside on the pass reception, then beating the defender down the boards). But he's a legitimate force when activating and joining the play. Strings together defensive zone coverage and passes of various directions and ranges to get up the ice. Usually

## Ryan Healey 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



picks the right lane and changes speed to maximize his threat. Recognizes lanes before his forwards. And he shows at least 5.5-grade handling, toe-dragging the puck around defenders and setting up his dekes on angles. Eye deception to set up passes. Stride: knees past toes, proper recoveries with some forward push, but inconsistent hip depth. Crossovers: pronounced hopping motion without much inside leg push off, but often maintains ankle flexion. In general, his feet flail with the puck with variable depth. Takes a wider stance when defending the rush to manage risk; he uses crossover motions but rarely actually crosses over, which helps maintain power while keeping the manoeuverability of a more traditional c-cuts. Lacks explosiveness despite his form. Defensively, he's sound but not advanced in anyway. The defensive skating habits give me optimism that he'll improve with added strength and scanning. Lots of assembly required, but he could be a fun late-second, early-third. Instinctual activation, some tools, and defensive potential.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** March 19th, 2022


Fargo Force vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

A really impressive performance from Healey in this one. Kept it simple for the most part, found great outlets in transition both through the middle of the ice and along the wall. Showed some creative ability to evade F1, including one effort where he continued up the ice and ended up scoring

on a shot from the high slot. Tried to stop rushes early and engaged opponents physically, even though he doesn't have the biggest frame. Constantly looks to activate in transition, which can work against him sometimes when the Stampede turn the puck over in transition and Healey gets caught up ice. Overall, he was reliable, showed good enough skating ability, and looked to me like a second to third round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Lincoln Stars vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Now, this is an exciting prospect. Healey's always in the rush. He recognizes space before his forwards, jumps into space, and rarely leaves his team in a defensive deficit while doing so. Combines DZ coverage with activation. When he's in the play, he shows advanced handling skill and vision. Dekes around defenders with ease, whether that's beating them into space or using a reactionary move through their triangle. Turned one deke into a backhand pass into the slot. From the point, he fills space on the weakside and tries to beat defenders himself. He's not explosive, and tends to fall into the same patterns when trying to take on defenders, but his activation is definitely projectable. Needs to tighten up the gap control and off-puck reads, but he has some projectable qualities: risk-mitigating footwork with a wide base, play-killing instincts along the blue line, and a puck-focused physical game. Could be a late-second, early-third type. I'm a fan. 



59  
Rank

C  
Grade

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

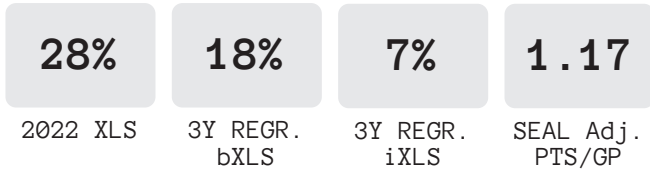
5.5  
Hockey Sense

6.5  
Physical

# VINZENZ ROHRER

RW | OTTAWA 6'7" S

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. SEP. 9, 2004  
WEIGHT 168 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	64	25	23	48

## Scouting Report

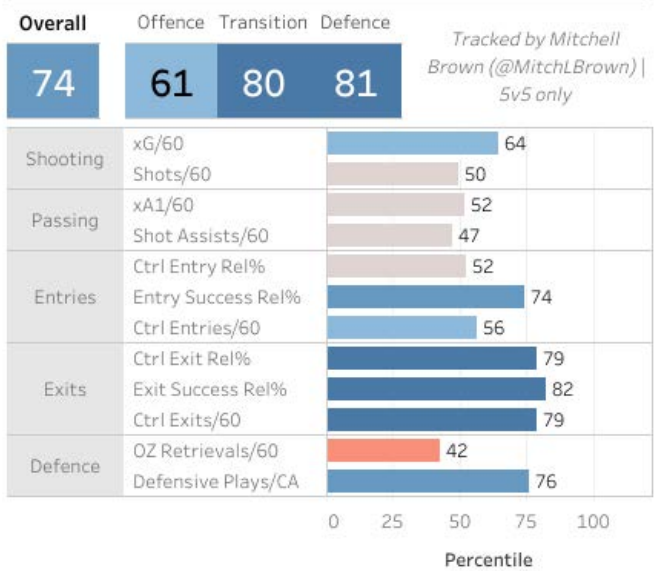
It would be fair to assume that Vinzenz Rohrer is a finesse player without much of a physical game. After all, he's listed at 5-foot-11 and just 168 pounds and only took seven penalties all season. But Rohrer is one of the draft's foremost physical players, and he's not short on skill.

The physical play of Rohrer starts with his body positioning. He gets low, sticks his leg in front of the opponent's, then follows through his hips. And it impacts every area of his game, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown explains: "He beats down players with his stick, but never takes penalties. Along the boards, he steps out into space to intercept the incoming defender, then makes the next play. And he's so good at getting inside on players that he draws penalties and knocks bigger defenders off balance."

With that physical game comes defensive potential. Where many players straighten their legs and puck-watch, he keeps his knees bent and scans for threats constantly. That gives him expansive range; in a single sequence, he supports down low to eliminate a threat, sprints to the point to prevent a point shot, and then wins the ensuing battle along the boards.

The physical play directly impacts Rohrer's shooting game, as he uses body positioning to keep his stick free in the slot. As he sprints up the ice to become a shooting threat, he subtly nudges nearby defenders and uses his free hand to push them away. If getting body positioning in the slot isn't an option, he gets open just outside for one-timers and catch-and-release wristers. Improving timing on his movements into scoring position should help him find the

Games Tracked: 10 | Minutes Tracked: 143.2



net more regularly. While Rohrer's puck-game in transition isn't complex, it's largely projectable. Where most players get locked into straight-line rushes down the boards, he passes to start the give-and-go. Inside the offensive zone, he largely plays a simple game, but there are moments of more. In open ice, he uses deception to drag defenders out of passing lanes. On retrievals, he makes quick passes off the backhand to the slot.

If the offensive flashes become full-time skills, he has top-nine upside. If not, he's probably just a depth piece. Most likely, he becomes a capable fourth-liner who brings a valuable combination of physicality, off-puck offence, and some playmaking.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Nick Ritchie YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 96%	2 Daniel Paille YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 96%	3 Ryan Martindale YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 96%	4 Daniel Sisca YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 95%	5 Jamie McGinn YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 95%
6 Ryan Ramsay YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 95%	7 John Hughes YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 95%	8 Mike Duco YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 95%	9 Bo Horvat YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 95%	10 Jamie Arniel YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 95%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

On the penalty kill, Rohrer deflected the puck, flew the zone, and hit with a cross-slot pass through a defender. He waited for the defender's reaction (turning the feet slightly and flinging his stick at Rohrer) before passing, maximizing his odds of getting the puck through. At 5-on-5, he didn't show much playmaking. That's probably the biggest concern I have about his projection. He's mostly an off-puck scorer with playmaking, handling, and transition flashes. Took a tricky pass and spun inside a defender for a shot in one motion – cool play.

Tends to arrive to his pockets a bit late in OZP, but he always finishes his routes and arrives on time in transition. He doesn't get a ton of pucks in favourable positioning, most for no fault of his own (he's usually the guy doing the work along the boards). Really, his projection is about weighing the probability that the flashes will become full-time skills. If they do, he's potential third-line forward. If not, he's a depth piece at best. Most likely, he leverages the physical game, off-puck skill, and flashes of playmaking to become a capable fourth-liner with PK time. That's a pick this year. And the chance that he's something more would make him a fine pick inside the top-75.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Rohrer's physical game didn't shine quite as bright in this game. The give-and-go and flashes of individual skill appeared, however. He recognizes opportunities to get his teammates involved and executes immediately. Doesn't force plays, but still makes skilled plays. My thoughts on the drag-back into between the legs move are well established, but he had an actually good one. He set it up inside crossovers, then looked into the slot and showed pass. Well-executed, showing an awareness of how to beat defenders. Crossovers are the best element of his skating.

He maintains his depth and gets near-full extension on many of them. Consistently uses the inside and changes

lanes on breakouts, even when pressured. Off-puck game is going to be his NHL skill. He's making our board, for sure.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022 -

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Just a masterclass in body positioning and effective physicality. Rohrer combines physicality and intelligence. He beats down players with his stick, but never takes penalties. Along the boards, he steps out into space to intercept the incoming defender, then makes the next play. That directly led to best his pass of the net. Off-puck, he constantly battles for positioning to seal off back pressure and keep his stick free for the puck. And he's so good at getting inside on players that he draws penalties and knocks bigger defenders off balance. He couples the physicality with off-puck intelligence. He skates his routes, adjusts his speed to prolong the passing window, and tries to get behind defenders. For his goal, he found open space, took the puck in his hip pocket, and beat the goaltender across the net. Not individually creative with the puck, but he creates openings by making cross-lane passes and backing off defenders with his off-puck skating. More deception and skating refinement would be nice, but he looks like a potential late-second, early-third. Seems like a decent bet to become at least a fourth liner, with enough skill to play a bit higher up.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

The best playmaking performance I've seen from Rohrer. Connected with an impressive cross-slot pass from the point that required vision, timing, and skill. Consistently changed the point of attack in transition with cross-lane passes. Usually makes the play to the middle, too. He creates space up the ice with those skills. Give-and-go, with one sequence leading to his best chance of the game. Doesn't force plays. Instead, he cuts back and waits. A bit risk-averse in this situations, but he consistently gets and maintains the offensive zone. The stride still has a lot of work to be done, but with high crossover integration and some natural quickness, he

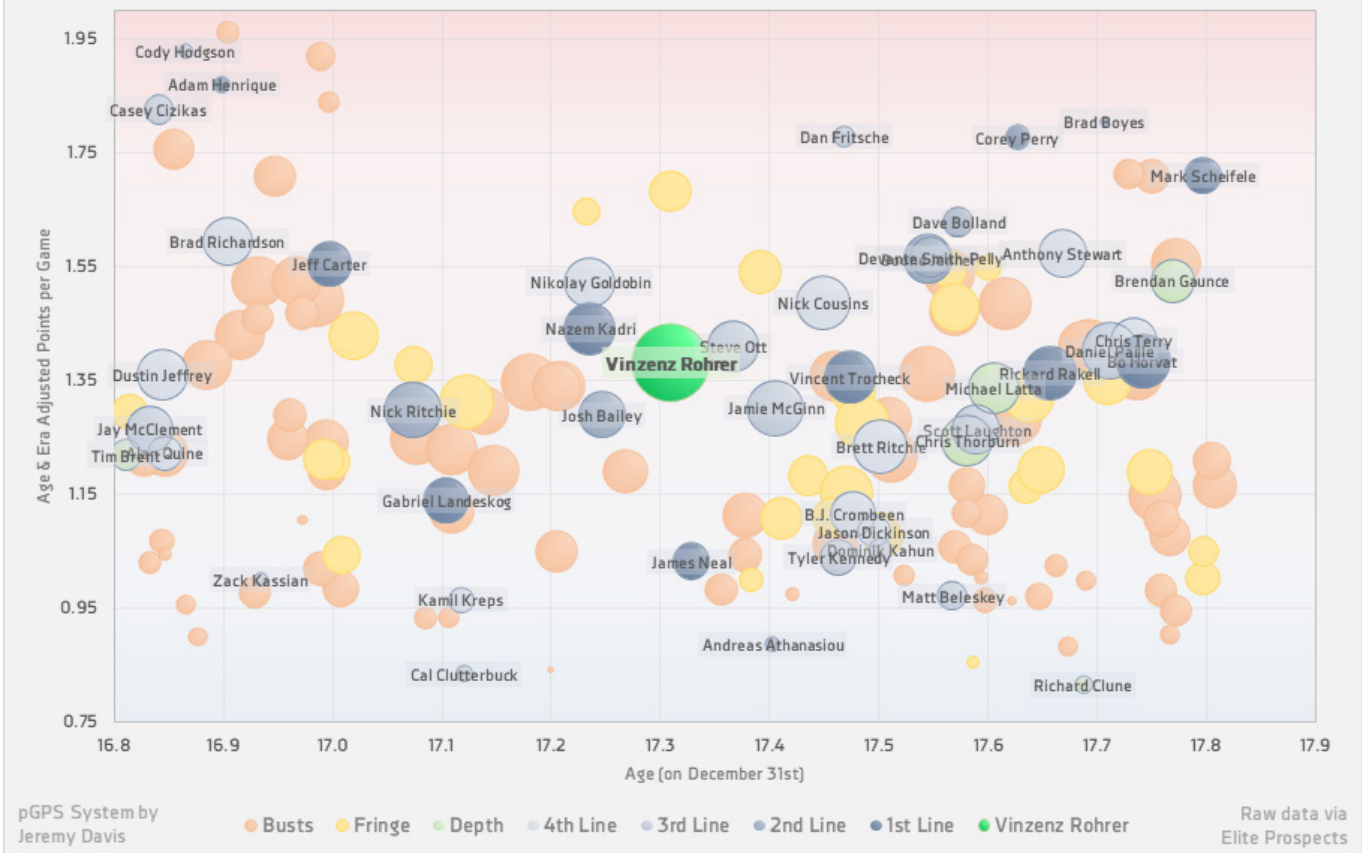


## Vinzenz Rohrer 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 156 || Base XLS: 28% || Impact XLS: 11% || XPR: 39.4 || Drafted Pct: 69%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



could be an NHL average projection. He's definitely a pick. Probably more of a tertiary piece on an NHL line, but he creates space with his passing and physical game. And the off-puck instincts should help him finish off the odd play. Could make a fine third rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 16th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Rohrer's defence could get him to the NHL. Knees bent, head up scanning for threats – he's always ready to leap into a passing lane or tie up a stick. Even when it seems like he's beat, he manages to disrupt the puck carrier. Both goals he scored started with intelligent defensive plays. The second was the best, as he recognized the passing threat, stayed on the inside, used a look-off cross-lane pass to gain the zone, and then open for the one-timer in the slot. Always looking to play inside contact. He reaches out to push defenders behind him when racing up the ice and uses subtle bumps to knock defenders off-balance going into retrievals. Plays more of a playmaking role off retrievals, highlighted with a quick possession pass off the boards to a wide-open teammate through two defenders. Look off from behind the net for another look. Gets almost full extension on his crossovers, but his strides lack consistency and refinement. Wonder

how much of his skating issues will improve with strength. Doesn't make or even try many skilled plays in the neutral zone, largely because he tries outrace when his skating won't allow it. He's definitely a draft pick. Retrieval-playmaker with high defensive upside. I could see a third-round argument.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 27th, 2022

Ottawa 67s vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Rohrer didn't have much of an offensive impact in this game. Good passes on the powerplay but not necessarily all that deceptive. His game is defense and support, and that was on display in this game. He was blocking shots, tying up open skaters in the slot because his defensemen were nowhere to be found, sliding back to cover his defensemen who'd jumped up in the play, used an active stick to disrupt passes in the defensive zone, and had good overall positioning, thanks to a very active shoulder check. Was the recipient of a bad hit and fell into the boards but drew a penalty on the play and didn't miss a shift. Very disruptive player in his own end, always looking for situations where he can force turnovers or steal pucks. He's not going to land on the scoresheet every night, but his impact will be felt. Probably a mid-round pick at best though.

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**“Vinzenz has shown continuous improvement since arriving in Ottawa, with his elite vision and playmaking ability. His skating, puckhandling and decision-making are all at a high speed.”**

*Ottawa 67s General Manager James Boyd, June 2022*

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

A solid performance from Rohrer. His pace and aggression are his standout skills. He puts in the work on every forechecker and backcheck. Cuts off the top in defensive zone coverage while scanning and recognizing help defence opportunities. He's physical, always trying to gain inside positioning on players and making plays to the middle. Connected with a cross-slot pass for a chance, but it wasn't a dynamic play. Slot cut opportunity highlighted some skating deficiencies, as he widened his base and used the inside edge of his outside leg to cut towards the middle (rather than loading his inside leg over the outside edge), which killed his speed and prevented him from shooting. There's a lot to like with this player. Think he would thrive in a different environment. He's definitely a pro, but whether that's as a fourth-line energy-type or an AHL scorer remains to be seen. Perhaps an end-of-board type.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

A nothing game from Rohrer. He had one notable offensive play at 5-on-5: a stationary pass to the slot that just missed. Lots of chip-and-chase and straight-line attacks up the boards. Absorbs contact well enough to power through the odd check and gain the zone. An aware defender with some physicality, too. But that's about it in this game. Didn't look like a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

OT winner for Rohrer. Beat the first defender then skated straight down the ice and ripped an outside leg wrister past

the goaltender. Rough night at 5-on-5, however. He missed a few passes into the slot – if he made the decision earlier, he might've created a chance. Still, he had one wicked spin-around hook pass through two defenders for a scoring chance. Dokes when he could pass, but he's always the first player on the puck. Wins battles through a combination of strength, physicality, and awareness. Looks to establish positioning, and if he can't, he often just overpowers his opponent. Highly disruptive player overall. Too passive his off-puck positioning in several instances. In one F3 sequence, he went too high and then glided towards the pass instead of accelerating – missed a prime scoring chance as a result. Play selection and timing were weaknesses in this game, but perhaps that's a one-off. Still a draft pick, even based on this game alone.

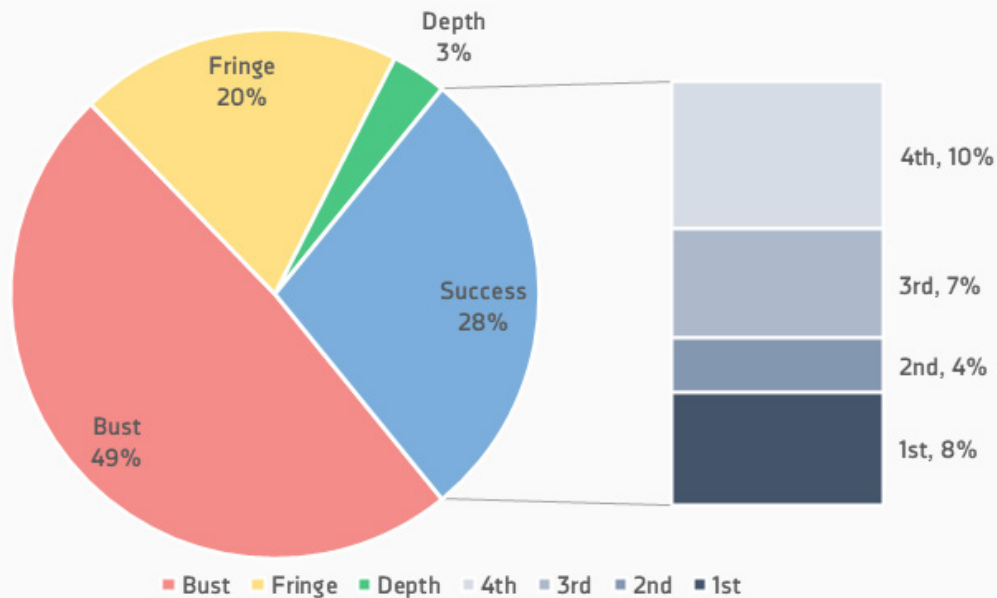
**Lauren Kelly:** December 28th, 2021

Austria vs. Canada - WJC20

Everything that makes Rohrer worthy of an NHL draft pick was on display in this game. Positionally sound, shoulder-checking in the DZ, retrieving loose pucks and making quick, smart passes, or hounding puck carriers (he pressured Owen Power at the blueline and ended up chasing him back to the Canadian end to reset), he's exactly what NHL teams should be looking for in mid-to-late rounds of the draft. He stole the puck in his own end before slipping through the Canadian defence on the breakaway, and although he couldn't regain control of the puck, he retrieved it along the boards before sending a fantastic pass to Lukas Necesany for Austria's opening goal. It's also pretty impressive he wasn't on the ice for a goal against until the third period (Canada's seventh goal). He didn't make many (or any) mistakes with the puck when he had it and it's a shame that the tournament

## Vinzenz Rohrer 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



ended so early, because it felt like we were just scratching the surface with the impact Rohrer could've made for Austria.

**Lauren Kelly:** December 27th, 2021

Austria vs. Finland - WJC20

In a blowout loss, Rohrer was one of the lone bright spots for Austria in their tournament opener. Whether it was laying out to block shots or causing havoc on the forecheck and creating turnovers, Rohrer looked exactly like the kind of player he is in the OHL. He did lose positioning on Samuel Helenius in the slot on Finland's second goal, and he certainly won't go as high in the draft as fellow countryman Marco Kasper, but Rohrer held his own on Austria's top line and was one of the better players for Austria in this one.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 5th, 2021

Ottawa 67's vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Quiet game for Rohrer. He had a couple of slick breakout passes from the boards to the middle, showing a bit of patience to wait for the option instead of simply playing the system. He's always involved in puck pursuit, whether he's applying intense pressure on the forecheck or eliminating a threat on the way back down the ice. Didn't touch the puck much; don't think it was because of any off-puck limitations. Tough one for Ottawa team-wide and he lacks patience with possession outside of the breakout. Rough showing, but can't put too weight given the circumstances.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 23rd, 2021

Ottawa 67s vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

As far as first impressions go, Rohrer was definitely a constant source of energy for Ottawa in this game. He worked hard to get in on the forecheck, was relentless in his pursuit of the puck, challenged opposing puck carriers and back-checked hard to help out his defensemen. He played on both special teams and didn't make obvious mistakes on either. His lone assist of the game came off a pretty play with Jack Beck and he showed off his passing ability in tight.

**EP Rinkside Staff:** October 10th, 2021

Ottawa 67s vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

This guy is worth a late round pick and I'd give him a chance of making it purely on the fact that he is a nightmare to play against. He's a menace on the forecheck (team high 4 hits) with his physicality and creates turnovers because guys feel the extra pressure to make a play. He is laboured a bit in his skating and is hunched over with a wide base - something he needs to improve to be a better checker. He showed good puck protection skills and balance when he drove around D to create a few chances. On the first PK, he didn't close fast enough, which led to a goal against from the point, but he made two crucial clears on the penalty kill in the last minute of the game to seal the win. He was someone who got better as the game went on and merits a closer look as the season progresses.



60  
Rank

C  
Grade

4.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

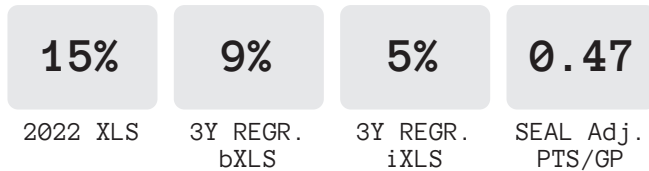
5  
Physical

# SIMON FORSMARK

D | ÖREBRO HK

HEIGHT 6'2"  
WEIGHT 194

D.O.B. OCT. 17, 2003  
SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	23	5	22	27
SHL	41	0	3	3

## Scouting Report

Just about every part of Simon Forsmark's profile augurs a relatively high likelihood of NHL success, but there's a pretty big "but," one so grand in its scope it could mistakenly draw the admiration of Sir Mixalot.

For some evaluators, if you can't skate, you can't play, and that's the concern with Forsmark's game that could undo otherwise legitimate NHL aspirations.

"It's almost incredible how little pace he plays with on his shifts, barely activating out of glide for long stretches of play," Elite Prospects crossover scout Daniel Gee remarked from his first Forsmark viewing. "This, combined with a mechanically distraught stride that lacks ankle flexion, knee bend, and hip integration, all while heel kicking in his recoveries, makes me question if he has any chance of translating just on these factors."

This lack of mobility limits Forsmark in every phase of the game, but it's most apparent in transition, where he lacks a separating gear as a puck-carrier and often gets turnstiled at the defensive blue line because of it.

We should note, in the interest of transparency, that Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin holds his

stride in much better esteem, but the crossover work and recon from team side scouts didn't quite align.

Two reasonable evaluators can arrive at very different reads on a player's stride, and that seems to be the case here. We tried to split the difference with the 4.5-grade on our 1-to-9 linear tools grade scale.

The rest of Forsmark's game is pretty strong, though. Anything that doesn't require much movement in open ice is at a reasonably advanced level for a player this age.

"Offensively, Forsmark isn't a flashy or particularly skilled player but activates, joins the attack, and has good breakout passes," Hamrin wrote in his year-end player report. "His physical play is mostly stick-work and reading the play right. He engages but is not physical or strong. Forsmark is a solid two-way defensive prospect. He processes the game well, not overthinking plays, acting decisively and with purpose."

Forsmark's statistical profile is as exciting as it gets. Nearly an entire first year of draft-eligibility spent in a European professional league is always a great sign, and his 6-foot-2 frame is bound to help his odds, too. Don't be surprised to see this player go early in the second round, if not sooner.

## Game Reports

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 9th, 2022

Linköpings HC vs. Örebro HK - J20 Final Four

Forsmark played in SHL in a double OT and flew down for this won or lose semifinal game the day after. He looked

impressively smooth at this level, like the game was too easy for him. Forsmark's skating looks arrogantly effortless. He is one of the fastest players on the ice but it does not look like he is even trying.

His calmness and low energy skating makes his hands soft and he drives the play with skating with the puck and strong breakout passing. His defensive stick work is strong too as he makes good reads and uses his reach.

Forsmarks looks poised and dominant. He scored a goal where just skated in straight up on the left side, made one little move inside the blueline to pass a defender and then put a shot behind the goalie. The calmness in his game makes the game come to instead of the other way around. This level is not challenging for him.

There was one bad situation where he did not chase an icing puck with the extra attacker and an opponent beat him to the puck to annul the icing and almost scored. If it was fatigue or just sloppiness it was hard to read. His physical play is mostly stick work and reading to play right. He engages but is not physical or strong. He doesn't shy away at least.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 27th, 2022

Örebro HK vs. Rögle BK - SHL

A solid performance by Forsmark. He played over 15 minutes and was almost flawless defensively and active offensively. Forsmark is a smooth skater. He can play at a high pace looking effortless. He moves well in all directions and is hard to beat with pure speed. He changes direction smoothly and skates well with the pace of the SHL in both directions. His top speed is not elite but he can skate away from trouble with the puck.

Forsmark showed good pass selections in the breakouts. He rarely plays over his head. He had a couple of non-successful skating out with the puck breakout though. He is calm with the puck and showed some good moves offensively as well. He had one sequence from an offensive face off where dekes his way through and almost scored. Defensively he is effective with his stick work. He uses a long stick and plays with good reach.

Forsmark showed good decision-making in this game. He shut down plays defensively with both his stick and body and kept a close gap all game. Offensively he engaged a lot on the offensive end. He moved around, changed position and did so with good control. He plays well with his team's offensive system and looks comfortable with and without the puck. His team dominated the game and was not put under huge pressure by any means but when he was under pressure he handled the situation well.

He looks like a soft player and lacks a mean streak to his game. He defends more with his stick and his body. He did deliver a couple of hits and did not hesitate to play physical at all when he needed to.

Forsmark looks to me like a solid two-way defensive

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Johan Motin

YEAR: 2008  
SIMILARITY: 95%

2 Robert Hagg

YEAR: 2013  
SIMILARITY: 92%

3 Calle Andersson

YEAR: 2013  
SIMILARITY: 92%

4 Dennis Bozic

YEAR: 2009  
SIMILARITY: 92%

5 Petter Granberg

YEAR: 2011  
SIMILARITY: 92%

6 Robin Olsson

YEAR: 2008  
SIMILARITY: 91%

7 Fredrik Styrman

YEAR: 2009  
SIMILARITY: 91%

8 Alexander Urbom

YEAR: 2009  
SIMILARITY: 91%

9 Johan Bjork

YEAR: 2003  
SIMILARITY: 91%

10 Elias Granath

YEAR: 2004  
SIMILARITY: 90%

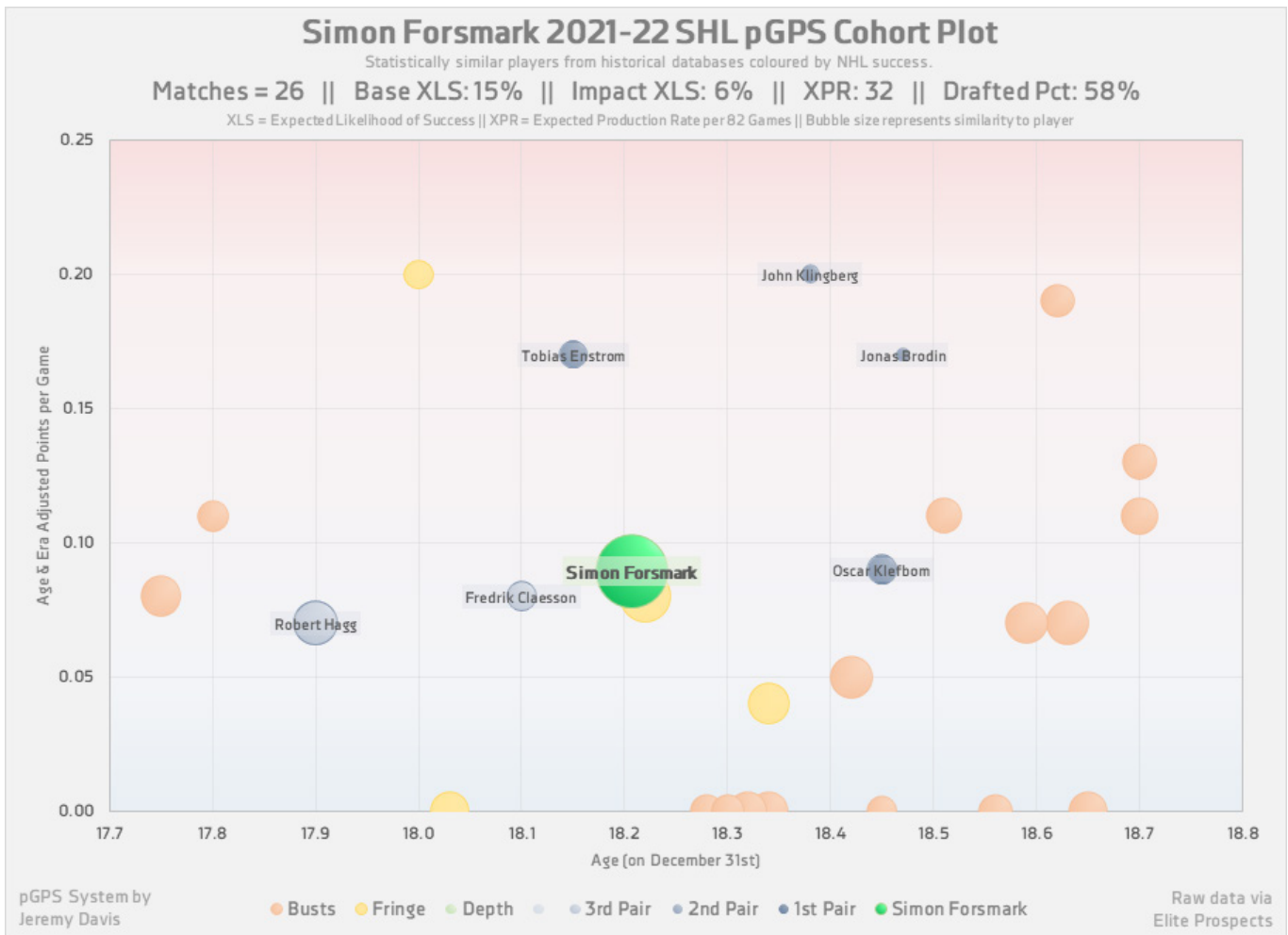
prospect. His skating has developed during the season and he seems to process the game better now as well, not overthinking plays. He lacks elite puck skills but had flashy moments and played solid. I can see him becoming a solid 4-6 defenseman in the NHL. For the draft his range is a late first or second round pick.

**Daniel Gee:** October 16th, 2021

Oskarshamn J20 vs Örebro U20 - J20 Nationell

Came away from this viewing very down on Forsmark's overall game. It's almost incredible how little pace he possesses on his shifts, barely activating out of glide for long stretches of play. This, combined with a mechanically distraught stride that lacks ankle flexion, knee bend, and hip integration, all while heel kicking in his recoveries, makes me question if he has any chance of translating just on these factors.

These mobility concerns are most apparent in transitional defending sequences. Forsmark was a slow processor and was burnt on multiple shifts. In the second he made a poor pinch attempt, turning the puck over and statically reaching with a lazy pokecheck. Later in the period Forsmark gapped up fine, but was turned into a pivot by a slight pace increase. In the third, he had an even more egregious play where he was slow to recognize a teammate about to turnover the puck and was beaten-wide badly on the rush against. He struggled mightily in sustained sequences as well. Forsmark failed to

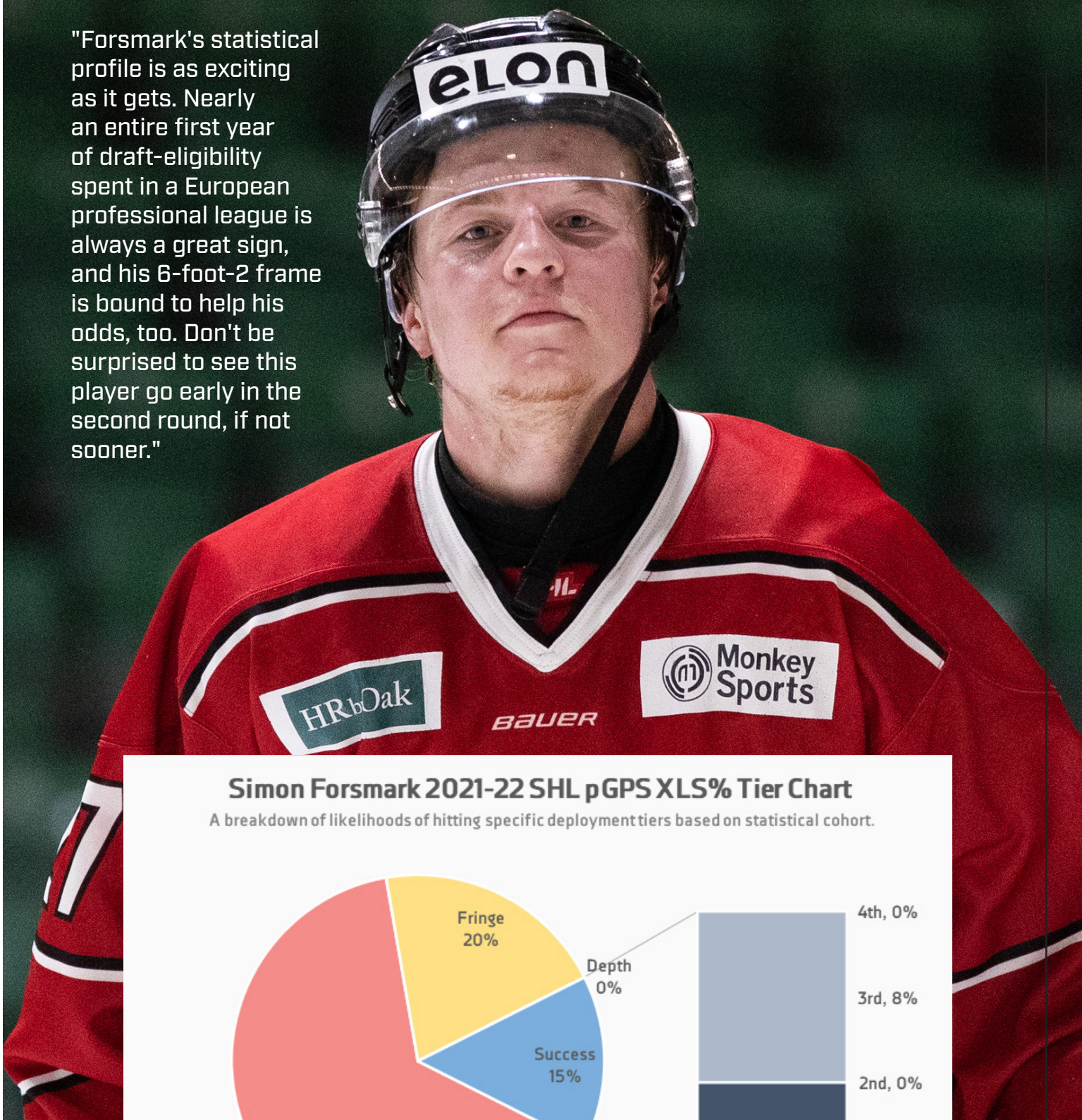


mirror footwork on out play in the second, conceding an inside lane and allowing a pass that resulted in a high-danger chance. Later in the third, he made a static pokecheck on an attacker who had speed, allowed the attacker to work behind him, and was outworked in an endboard battle. He completely missed the player initially in his peripherals. His reach is a plus in general, but only because he is so static. Has to rely on it to make up for pace issues.

Offensively there are some plus attributes here. While Forsmark doesn't pass in-motion, he has some layering ability -- he connected on a chip pass through multiple layers to send a man in on a break -- it was a 100 footer. He lacks pre-scanning and I question some of his reads of developing play -- put a teammates in a a tough spot with a backhand flip -- it was essentially a suicide pass if the defender was

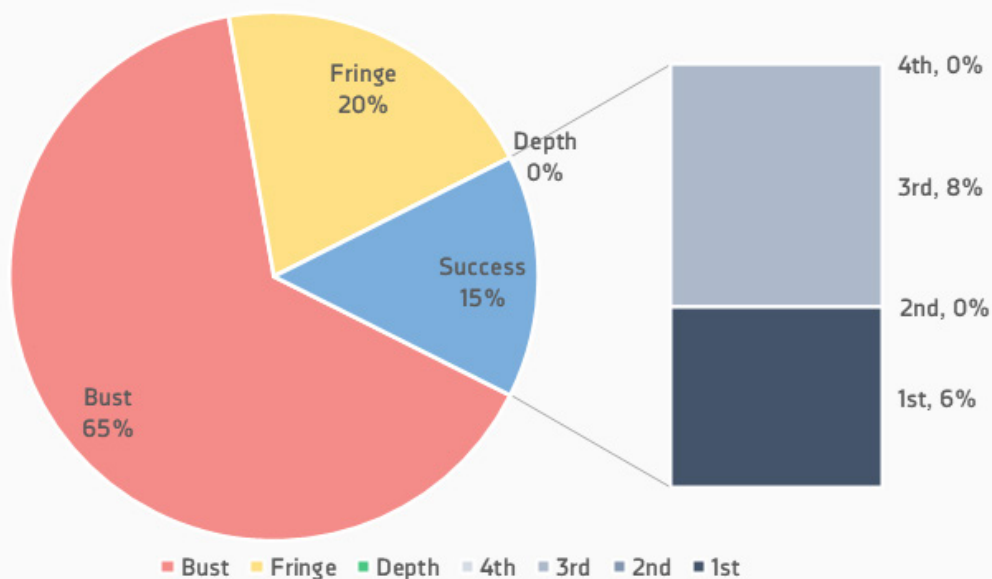
more physically inclined. Some carry habits -- about the only time you see any pace increases. In the third Forsmark carried in a puck, making a sharp cut to the middle, stringing a chip pass into a short breakaway to a streaking teammate. When set up on the blue line, handling errors caused multiple bobbles and panic sequences when he was faced with pressure. Forsmark's shot is hard -- unlocked top-arm with an immense amount of flex creates a whippy release. Some proactive habits on pinch plays as well. He had a wonderful pinch + stick check play in the third. Forsmark followed that up with a drag-inward curl and drag shot, changing the angle. Has some one-touch ability as well, especially when he activates. Forsmark obviously requires more viewings but right now he looks like a player who probably can't defend well enough when the uptick of speed is present.

"Forsmark's statistical profile is as exciting as it gets. Nearly an entire first year of draft-eligibility spent in a European professional league is always a great sign, and his 6-foot-2 frame is bound to help his odds, too. Don't be surprised to see this player go early in the second round, if not sooner."



### Simon Forsmark 2021-22 SHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.





61  
Rank

4  
Skating

5  
Shooting

6  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

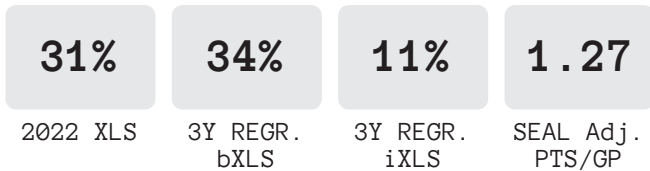
5.5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# DEVIN KAPLAN

RW | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. JAN. 10, 2004  
WEIGHT 198 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	53	13	25	38
USHL	22	8	10	18
WJC-18	6	1	5	6

> Committed to Boston Univ.

## Scouting Report

Few players work as an example of why Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown tracks such an expansive data set as Devin Kaplan. His surface-level stats may suggest that he was a passenger with the USNTDP U18, but the underlying data makes clear that he was one of the drivers of his line's success.

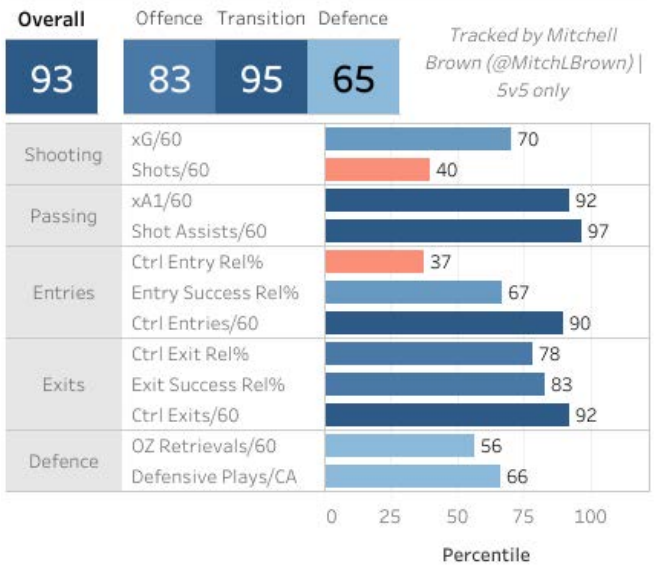
Kaplan has one of the better profiles in the entire dataset. He earned an overall score of 94 mostly because of his excellent rush-creation. And after learning of his great tracking results, our team took a closer look at his tape this season.

"The more I watch Kaplan, the more I appreciate his game," Brown wrote in an April report. "It requires a bit of imagination to see it in the NHL, but he's certainly intelligent enough. He delays at the right moments, inviting pressure before passing. Anticipates teammates moving into space and hits them with the lead pass. Looks to the inside and cross-ice for options rather than forcing a low-percentage shot or up-the-boards dump."

Kaplan's progression was quite staggering over the course of the season. His skating will remain a large obstacle in his path to the NHL, but the American prospect showed this season that he has the tools to overcome it.

His passing ability is at the core of his game. The plays he can't connect with his speed, he finds ways to complete with smart and quick feeds. With give-and-gos, Kaplan moves around defenders in the neutral zone and escapes scrums

Games Tracked: 12 | Minutes Tracked: 152.8



along the boards, and with backhand and spin passes, he finds lanes to teammates in the slot for scoring chances.

Kaplan can also finish passing plays himself, but like everything else in his game, his release is affected by his suboptimal footwork that doesn't allow him to maximize its precision and power. To become a consistent NHL scorer, a top-nine contributor, Kaplan will have to work to add more flexibility, agility, and strength to his movements.

The defensive value he provides and the aforementioned playmaking skill still represent a strong foundation on which to build a game worthy of the NHL.



## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Jason Gregoire YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 92%	2 Louis Leblanc YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 92%	3 Justin Abdelkader YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 91%	4 Vinni Lettieri YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 91%	5 J.B. Bittner YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 90%
6 Seth Ambroz YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 90%	7 Jason Zucker YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 89%	8 Zemgus Girgenson YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 89%	9 Bryan Rust YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 88%	10 Kyle Okposo YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 88%

## Game Reports

**Dylan Griffing:** April 23rd, 2022

USA U18 vs. Canada U18 - U18-WC

Pretty bread and butter game for Kaplan here. He is always looking to attract pressure as soon as he gets the puck while keeping his head up and surveying his options. The execution of his passes wasn't exactly ideal, but the ideas were there always. His forechecking presence was great here, chasing down the puck with constant pressure applied, using his reach advantage to steal possession, and fighting off the defenders when he got control of the puck to wait for help to arrive and try to get an attack going. I love how hard he chases his own dumps or off-target shots, while his skating is... bad, he still gets there and then has that physical edge to win it back.

I've been a Kaplan fan all season long and see him as a late-first round option. While his skating is a major downfall in his game and there isn't a clear path for improvement in that regard, I don't feel it's something that is going to limit his game moving forward. The patience and intelligence he plays with is at the level that he can control the pace of play with the puck on his stick and be a facilitator at the slower offensive speed. He's always looking to attack the inside while drawing defenders close to him. The playmaking ability is standout in this class and he accompanies it with the strong forecheck presence and a solid defensive game – using his awareness and play recognition to keep a positive body position on his target and then has the reach and physicality to jump up if need be.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

The more I watch Kaplan, the more I appreciate his game. It requires a bit of imagination to see it in the NHL, but he's certainly intelligent enough. He delays at the right moments, inviting pressure before passing. Anticipates teammates moving into space and hits them with the lead pass. Looks to the inside and cross-ice for options rather than forcing a low-percentage shot or up-the-boards dump.

The anticipation is also visible on the defensive end, but he's not proactive. His skating is the limiting factor. He's much better at establishing body positioning and winning battles now. To contribute offensively with skating as a weakness, he'll need to build off his delay game with deception and intentional manipulation. He'd be a solid mid-to-late second.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Kaplan's growth this season has been striking. Not only more confident, he's more aware of plays. Created several chances. Recovered his own dump-in for a point blank chance, and drove the net for an assist. Connected with a pair of tricky cross-slot passes, including a one-touch pass out of the corner. Recognized a passing lane and tried to manipulate the defenders – unsuccessful but the idea was sound. Where he used to offload possession, he cuts inside. Shot lacks some refinement, deeping his top hand too close to his hip and shooting off a near-straight leg. Awareness of backpressure is still developing, but it's easy to see the potential. He's intelligent, has some puck skills, and he's development curve has been sharp. Working on skating (ankle flexion and consistent posture, especially) will improve every area of his game. He'd be a solid mid-to-late second.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

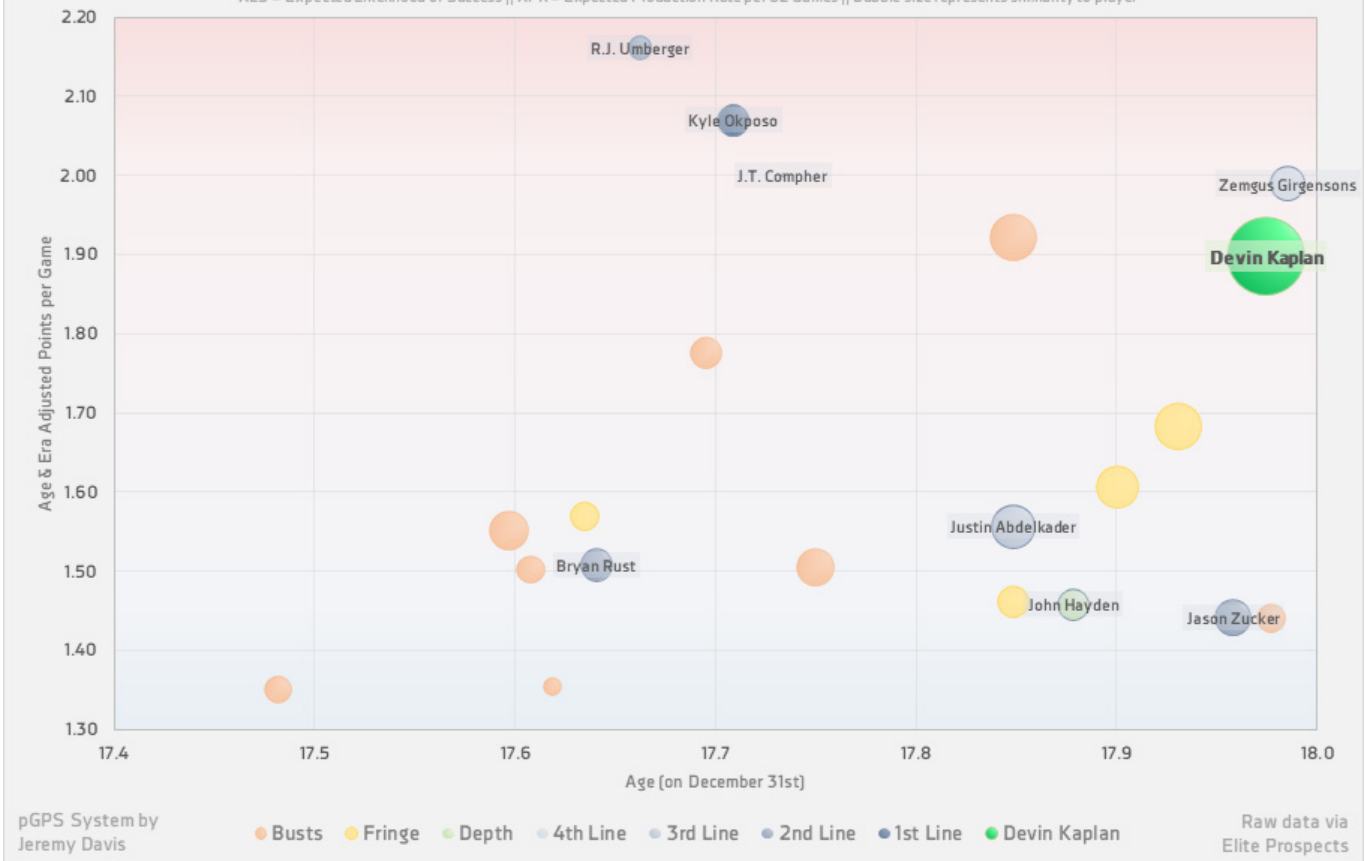
Kaplan keeps improving. Playmaking is his best element. He uses give-and-gos to escape the walls. Delays for pressure to arrive then passes through it. Connected with a tricky pass between two defenders for a point-blank chance. A couple of chances, too. One with using his playmaking to get the play to the middle and the other a classic off-puck skating sequence off the rush. His game lacks some nuance (he'll have to add more deceptiveness to his pass set ups), but he's clearly an intelligence off-puck player. There's some excitement for handling skill, but it only ap-

## Devin Kaplan 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 20 || Base XLS: 31% || Impact XLS: 17% || XPR: 40.3 || Drafted Pct: 70%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



appears if he's stationary or reacting to losing the puck. Too many poor first touches and he fights the puck when he's moving. Skating improvement is required, as it won't just help his skating. His hands will improve (more consistent depth), as will his puck protection, defence, and every area of his game.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Alright, Kaplan is good. This wasn't exactly a pretty performance by any metric, but here's a player who understands his limitations. He lacks ankle flexion and hip engagement; his heels kick and his chest collapses toward the ice. He has little quickness or puck protection ability. So, what does he do? Minimize the need to do either. He delays, waits for pressure, and then passes. Where most players rush ahead, he reloads or waits. Even smaller puck decisions suggest an intention delay game, where he waits for a split second longer than most players to ensure that the defender is committed to him. He connected with a ton of a cross-ice passes, creating space up the ice. He's a disruptor on the defensive end and backcheck, although he'll lose some of that value if the skating doesn't improve

(too reactive). Takes more a playmaking role offensively, highlighted with a pass to the inside from behind the net for a scoring chance. He's basically the NTDP's Šapovaliv. He could be a second-rounder.

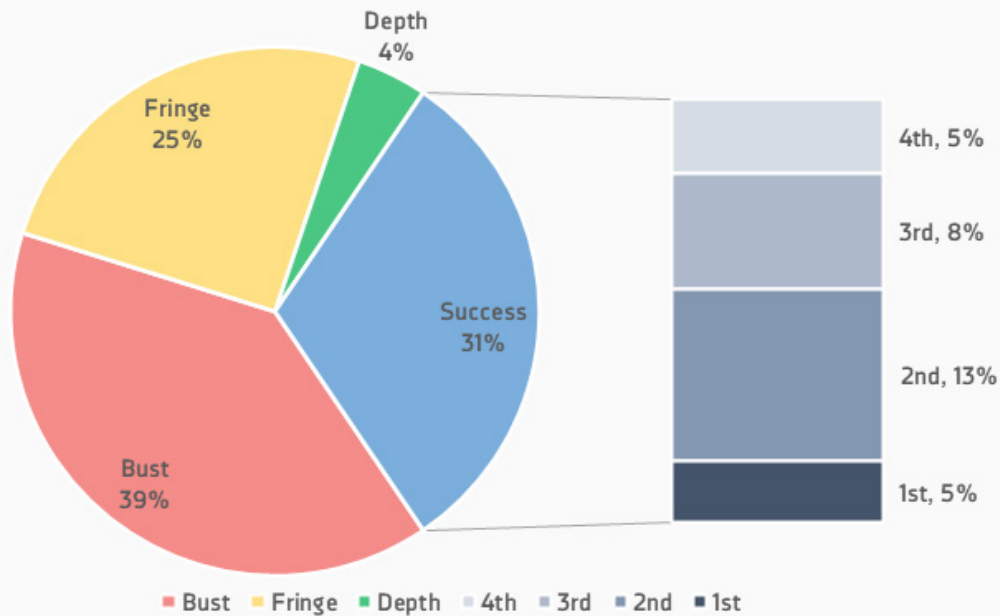
**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Best game I've seen from Kaplan. He had a goal, an assist, and several good looks. Quick on-and-off shot, adjusting his top hand to ensure that he got everything on the shot for his goal. Best when shooting off the pass, although he struggles to generate downforce through his lower body. Scoring instincts looked like a strength, positioning himself in the right areas at the right speed. Lack of awareness of threats prevented him from establishing body positioning in one off puck sequence for what could've been his best chance of the game. Right now, he's very limited as a skater: barely gets his knees to his toes, drops his chest toward the ice, has limited skating skills. There's no explosiveness to his game. It affects his board play, but he's quite intelligent in those situations, timing turns, contact, and passes to best protect the puck. Some passing skill: spin passes, slick backhands to the inside, and a wicked

## Devin Kaplan 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



shot-pass to the inside for an assist. Apart from his assist, his lack of deception (pre-shot, pre-shot, handling) limits his effectiveness. The skating limitations force him into straight-line rushes, and while he delays on occasion, he didn't show any awareness of trailing options or teammates behind him – would've saved him a few turnovers.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

With the NTDP down to three lines, everyone played big minutes. Kaplan made the most of it. This was the best performance I've seen from him, challenging my belief that he's mostly the tertiary player on any line he plays. His passes lack layers, but he moves the puck quickly. In this game, that culminated with several high-danger chances, including a couple under sticks. Perhaps the lack of deception hurts in lower event games. The shot requires a bit of work, especially the feet, but he mostly found himself in the right areas. Best in transition, where he excels by arriving late into space, building speed under the puck first or sneaking the boards as the trailer. I need to keep a closer eye on him, he looked like a mid-rounder in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Kaplan's most just a facilitator. He roams the ice, gets the puck, and quickly offloads to it a better-positioned

teammate. Usually makes a positive play, but never the best play. As usual, he had his one sequence of standout skill. He stepped off the boards, deked around one player, and then fired a quick angle-changing wrister. Was off-balance for most of the sequence, making me wonder if that's more of the limits of his skill rather than the beginnings of it. I didn't see a draft pick in this game, even with his puck pursuit.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Kaplan's a facilitator. Sometimes, a skilled one. But mostly an average one. He makes the obvious pass early and with accuracy, and has some hand skills to beat sticks and skates into lanes. Sturdy enough under pressure to spin off a hit and start the cycle. Straight-line, very basic transition game. I didn't see a draft pick here, even with some defensive engagement.

**David St-Louis:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - NCAA

Kaplan didn't leave a big impression on me in this game, but I look down at my notes and there are a lot of positives. I noted a good defensive engagement, an ability to pass in transition, and to rush the puck himself in the offensive zone with some interesting rush patterns, weaving crossovers movements. He drove the net in the offensive

zone and continued to display passing skills. I remember one of them in particular, a pass he made by extending his stick away from his body to hook or slip it around an opposing stick. Some interesting flashes suggest he has NHL qualities to offer.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

It seemed like Kaplan often had the right idea, but his execution was way off. He tried to bring the puck to the inside, looked for teammates in better positioning before shooting, and found space off-puck. Strong on retrievals and managed to escape the odd battle after getting pressure on his back. But his timing is way off. Lots of plays that were too late, too early, or simply inaccurate. That was across all three zones, but especially noticeable on the breakout.


**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Kaplan's skill level was quite inconsistent in this game, but there were some flashes. He used the inception of a weight shift to beat a couple of defenders, throwing in a look off to make up for his lack of outside edge engagement. Nearly connected with a few passes to the slot, but he generally plays more of an intermediary role in the offence. He's inefficient in transition, doesn't understand how to turn space in opportunities, and misses opportunities. Reminds me a bit of Liam Gilmartin: Skilled handler, but high inefficiency everywhere makes him a tertiary creator on which line he plays.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

Kaplan already has a pretty clearly defined role: He's checker with skill, there to win battles, support plays, and set up the odd look. He's shockingly effective, even if lacking timing and execution. Plays a give-and-go game, but also some handling skill, probably projectable to average, to walk around the odd defender. After passing, he immediately hustles to the net. Finishing off-puck skating routes consistently, either backing off the defender or sneaking behind them to free his stick in front of the lack. Skating's inconsistent, lacking ankle flexion, but he showed a tiny bit of quickness. If he tightens up the off-puck timing and passing, he could be a pick. 

**"To become a consistent NHL scorer, a top-nine contributor, Kaplan will have to work to add more flexibility, agility, and strength to his movements. The defensive value he provides and the aforementioned playmaking skill still represent a strong foundation on which to build a game worthy of the NHL."**



62  
Rank

C  
Grade

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

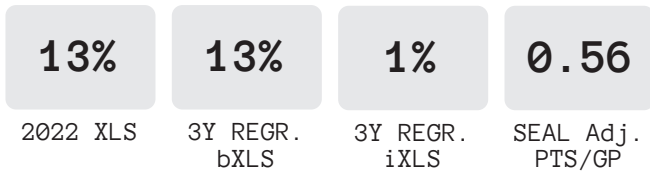
7.5  
Physical

# MAVERIC LAMOUREUX

D | DRUMMONDVILLE VOLTIGEURS

HEIGHT 6' 7"  
WEIGHT 198

D.O.B. JAN. 13, 2004  
SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	54	4	20	24

## Scouting Report

Maveric Lamoureux, a 6-foot-7 defenceman for the Drummondville Voltigeurs, has all the tools to succeed in the NHL.

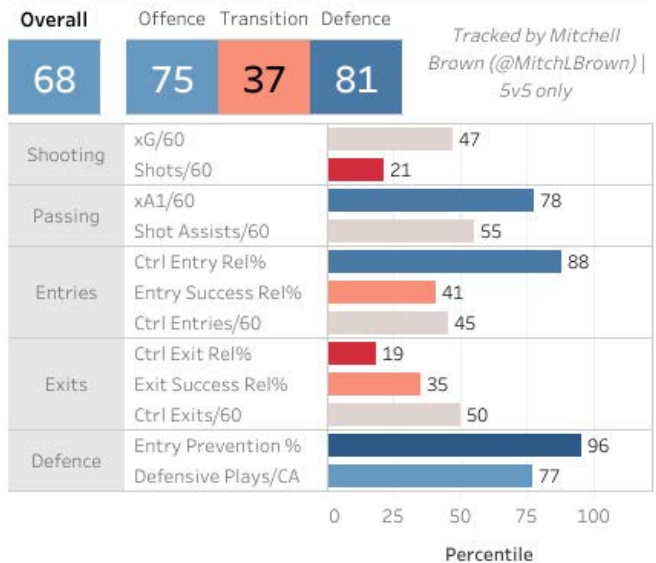
His stick reaches far past the one of his counterparts and his skating has a rare fluidity for a player his size. He also showed this season that he has the finer technical ability necessary to execute advanced offensive plays, like dangles at the point or passes through forecheckers on breakouts.

"Lamoureux was smoother in this game, in his puck-moving and point-play," wrote David St-Louis, Elite Prospects QMJHL scout, on April 14th, 2022. "He was back to manipulating defenders to open up lanes and clearly showed he has an understanding of how to do it."

While Lamoureux is much smoother mechanically than other players of his size, he was still the victim of frequent hiccups this season. The puck escaped him inside his moves. His rapid, continued growth spurts over the past three years could be responsible for those errors. We project that, once the defenceman settles into his final form, his skills should solidify themselves and become consistently NHL-caliber.

Defensively, Lamoureux loves to punish attackers entering his range. It's a characteristic that will endear him to professional coaches and earn him a lot of playing time, but Lamoureux will have to learn to better control it. His overly

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 145.7



reactive playstyle, his tendency to bite on attackers' feints and to commit hard too hard to a hit or a pokecheck, led to a lot of missed coverage this season.

Before picking Lamoureux, a scouting staff has to consult their development team. The Voltigeurs defenceman is a large project to take on, literally, but a patient organization with a focused and layered development approach could transform Lamoureux into a poised, bottom-three, shutdown defenceman.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Alex Grant YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 91%	2 Jeremie Blain YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 90%	3 Luc Bourdon YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 90%	4 Brent MacLellan YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 89%	5 Eric Gelinis YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 89%
6 Drew Paris YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 88%	7 Konrad Abeltshauser YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 87%	8 Oskars Bartulis YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 87%	9 Jesse Goodsell YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 86%	10 Yann Sauve YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 86%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 9th, 2022

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Blainville-B.Armada - QMJHL

Another ugly showing from Lamoureux. This time, Lamoureux was getting picked apart defensively. The Armada realized that a simple soft chip that forces him to pivot equals free entry. He bit on the slightest fakes, overplayed the interception at the blue line, and ended up chasing too often. Pivots have power. He can't recover. But he's physical and tries to close out fast. With the puck, he made a couple of slick breakout passes under pressure and kept the turnovers to minimum. But there was nothing on the offensive end. Whiffed on plays and struggled with the puck. He didn't look much like a draft pick in this game, but that he has some mechanical fluidity and a shocking number of advanced ideas gives me a bit of hope. He'll play in the NHL for sure. Development will dictate if he's any good.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 6th, 2022

Blainville-B.Armada vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Tough one for Lamoureux. Had a significant breakdown as he turned to face the play and push the puck with backhand, leading to a goal against. The same issues on breakouts were present, but with none of the interesting ideas. Same thing from the point – no activation or proactive reads. Defensively, he's interesting. Doesn't just concede ground like other big defenders. He gaps up early, takes away middle, and pushes plays to the outside. Forces a ton of dump-ins and often gets stops in complex situations that many players can't. Defensive zone coverage is mostly reactionary instead of proactive scanning and proper athletic posture. The aggression hides a lot of the warts. Hardly a pick based on this game, but I've seen better from him.

**David St-Louis:** April 17th, 2022

Victoriaville Tigres vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

One of the better performances I've seen from Lamoureux from a technical standpoint. I didn't see the handling miscues that are often present in his game this season. His tools rank quite high in fact: top-hand away from body, smooth and narrow dribbling motion, good flexion in strides (especially for

his size)... His decisions with the puck are still questionable (a ton of shots fired at shin pads in this game and a couple of passes to covered teammates), but there are also flashes of playmaking ability, like the time he activated down, got to the far-post, scanned in front of the net, and deflected a puck to a teammate there for a great scoring chance. He's still very physical and aggressive defensively, but incredibly reactive in his movements.

**David St-Louis:** April 14th, 2022

Blainville-B.Armada vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Lamoureux was smoother in this game, in his puck-moving and point-play. He was back to manipulating defenders to open up lanes and clearly showed he has an understanding of how to do it. The puck control was better and the agility, too. He's still a bit lost off-puck defensively, really late on his check, but his stature served him. He cross-checked an opponent on the back which plastered him to the ice, took the puck, and started the breakout. You know what they say: you can't teach size.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Drummondville V. vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Lamoureux continues to flash some interesting ideas in all three zones. In the offensive zone, he activates, often ahead of the play. He anticipates openings and makes sure to become an option. He turns shots into passes from the far corners of the offensive zone. In transition, he uses the middle, tries to slip pucks through defenders, and identifies cross-lane opportunities. Does he connect on most of his ideas? No, but he's not too far off. The shots having these lengthy wind ups despite acceptable form. He'd be better off relying more on his vision for success. Defensively, he's ultra-physical and gets on players early. It's pretty exciting to watch. I have no idea how to project him beyond that he's likely to play. It'll be so dependent on whether the flashes of skill expand as he grows more coordination or dissipate as he settles into a shutdown role to make the NHL.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Drummondville V. vs. Baie-Comeau Drakkar - QMJHL

Lamoureux's clumsy, often reactive, and misses the best play on most of his touches. Still, he's fascinating. Not just because he's tall. If he were 6'0", he'd still be one of the more interesting players in the draft class. From the point, he combines habits and the odd intelligent play. Takes pucks in motion, then looks inside for a passing option. Doesn't make complex reads, but he's ahead of the curve for a QMJHL defenceman. And those habits mean that he could add more nuance. He's quite deceptive on the breakout and shows a high willingness to use the inside. Defence is half great, half bad. There are moments of angling, early gap closures, and projectable physicality. There are moments where he can't pivot and the opposition beats without him much friction. Reactive in his own zone, but his wingspan fixes mistakes at this stage. Lamoureux's highly likely to play in the NHL because of his size, flashes of skill, and desire to play physical. Will he be any good? That depends on whether or not the team is willing to develop the reads and skills necessary to make use of his mechanics, flashes of playmaking, and habits.

**David St-Louis:** March 3rd, 2022

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Drummondville V. - QMJHL

Lamoureux is still mindlessly firing from the point. Is it him who decided to simplify his offensive game? Is it a coaching directive? I don't know, but it's not working. His shots are super easy to block because of the loading time and the lack of pre-movement. His hard pinches broke the Cataractes's attack a couple of times, but also cost him other times. He's much smoother in terms of handling ability and skating in these latter games than at the start of the season. Maybe he could become a n.5 or 6 defenceman in the NHL, but the certainty is low because the hockey sense doesn't rank high enough (4.5-5).

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Québec Remparts vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Lamoureux will require some serious development work if he is going to become a useful top-4 NHL defender. He doesn't trust himself to make plays on breakouts anymore; everything is glass-and-out. Maybe it's a coaching directive, but it doesn't look good. He activates and creates controlled offensive zone entries when he has space, when there is an easy path in the zone, and shows some deceptive habits. Does his understanding of playmaking go past these deceptive habits? I don't think so. Offensively he is limited by his clumsy mechanics but he could develop into a much more effective

quarterback with reps and talent around him. Defensively, it's excessively easy for attackers to make plays through him or even beat him with speed. He doesn't make great reads (risk mitigation is nonexistent) either.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2021

Québec Remparts vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Lamoureux takes himself out of the play trying to hit at times, but I liked the physical penchant in his game. He showed the same defensive care. He's not effective (he lacks the anticipation, the tracking, and the defensive spacing), but at least the effort could lead to better results down the road, once he plays in a better system and learns to use his tools to their potential (and works around their limitations). I didn't like his puck management: multiple bombs into traffic that his teammate had no chance of catching. His handling failed him multiple times in this game. He missed receptions, passes, and handling moves. Not sure what to make of him. He's an interesting project, but everything has to be built/rebuilt in his game. The size, range, mobility, confidence, and offensive flashes could make him a B prospect for us, but I expect he ends up more of a C.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 9th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Lamoureux separated from forecheckers with speed alone multiple times. He also tries plenty of skilled plays. He activates into the rush, jumps into space from the point, winds up shots that become passes, and looks to use the middle on breakouts. Links his gap control to offence by taking aggressive positioning and pinching when possible. Rare tall defender who actually gets on his check early and even angles attacks. He's very physical, often needlessly so. He gets on the wrong side of the puck too often in defensive zone coverage. Are the turnovers and poor reads the consequence of an inability to read the play or his mechanical limitations (every action has a massive wind up because of his puck positioning). If it's the former, how much can we expect it to improve? If it's the latter, that he already has so many modern details in his game (move through pass receptions, deceive, use middle) means that hip pocket handling will be a natural addition to his game. There are definitely some signs that it's both. Multiple times in this game, he didn't read the feet of incoming defenders – instead sticking to his original play and turning the puck over. Tries to force plays through defenders when the lane is clogged, and he's not manipulating to open it. Still no closer to a projection.

## Maveric Lamoureux 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 16 || Base XLS: 12% || Impact XLS: 0% || XPR: 0 || Drafted Pct: 81%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**David St-Louis:** December 4th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

For such a large skater, Lamoureux is quite smooth, especially in backward crossovers and drives. He doesn't get beat wide and his gap is...reasonably tight (it could improve further). His long limbs remove a bit of stability in one-on-one engagements, however. You could see it when he found himself defending Louis Crevier, the Rempart's own giant, net-front. Lamoureux tried to move Crevier but he only recoiled out of position. I liked his battle intensity there. Otherwise, he looked a bit behind the play, offensively and defensively. The pace of his decisions was slow. He also has trouble shaking the forecheck by himself. At his size, he is, of course, an inside-edge skater and this limits his forward agility. Lamoureux is a pick, but more of a B or probably a C grade, a mid-round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Drummondville V. - QMJHL

Nothing but turnovers from Lamoureux in this game, but I see the potential. He tries to deceive on retrievals, even with his feet (but he lacks the depth to flip his toe caps in tight). Activates, tries weight shifts, scans for options in the middle, then looks off and makes the pass. The deception

features pretty regularly in his game, whether that's on the powerplay or when activating. In transition, he tries to use the middle. Generally aware of his options but he can't move the puck into his hip pocket fast enough to access the lane. Defensively, he usually pivots early and tries to angle. If not, he uses heel pushes to generate speed while keeping his stick in the middle. Pivots lack any sort of push off power, but he times them. It's easy to see defensive skating becoming a strength as he gets stronger. Killed a ton of plays early, often inside the offensive zone. He really wants to play a physical game. It requires a lot of imagination, but there's potential here.

**David St-Louis:** October 1st, 2021

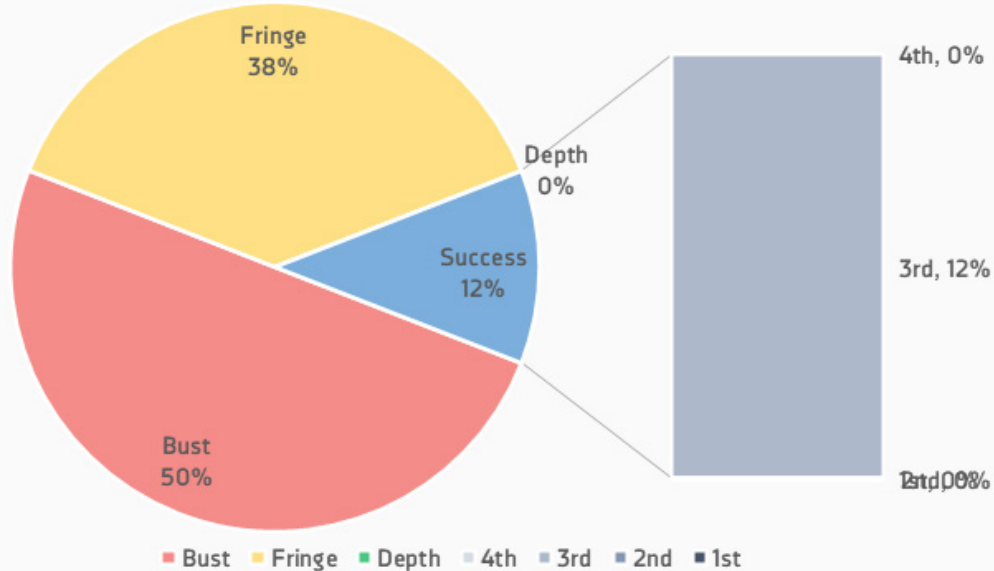
Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Val D'Or Foreurs - QMJHL

Not a good game for Lamoureux. Both his decision-making and his execution was problematic. He was reactive defensively, committing too hard with his footwork, and reacting late to rotations that were quite obvious. His large range gave him stopping power in between blue-lines, at times, however. His puck-moving was also problematic. There were a few nice short passes, but he also tried plays that had little chance of succeeding and threw pucks away. The puck escaped his stick repetitively this game and I didn't like his



## Maveric Lamoureux 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



shot selection in the offensive zone, the big slap-shots when he had space to attack down and fire on net from closer. A few bad pinches, too. He grew again this summer, I think. It might take him a bit of time to adjust.

**David St-Louis:** April 30th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

I like the control in Lamoureux's game. Most defencemen his size are out there reaching for every puck and getting beat wide as a result. Not Lamoureux. He keeps a relatively strong skating posture (it's still a weakness of his game) and defensive side positioning, letting attackers run to the corner. Of course, every part of his rush defence could improve but considering his age and his rapid growth spurt, I think we can be more lenient here. Good habits on retrievals: scanning and identifying easy escape routes. He can't explode away from anybody right now, but he finds outlets. He also walks the blue-line (although he could identify lanes and manipulate a bit better) and I like his offensive ideas. Not sure he is a great anticipator of the game, but he is willing to make plays through defensive lines. He sees them. Probably a first-round pick in 2022.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 28th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

Impressive offensive performance from Lamoureux. He manipulates defenders to open lanes, hit teammates moving into space, and activated from the point several times. Used space before firing. Took passes in motion. Struggled in transition because of inconsistent skating posture, body

positioning, and a lack of strength hurt his retrievals. Still, when he has a bit of space, he makes high-level reads, using deception to pass up the middle. Skating lacks a ton of depth, but he covers ground moderately quickly. Weak on his edges; really unstable at the best of times. Gets on his check early in the NZ and forces dump-ins. Quite aware defensively but his skating is limiting, he ends up relying on his reach over positioning a ton. A pretty exciting player.

**David St-Louis:** April 28th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

Lamoureux is willing to make plays. He doesn't just shoot from the point, but looks for passes inside the defensive box. If he has an opportunity (a pretty evident one), he can also manipulate high defenders. I doubt he is ever capable of using those skills in the NHL, if he makes it, it will be more as a shutdown defenceman, a physical, rangy presence. He's already pretty mean in his defence, not afraid to crosscheck and hit. He's used on the half-wall on the powerplay, which suggests to me that he's a powerful shooter.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 27th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

Lamoureux's tall, weak, and awkward, but it's clear he's a smart player. He manipulates forecheckers with full-body deception, uses the middle in transition, and has the perfect amount of patience. Sometimes, he loses the puck or his feet fail him. Offensively, he takes pucks in-motion and looks to the middle before shooting -- one time, that resulted in an awesome shot-pass into the slot where he manipulated the



nearest defender's feet with a series of fakes. He's constantly improving defensively, and it was evident in this game. Killed plays early in the NZ without committing footwork. Scanned for threats and eliminated them swiftly. Understands how to mirror footwork along the boards and close space, but he's just too awkward at this stage to really keep up. And, as usual, he really wants to be a physical presence out there. Likely long-term but the potential is incredible. 16-year-olds don't make the plays that he does in the CHL at this stage.

**David St-Louis:** March 4th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Blainville-B. Armada - QMJHL

Lamoureux has some mobility issues which limits his dangling ability, but his poise stands out, offensively and defensively. He scans for outlets/threats and can problem-solve in tight. He puts the right weight on his passes, sends them into space for teammates to pick them up, or lasers them through two zones. He seems to know the right play and recognize offensive advantages, but he can't really execute on those most of the time as he can't separate all that easily. His defensive footwork is very committing; he has to lunge at the right time as he can't fluidly pivot.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2021

Drummondville V. vs. Chicoutimi Saguenéens - QMJHL

Lots of interesting stuff from Lamoureux in this game. He certainly has the potential to become an above-average skater with improved ankle flexion. He almost gets enough flexion,

but can't keep that posture consistently. Still, he shows some in-tight escapability, sturdy-enough edges, and intelligent skating routes on retrievals. Always looks to the inside first on the breakout. Takes and makes passes in motion, and consistently looks to activate into the rush. His routes and reads lack some polish and adaptability, but that he's trying to be an option is impressive at this stage. Active off-puck from the point, and steps into space before firing. Disrupts plays in the NZ effectively, although caught watching instead of managing space a few times. He wants to be physical and a difference-maker defensively, but struggles to consistently break up plays. Some off-puck instincts but masked by inconsistent defensive posture and scanning. I wonder what his game looks like with a bit more confidence in his hands and feet. More deception will help, too.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2020

Victoriaville Tigres vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Execution's an issue, but Lamoureux has lots of great ideas driving his game. He tries desperately to be extremely physical, but bounces off checks. In transition, he tries to deceive, occasionally activates after making an in-motion pass, and uses the inside, but his reads are inconsistent. In the offensive zone, he shows creativity, but he just can't quite connect. Defensively, he's already a positive. Not just through his attempts at physicality, but the tight gaps, mobility, and aggression. Lots of potential in the other two-thirds of the game.



63  
Rank

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# MIKEY MILNE

LW | WINNIPEG ICE

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. SEP. 21, 2002  
WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS LEFT

16%	15%	5%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	68	38	43	81

## Scouting Report

You shouldn't be reading about Mikey Milne in a 2022 NHL Draft guide. In a just world, some team would've snagged him in the middle of last year's draft and they'd be looking pretty sharp for making that sort of investment, too.

Maybe the second time's the charm for the Abbotsford product, who checks in for hopefully one last time in an Elite Prospects draft ranking.

Certainly, the statistical profile should be enough to warrant the attention of some teams. Milne exploded on the score sheet, going from 12 points in 14 games last year to 81 in 68 this season. It wasn't uncommon for the Ice forward to draw praise from our staff as the best player on a stacked Winnipeg Ice team that made it all the way to the WHL's Eastern Conference finals.

While not necessarily short on skill, Milne's at his most potent as an off-puck scoring threat. He consistently scans for soft ice, makes well-timed entries into that space and positions himself to make quick plays on pass receptions, all

while dominating physically at the net-front, gaining inside positioning so that he's always first on loose pucks.

There's no reason Milne can't leverage this hard skill to produce tertiary offence at the next level, but the real selling point of his game is on the defensive side of things.

An absolute nuisance in the defensive zone, Milne scans off-puck for threats and closes with force as plays develop, always taking that extra stride to make contact where others lunge with their stick from a glide. The motor never stops running with this player, making him an absolute force on retrievals, too -- this also applies on the forecheck.

We may not expect Milne to go especially high in this draft -- even our ranking may be a bit charitable -- but there's no reason for him to pass through unclaimed for a second straight year. You're not getting a player with top-six potential out of Milne, but there's a pretty straightforward path to a bottom-six role with some penalty killing upside here.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Henrik Samuelsson YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 97%	2 Greg Chase YEAR: 2014 SIMILARITY: 96%	3 Dominik Uher YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 96%	4 Kenndal McArdle YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 96%	5 Jarret Lukin YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 96%
6 Max Reinhart YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 96%	7 Tim Kraus YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 96%	8 Dustin Sylvester YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 96%	9 Jordin Tootoo YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 96%	10 Justin Cox YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 95%

**Mitchell Brown:** May 13th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

Another game where Milne was Winnipeg's best player. Chips pucks into space, hunts them down, and attacks the net. Several clever tricks on retrieval: early contact, turning his back to their back, and reaching around to hit the puck into space. From there, he looks to the middle immediately. Played more of a playmaking role in this game, setting up a goal with a cross-slot pass and making positive plays in transition. Skating still lacks refinement, but his output's high. He's an NHLer. Could be a late-second.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 11th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

I appreciate Milne's consistency. Every viewing has the same result. He gets open consistently, even inside multiple defenders in the slot. The shooting mechanics aren't perfect, but they work for him. His game isn't based around shooting mechanics anyway. Some questionable playmaking decisions, but that he's trying to play a more diverse game bodes well for his NHL future. A non-stop force on the defensive end. Constantly scanning. Proactive. Piles up the steals with non-stop pressure but never overextends. He's an NHLer. A fourth liner, probably.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 15th, 2022

Calgary Hitmen vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

Milne did that thing again when he outraces everyone to the net and scores. It was cool. He's a skilled handler with lots of control on his edges. Plays fast and plays up the middle. Always tries to make plays off the boards to the inside. His growth across the ice has been significant this year, whether that his passing reads, defensive timing, or rush patterns. He's an NHLer.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

I just repeat myself every time, but it's still worth writing these. Milne's an inside-driven shooter with improving playmaking. He identifies teammates in high-value positions but doesn't always choose the right pass. He's not manipulative, but he's somewhat creative. Adapts his game to his linemates and the situation. Sometimes, he needs to slow down and extend possession instead of forcing a play to the middle. The tools are probably NHL-calibre across the board now. He's a pick, probably as a late-second. Should be a long-term NHL player.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 21st, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Edmonton Oil Kings - WHL

Milne didn't get a ton going in this game, mostly MD looks. The usual forechecking, defence, and off-puck offence were here, however. He's such a consistently strong player in key areas for bringing his game to the next level. But watching this game, it's clear that his game will always be dependent on his linemates. He's puck-battler and shooter, while his teammates make transition plays and divert defensive attention. Probably third or fourth liner. Late-second or early-third in this class.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Winnipeg Ice vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Benson and Milne continue to battle for the best player on Winnipeg, outshining Geekie and Savoie consistently. They did it again tonight. Milne finishes every route, which Benson rewarded with his passing. Milne had one-timers from the slot, HD chances after sprinting past defenders in the NZ, and individual net drives. Body positioning and ability to play through contact are strengths. He's a non-stop presence on the forecheck from his physicality, anticipation, and timing. He has complex passing ideas with poor completion, but his passing skill off retrievals will translate. Milne's a projectable player in almost every regard: skating, shooting, passing, defence, off-puck offence, transition, and forechecking. Will he become a top-six player? Probably not. But he's a good bet to become a third or fourth liner who can adapt his game to his linemates.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 27th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Milne is Milne. He's the driving force of the Ice. He's always attacking the inside lane, whether that's after a crafty retrieval, battle win, or forecheck steal. Took a puck off the boards and drove inside for a scoring chance. Passing game continues to tighten, now consistently hitting teammates in scoring position and occasionally identifying the best play. Unlikely to become a lane creator at this stage, but his pace, physicality, and scanning habits ensure that he'll create a bit for his teammates at the next level. Second-rounder this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 20th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

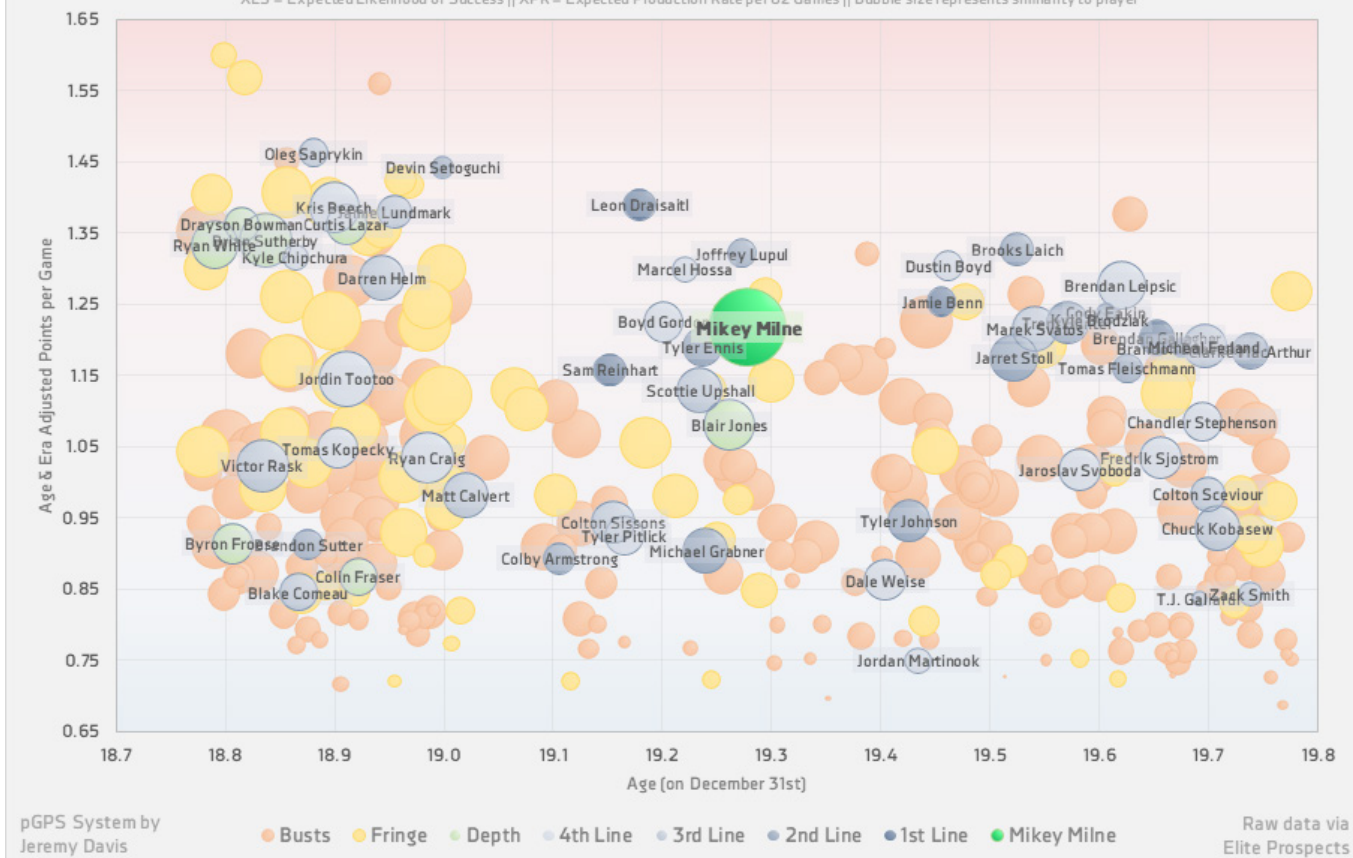
Milne's the WHL's leading even-strength scorer for a reason. He's very inside-driven, setting up the trap on defenders by skating up the boards, waiting for their reaction, and using a punch turn escape. He doesn't overhandle the puck, usually makes the best play (a huge development since last year), and consistently finds himself alone in the slot. Some of his off-puck reads are great, like jumping around a defender at the right time or playing between checks without getting

## Mikey Milne 2021-22 WHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 310 || Base XLS: 16% || Impact XLS: 5% || XPR: 34.7 || Drafted Pct: 61%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



caught. The shot's cleaner, he's uses his teammates better in transition, and he's just a forechecking monster. The stride still needs some clean up but he gets his knees over his toes and generates power. He's an '02, which complicates things a bit. But he might actually be a second-rounder. It's clear what he's going to bring every night: defence, forechecking, and offence. The passing accuracy needs work, but he's answered every single question about his game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Saskatoon Blades vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Milne is, well, Milne. It's the same stuff every game: off-puck movement and timing, very inside driven, physical, and a menace without the puck. His versatility's going to make him a coach's favourite. He's not particularly creative, but he has a number of ways to get the middle of the rink from the boards. He spins away from pressure, runs through it, or dekes it on occasion. He's not the highest upside pick out there. The skating's still has untapped power with a lack of hip engagement that his feet kick wildly. Not even sure if that's a big deal. Either way, he looks like a second rounder. What a breakout.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Edmonton Oil Kings - WHL

This is Milne's fourth year of eligibility in the WHL -- he's supposed to be good. But he's regularly outplaying Savoie, Geekie, and well, everyone. He's completely evolved from being simply an off-puck shooter. He's trying to set-up teammates regularly in situations where he previous shot, and he's becoming increasingly successful. Give-and-go game plays off his off-puck instincts and movement, but he's trying to string together passing sequences and play the set-up man for Geekie. He doesn't always choose the right pass for situation, but that he's identifying the best play now is huge. There's some manipulation in his game through handling and full-body deception that could easily become a lane-opening tool. The skating hasn't improved quite as much as I hoped, but everything checks out. He has third-line upside, for sure. Would be absurd if he went undrafted again.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 26th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

As usual, Milne was everywhere. He hustled back to break up a clear-cut breakaway and intercepted another pass for a point-blank look. Just non-stop disruption. Some standout retrieval plays, one-touching the puck into the inside and

beating defenders into the slot. Skating mechanics still require improvement, especially through the hips, but he generates power and outraces players regularly. Scored a tap-in goal on the PP, but it was playmaking that shone. He set-up two high-danger opportunities through layers and connected both, including one with a one-touch pass off the boards. He's definitely a draft pick this year.

**David St-Louis:** October 20th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

I don't understand why Milne didn't get drafted. He is driving his line. Literally. His motor never stops and his pressure on the opposition is constant. He can set up others with his passing -- in one sequence, he challenged a defender to create space for a delay play and then connected with a trailing teammate for a scoring chance -- and he battles net-front for pucks, doing so intelligently. Milne works to get his stick free and first touch on the puck. He moves his feet, readjusts his positioning based on where shots and passes might be coming from; he sticklifts opponents and pushes them away. Defenders not only have to keep track of the puck as it moves around the offensive zone, but also of all the tricks Milne is pulling on them. I bet an NHL team grabs him this time around. The presence of Savoie and Geekie will help him get seen.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 16th, 2021

Regina Pats vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Milne's clearly made an effort improve his playmaking. Not every pass is perfect, and many aren't even close to their targets. He sees options but has no discretion -- he's in the experimentation phase. Some of the passes are quite intelligent, and many followed one of his numerous steals. That playmaking growth is a big deal for a player with such an advanced off-puck game across the rink. It adds new layers to his offence game. Maybe it doesn't translate to the pros, but he's moved so far to the passing side that I think this is real. He should definitely get drafted this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 15th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Milne's probably getting drafted this year. Yet again, he was the play-driver upfront for the Ice. Non-stop in every area of the game. Advanced understanding of body positioning and puck protection. Drives play to the inside and constant off-puck threat through movement and timing. His shot still needs some tweaking, but the biggest issue remains his playmaking. He threw a bunch of pucks into the slot, connecting on just one -- a gorgeous saucer pass for the middle-lane

driver. That he's slowing down to find those plays is huge, but his timing and accuracy are way off on most of them. He uses hook passes and tries to slip pucks through openings, but his passes usually end up behind his targets. Still, I think he's could become a long-term fourth-liner.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 6th, 2021

Regina Pats vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Yeah, Milne probably should've been drafted last year. He's a machine, getting involved in every battle, every footrace, and every backcheck. Non-stop pressure with physicality and pace. Attacks the inside with the puck, albeit he's a bit simple in his rush patterns and handling skill. Still, he prefers give-and-goes and passing sequences over individual skills. Finds pockets of space off-puck, always supporting or in scoring position with a freed stick. Very clearly making a conscious effort to play with creativity while building a playmaking game. Mixed execution and results, forcing plays that aren't there. He's probably a bottom-six player, but he has enough skill to help out two talented linemates and score goals in the NHL. Someone needs to pick him.

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Any coach would love this tape. If you wanted to sell them on Milne, this single game could do it. A lot of defensive details, scanning, reloading high ahead of change of possessions, effort on the forecheck, interceptions, steals combined with effort offensively, net-drives with and without the puck (scored from one) and smart off-puck movements. Timing and routes are on point; controls speed, reads the developing play a pass ahead, pops open...Love this player. His execution in possession lags behind his mind. Handling is a 5. He tried a lot of slip and slick passes this game that just failed because he can't register teammate and defender positioning as he handles. Ideas are right, but he needs skill development. Skating is potentially a 5.5. Good form and motor helps.

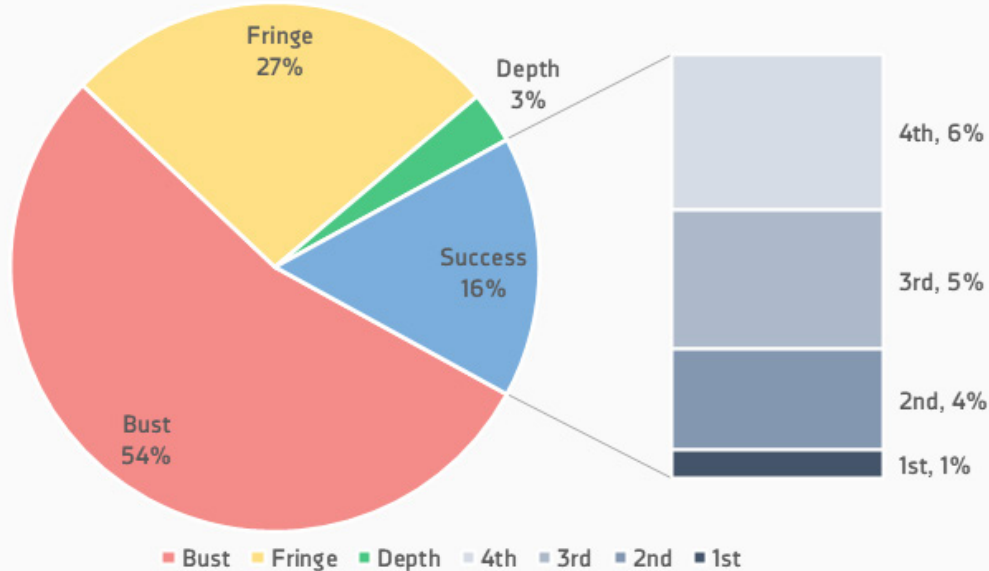
**Mitchell Brown:** April 21st, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Milne's motor never quits. He always puts himself in the middle of the play. Tons of pressure on the backcheck, forces plays up high then takes the puck away, and anticipates help defence opportunities. Some really impressive off-puck sequences to get the puck back. One, he saw the defence collapsing toward the net, so instead of rushing in, he peeled off to the top of the slot. Another saw him blitz the slot with perfect timing, could've been a chance had he gotten the

## Mikey Milne 2021-22 WHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



puck. He's so singularly focused on driving the net that he misses opportunities to distribute, but it's not for a lack of skill. Connected with a one-touch feed into the slot while pressured. Dump-and-chase oriented if the give-and-go isn't there, but places the puck into space to maximize odds for retrieval. He's getting drafted to be an energy/off-puck winger. Wouldn't be surprised to see him go in the second round, but he'll probably be a fringe second/early third for us because the upside's comparatively limited.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 12th, 2021

Regina Pats vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Milne's shooting mechanics desperately need improvement. That top arm stays locked to his side and he doesn't push his hands forward enough. It's not necessarily crippling in itself, but he's a shoot-first player. Speaking of that, Milne's off-puck instincts drive his offensive value. He slips behind his man, then darts in front with the incoming pass. He establishes positioning, then races to the net with perfect timing. He bobs in and out of scoring and supporting position, making his dash to the right area at the perfect time. He's going to post serious goal totals next season. Some low-percentage shots, but none left anything notable on the table. The off-puck instincts translate to transition, where he's always building speed under the puck and adjusting his route/speed to extend passing windows. Inside-driven. Shows some passing skill, but mostly vision. Clever backhand pass under a defender's stick for a HD look, as well as a cross-slot feed, but he fails to connect on too many plays. As usual, big-time defensive impact. He's probably just a fourth liner,

maybe a third liner if the shot and playmaking come along, but he's absolutely a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 10th, 2021

Prince Albert Raiders vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Milne's a shooter without a threatening shot -- that much is obvious by now. He's so inside-driven, so determined, that he creates opportunities regardless. Very limited wheelhouse, in addition to locked top elbow. Hunts give-and-goes, and adjusts his route according to play around him. Legitimate NHL timing skills, bouncing between support, net-front battles, and playing between checks like a future 20-goal scorer. Doesn't mess around with the puck on the outside lane: he's trying to bring it inside on the first touch. Much better distribution in this game, hitting a hook pass through two defenders for an assist. He tried two other feeds into the slot that didn't click. Still left some value on the table with his sharp-angle shots with teammates on the inside. Even just a delay/reset along the boards would take his game to another level offensively. High motor offensively and gets the jump on a ton of pucks going to the point. Anticipates the next play next play defensively, and plays within his skill set. The probable outcome is a fourth liner, even with his off-puck game. If the offensive decision-making and skill improve substantially (that's a lot to ask), perhaps he's a versatile top-nine winger. Probably an early third.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 7th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

Milne plays like an NHLer. It's not just the non-stop mo-

tor; it's the reads: the way that he's always positioned to disrupt plays, his anticipation to jump into passing lanes for interceptions, the timed checks to dislodge possession, and the instantaneous transition between off-puck and on-puck decisions. He links together backchecks, down-low retrievals, give-and-goes, and net-front movement better than most players in the draft class. The skill's limited, but rarely will he pass up a give-and-go or place-and-chase opportunity for 1-on-1 skill. Better playmaking in this game compared to previous viewings: a HD feed after barrelling down the outside to a teammate who jumped in front of his defender, and nearly connected with a similar play off the backhand later in the game. Hard-work resulted in a goal, where he then pushed off his defender with the point shot, which he corralled and fired on net. Skating lacks depth, but he has quickness at this level and routinely finds a bit of separation. Uses physicality to establish space with the puck. Sure, the upside's limited, but no issues with him in the second round.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 6th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Milne's a shooter with flawed shooting mechanics. He locks his top elbow to his side, and keeps his hand along his torso -- he doesn't have any power. It's like he's shooting with a broom. Getting past that, it's clear he has draftable qualities. His off-puck offensive game is legit. When not supporting, he's actively clearing space for his teammates to work. Finishes every off-puck route, and adjusts his route and speed to ensure he's always a passing option. Plays between checks and finds space around the slot -- he has scoring instincts, basically. Inside-driven, peeling away checks to drive the inside. Off-puck intelligence and energy translate to the DZ, where he turns potential shots into turnovers and hunts down possession. Links together offence and defence. Limited playmaking ability probably means a bottom-six player if that archetype still exists. Proper ankle flexion but his hips are too high, with his back parallel to the ice. End-of-board type.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Regina Pats - WHL

The shift-to-shift, game-to-game consistency of Milne's really impressive. He does the same things every game, at the same rate, and without making many mistakes. Absolute weapon defensively, grabbing several steals at the point, turning backchecks into offence, winning retrievals, and intercepting passes on the forecheck. He instantly flips from defence to offence, largely because he scans for the next play while engaging. Off-puck instincts are better than his on-puck

ones. Finds space around the net, battles at the right times and pushes off into space at the right time. Physical with and without the puck. A bit too reliant on chip-and-chase plays. Weirdly enough, he was better in transition on the PK in this game, flashing some handling skill to get the defender to centre his weight so he could beat him wide. Passing's a bit all over the place, but it's clear he recognizes teammates in better positioning. He's just so locked into getting to the net that he can't change pace to complete the pass. He's definitely a pick, maybe as high as the second round, but probably more of a third-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Prince Albert Raiders - WHL

Milne's stride looked better in this game than in previous viewings. He loaded his stride properly, finished his strides, recovered under the shoulders while driving his legs forward. Better off-puck than with it, Milne used his skating, timing, and awareness to become a consistent threat off the rush and in OZP. Adjusts route to maximize his likelihood of getting the puck, and establishing positioning on the nearest defender, directly leading to his goal. Understands his skill set, preferring give-and-goes in transition. Very net-focused, leading to a missed opportunity to set up a teammate for a scoring chance as he took a no-chance shot. High engagement and always involved defensively. Looks like a pick, but outcome here is mostly a complementary bottom-sixer.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 11th, 2020

Red Deer Rebels vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

An impressive performance from Milne, who's really becoming a player after a poor start to his WHL career. His skating requires significant work, but he constantly uses crossovers in place of strides and the mohawk to slip around defenders and face the slot. He lacks ankle flexion, but sits back into stride, causing a massive torso lean -- whereby his knee is basically touching chest. His recoveries are wide, too. He showed some NHL quality skill on the forecheck, poking away possession before bringing the puck into the slot and making a play. His puck skills seemed limited, beyond a catch-and-release goal from the slot, but with few layers, flatfooted, and no pressure. He recognizes his weaknesses, playing more a place-and-chase and pass-first game in transition, but his individual lack of skill probably makes him a late-round pick, at best. The fundamentals, especially his off-puck defensive game, are pretty advanced for his age. He's worth a closer look.





64  
Rank

4.5  
Skating

6  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

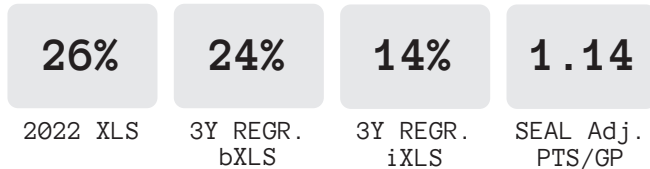
4.5  
Hockey Sense

6.5  
Physical

# FRASER MINTEN

F | KAMLOOPS BLAZERS

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. JUL. 5, 2004  
WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	67	20	35	55

## Scouting Report

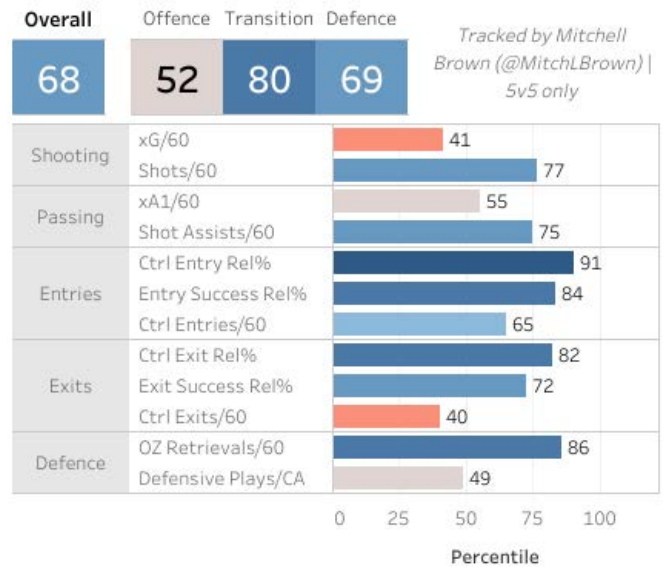
For the better part of two seasons, Fraser Minten's game was a collection of interesting tools, but lacked the glue to hold them together. He showed shooting, passing, handling, and physical skills, but always independently. Well, that was until the final few months of the season, where everything came together into one skilled, violent package.

Shooting and physicality are Minten's defining skills. A powerful one-timer, a smooth curl-and-drag wrister, and two-touch wristers make him equally effective shooting in space as he is under pressure. While he lacks the off-puck timing characteristic of NHL finishers, he shifts between the net front and outer slot to maximize his odds of getting a feed.

Early in the season, Minten's physical game was limited to thunderous hits. Towards the end, he cranked the violence dial up, while also showing a projectable board game. When the defender leans on him, he cuts back into space. He uses punch turns over either leg to find separation, doesn't needlessly cycle the puck, and drives play to the inside when possible.

Passing growth will determine Minten's NHL upside. "He slips pucks through defenders, sauces them over sticks, and even pre-scans to make one-touch plays off the boards or cuts back and finds a better option," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a late-season game report. "Passing often seems like a last resort for Minten; however, he's gradually upping the give-and-go use

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 129.9



and passing proactively."

As Minten's skating posture deepens, his crossover-laden rushes and handling skill should factor into his game more often.

While he doesn't project as a dynamic player, his combination of shooting and physical play make him a high-probability NHLer, likely on a fourth line. However, improved skating and playmaking could push him into a third line, where he will undoubtedly bring a unique skill set.

Don't be surprised if Minten comes off the board earlier than expected.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 31st, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Minten has put it together. The passing skill has always been there, but the willingness has not. It was previously a reaction. Now, he's showing increased proactive planning – making quick plays, starting give-and-gos, etc. The shooting and physical play remain the core his projection, however. Scored with a one-timer just outside the slot. Consistently gets open in the right ideas, even if he lacks the timing and movement characteristic of NHL goal-scorers. He's very physical, running through players without hesitation. And he's shown an improved board game through the season. He makes quick plays off the boards and cuts away from pressure. He's a fairly clearly bottom-six projection, but there's also a clear path to the NHL. Skating needs to improve a bit, but not an unexpected amount to play his game. He's probably late-second, early-third on our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 7th, 2022

Vancouver Giants vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Finally, a great Minten viewing. He ran people over, ripped away possession, and sprinted for loose pucks. Scanned for off-puck threats and took away passing lanes. The shot's clearly an above-average NHL projection. Form: chest up, hands pushed in front, down force through ankle flexion. Skills: curl-and-drag wrists around sticks and a crafty two-touch wrister inside a crossover. As he develops his skating, the shot will improve. The playmaking's an interesting conundrum. Passing often seems like a last resort for Minten; however, he's gradually upping the give-and-go use and passing proactively. But there's no doubt he has passing skill. He slips pucks through defenders, sauces them over sticks, and even pre-scans to make one-touch plays off the boards or cuts back and finds a better option. Multiple board escapes by establishing body positioning, cutting back (even over his outside leg), then passing or walking inside. Skating lacks ankle flexion. He stays too high in his stance. Lacks quickness. But he has high crossover integration. He looked like a second-rounder in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

The best I've seen Minten look. Lots of purpose to his puck game. He attacked the middle, passed, then skated his routes. Give-and-go player. Showed skill and vision as a playmaker. Made passes from behind the goal line to the front of the net under pressure. Delayed in transition and found teammates on the inside. Even manipulated to prolong one passing lane. The shot's smooth but lacks some mechanical

refinement. Sets it up effectively, curling the puck perfectly around a defender's stick for a chance. The skating's a soft average projection. Some notable output, but lacks lower body flexion. Uses his outside edges rarely, and when he does, he lacks the depth and form to exit his turn with speed. Looks like a potential fourth liner. Could be a 70s or 80s candidate.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Minten's not a creative player. He just rushes down the boards and pulls the trigger as soon as space seems to run out. Some of his shooting decisions weren't awful, but he doesn't even drop the shoulder and try to turn the corner on the defender. I'm not sure what his identity is in the WHL. He's best when he's forced into quick decisions, like a deking immediately after a pass reception. In one sequence, he delayed, then found an activating defenceman. Even set the pass up by turning his body away from his target. That was a great read that I didn't see earlier in this season. But it never appeared again. And he wasn't a factor defensively, unless throwing hits behind the play counts. Lacks lower body flexion and his handling skill only appears inside a glide with the puck exposed in front. Mechanical limitations, execution limitations, and limited off-puck skills. He has offensive tools, but I'm not sure that's enough to justify inclusion on our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

A much better game from Minten both with and without the puck. Nothing complex with the puck, but he consistently got open. Not just planting his feet; he's moving into lanes, adjusting to make the lane accessible, and ready to shoot immediately. A pile of controlled entries in this game, including a couple with outside-to-inside lane passes. Mechanically, he's still the same: plus-shot, everything looks average to below-average (projection). More of the handling skill that he flashed early in the season would benefit his game. Could be an end-of-board player, but I doubt it.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 21st, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Nothing I saw from Minten previously was visible in this game. The playmaking wasn't here. The scoring potential wasn't here. The physicality and handling skill didn't appear. Everett's a good team, but he didn't rise to the occasion. Overall, he's reactive, seemingly unsure player at the best of times. In games where space isn't obvious and teammates aren't an easy pass away, he hardly looks the part of a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 12th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

Minten scored on the PP, took a boarding penalty, and disrupted tons of pucks across the ice. Overall, a strong defensive performance. Sprints to the point at the right times, supports the play, and outworks players on the backcheck. Took the extra stride to come across the hips (rather than reaching behind). But this wasn't a notable performance with the puck. He's a straight-line attacker with creativity or diversity in his game. I don't see handling or playmaking skill. He can shoot, but he struggles to get open for passes unless the space is obvious. Tough to see what his game will be at the next level. Perhaps he leans into physical side.

**Daniel Gee:** January 21st, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

The puck was almost entirely funnelled through Minten in this game, and while he undoubtedly had a good game, I am not sure that was a good thing at the end of the day.

Minten's on-puck efforts are rather inefficient, but he flashes pro-calibre sequences that make you pause. His frame gives him obvious advantages at this level, but his skating mechanics and pace are a limiter. In this game in particular Minten absolutely abused his size advantage, often on the perimeter to keep plays alive on the cycle. Straight-up outmuscled the puck out of pressure and executed plays non-stop in this viewing. On one shift in the first, he grabbed a loose puck in the near corner, spun off a checker, and passed through a layer of defenders right on Seminoff's stick -- crazy stuff. Later he wheeled through open ice around the net, and sent a perfect hook pass to set Lindgren up with a one timer. He even had a high-danger wrap around chance in this viewing; the Cougars had no physical answer for him in sustained pressure. Where the pause comes is transitionally. He is ridiculously individualistic at times, taking wide routes to send garbage sharp angle shots on net with limited support. On one shift he carried the puck end-to-end, looked off an open Seminoff, and took a really poor shot in pressure -- all while carrying the puck directly in front of him (poor protection habits). He had better pace increases than I have seen; some legit acceleration through his linear crossovers, but he burns off mechanically early in a shift. He wasn't all bad transitionally either; off-puck he drove the net hard, executing some give-and-go attacks with Seminoff.

Minten was frankly too reactive defensively in this game. He is an inconsistent scanner, limiting how proactive he could be. Some mini-shoulder peaks. He makes his stops by being a monster on the perimeter and using his size. Overall worried he becomes half the player he is now in a faster

and bigger league. Probably doesn't move or think the game well enough to adjust to the heightened pace of pro. May be a second powerplay threat with his shot, but he looks more like a bottom of the lineup piece more than anything. If he doesn't have the physical advantages, what is he?

**Mitchell Brown:** December 17th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Minten's perplexing. There are constants in his game: the retrievals and forechecking ability, the shooting skill, and the frustratingly limited transition game. There are moments where playmaking is comparable to his shooting ability, like peeling a puck off the boards and finding a teammate in the slot. He absorbs contact and then looks for the next option, and clearly doesn't see-and-pass -- he tries to time to his pass. But he's already very straight-line, single-speed with the puck. He throws away possession without much pressure. His game lacks foresight both with and without the puck. He misses opportunities to support the puck, get open inside space, or diffuse plays in the defensive end. I'm not sure he's a draft pick.

**Daniel Gee:** December 11th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars- WHL

Probably the best game I have seen from Minten in terms of being able to up his pace to make more of an impact. Had legitimate activations that were downright scary because of his frame. Nevertheless, Minten's impact in this game is really predicated on simple sustained offensive zone sequences and some pressuring plays in the defensive end.

Minten was fairly slot and end-board oriented, focusing mainly on working pucks into areas in which he could best stall an exit and get support, or even out-muscle an opponent to continue sustained pressure. Off-puck he is so simplistic, often planting in the slot, stick set, ready for centering passes, tip opportunities, or rebounds. He was frankly slow to react on a couple of rebounded pucks in this viewing, or crashing into soft coverage a bit too late. His most dynamic play was in the first; Minten executed a fake-shot, spun off of pressure to the point, and continued the cycle. He was able to start a couple of one-touch passing plays on the power play -- an expanded role minutes wise in this one. I think a couple third period shifts encapsulate Minten's game; planted in the bumper he tipped a shot wide, used his size to win the retrieval and then hope passed the puck through the slot without scanning. A subsequent play had Minten backhand a centering pass into traffic in the crease creating chaos which he happily joined in on. Really not a shooting threat in this viewing; yeah his mechanics are nice, but he never miniplates and is so predictable -- easy blocks/deflects.

I'm not sure if Minten is all that advanced defensively. I found him to, yet again, fail to scan during multiple sustained sequences, constantly working behind the developing play. This is most evident when pucks go below his goalline and are worked high or into the slot -- he seemed lost. Minten was legitimately slow at processing a centering shot in the first, following that play up with a reaching pokecheck that left him static, later in the period. Pace plagues him here. Where Minten does provide value is in supporting battles along the boards. He provides resistance on his own net front, reads passes east-to-west well, and is a great backchecker. He failed a pass in the offensive zone in the first, upped his pace to race back into the play and prevented a breakaway by swarming the on-puck Prince George player. Had an egregious play at the start of the game where he handled the puck in front of his own net, turned it over, ultimately leading to a goal-against. If anything, he's probably a C prospect for us that has some upside if pace keeps patterning up, i.e. he starts to move his feet more consistently.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Minten's shot remains a strength, as does his physicality and forechecking. Real knack for creating havoc, at the very least. Applies a lot of pressure and catches players at unexpected moments. Seems to read the intentions of the puck carrier quite well. With the puck, he's complex. He dekes through players on occasion, fires off in-stride wristers, and shows the patience to wait for his target to arrive into scoring position before passing. He wants to play on the inside, but without the puck, his positionings not great. Tools-wise, he's a pick. Execution? Not sure. Maybe an end of board type, unless he really takes off soon.

**Cam Robinson:** October 30th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Really quiet offensive game from Minten in this one. He had a couple of shots on goal that showed his impressive force generation in a fluid and quick release, but otherwise he appeared a step behind creating or joining the rush throughout. He was a physical presence throughout, attacking on the forecheck and showing smart reads to take routes that forced the defender into compromising positions. He showed smart defensive positioning in this one as well, constantly being on the right side of the play and utilizing a good stick to set up his physicality.

Skating stride isn't terrible - it has length and can generate power over time, but he played a predominately low-pace game in this one.

**Daniel Gee:** October 30th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Not convinced Minten is all that impactful offensively off-puck, but he had some highlight reel worthy defensive sequences in this game against PG.

Minten's physicality and use of his frame on the perimeter of his own defensive zone is super impressive -- yeah he leverages his physical dominance over much smaller opponents, but he's at least effective at this level. On an early first period shift, Minten made a great far board activation to win a battle and create a turnover. Later he had some high-event penalty killing sequences, activating through the hash marks challenging a shooter with his stick in the release of the shot, and blocking the attempt. He straight up batted a puck down the ice on a sweet hand-eye play on the left-hand circle in the third. On top of these resistance plays, Minten was hunting for physical activations -- it's weird as he is such a low paced player but he sneaks into these situations. In the third after accepting a pace he shifted in the neutral zone and leveled a Cougar near the Kamloops bench. Against transitional attacks, he sometimes struggles to activate proper body positioning and four-way mobility to provide forechecking support.

Pace, as mentioned, remains to be a major issue. In transitional sequences he patterns to the perimeter, taking low percentage shots from sharp angles. There is some ability to pass in-motion, but in general the volume of these plays were limited. Off-puck, Minten often fails to execute dump-and-chase plays, late on the recoveries, further exacerbated by poor forechecking routes. The forechecking effort wasn't all bad, however. An early first period play had him up his pace, create an endboard turnover using his strength, and eventually lead to an on-puck activation in the slot, in which he facilitated a pass off to his right-wing. Minten, with space, on the powerplay is a different player. The threat of his heavily down-forced leveraged shot is real and he uses that to his advantage. In the second, Minten executed a fake shot, stringing a pass cross-ice through an open lane. As the cycle continued he wired an extremely well placed shot off the toe of the left pad and created a chaos scramble. Hope we see more leveraging of skills and better pace later in the season.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Minten spent most of this game looking like a checker, but he had some really strong moments. Late in the game, he manipulated a forechecker with his eyes, deked around them, and then worked a give-and-go (he's figuring out the "go" part). Earlier, he had a fake shot into a cross-slot pass and an open-ice look-off pass after gaining the zone. If he

finished his off-puck routes or recognized openings earlier, he'd be a score a lot. Especially his shot. Defensively, he's skilled with some problem-solving ability. He disrupts a ton of entry attempts against and brings the energy deep in his zone, too. The development plan for Minten's simple: skating and off-puck movement/timing/space recognition. If he adds the latter, he should be a big scorer in the WHL. Both will make him an NHL prospect. I think there's more passing here than he's shown so far, too.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Minten's a fun player. Always involved defensively, very physical, and a laser-beam of a shot. A wild in-stride wrister that hit the goaltender's shoulder and then the post. Really solid form: jumped onto his inside leg for downforce, hands in front, top arm elevated. Powerful shooter. Easily a 6-grade shooter if this game is anything to go by. When the puck's not around him, he's doing little. He stands arounds, arrives late to space, doesn't consistently get open, and has some play-making limitations. Inefficient and straight-line in transition. I didn't see anything that suggested a play-driver at the next level, but a solid third liner? Sure.

**Cam Robinson:** October 9th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

An impressive showing from Minten in this one. He was showcasing his two-way acumen throughout, but offensively he was the most creative and fluid that I've seen from him. Patience on the PP led to not one but two short side snipes under the bar. He used his reach and body control to protect the puck in traffic and had his head on a swivel. The kid has a heavy and accurate release, that's for sure. He gets his head clear of his body and creates downward force and nice weight transfer.

The skating stride isn't too bad. He could use some more finish to the stride for more consistent power, but it's the pace that needs to ramp up. He tries this intelligent, 'hunting' style waiting to spring on pucks or opponents, but I'd like to see him take charge more often.

Playing down the lineup on a stacked team should bode well for his long term development. He's forced to play responsible hockey at a young age. He showed some jam, jumping into a scrum late to move off a bigger player from his mate. Took the penalty but not a bad thing to see from a 17-year-old some of the time.

**Daniel Gee:** October 2nd, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Better viewing for Minten, who played around 15 minutes as a third-line centre, and pushed better pace throughout his shifts. Minten was super engaged in all three zones in this viewing, pushing pressure through forechecking efforts on most of his shifts. He had a true impact on Prince George's transitional efforts, creating a couple turnovers on his forays. In the first, he increased his pace on a backcheck, pressuring the puck carrier, and creating a turnover which led to a Kamloops goal shortly after. In the second, he pressured Hudson Thronton on a breakout, deflecting a pass, working into a cycle immediately after. In the third, he straight-up rejected a breakout as Prince George tried to force pressure down a goal. Defensive involvement, deep-down low support, and breakout involvement were trends. He had a wonderful scan and cross-ice pass rejection on a penalty kill in the second. This is probably the area of his game that he can specialize and build a profile out of. Size blend helps as well.

Offensively, Minten is a different story. While his fore-checking value does add some element to his game, he often follows up positive plays with less positive ones. A play in the second stands out; after creating a turnover, Minten rushed the puck up the far boards, failing to move it quick enough, resulting in his own turnover. In sustained scenarios, Minten tends to be fairly competent at establishing pass support and occupying dangerous areas of the crease -- he will often float into soft areas and plant, taking perimeter pressure off his teammates.

He moves to support battles, but barely gains possession off these plays. On puck, there is a focus to work the puck inward, towards the crease, but he struggled to get pucks through layering. There's a lack of execution and planning here. A feature on the powerplay, Minten occupies the far half-wall and showed some interesting things throughout this game. In the first he implemented some manipulation in the form of a slap-pass, to slide a puck backdoor to Seminoff who was planted in the crease. He also showed off his above-average shot -- he's strong, gets his arms in front of his body, and explodes through his stick.

Minten's shooting decisions are an issue. Transitionally, he often bursts off the LW with tunnel vision, shooting low leveraged sharp angle shots on net. This is pronounced when there is direct pressure on Minten as he commits to the outside lane on his entries. When there is less pressure, I again liked Minten's mechanics -- he had a rush in the first where he placed a nice shot off the left-hand circle (could incorporate lower body more). There is some manipulation on his transitional carries -- mainly in the form of stop ups.

"While [Minten] doesn't project as a dynamic player, his combination of shooting and physical play make him a high-probability NHLer, likely on a fourth line. However, improved skating and playmaking could push him into a third line, where he will undoubtedly bring a unique skill set."

Not sure there is a whole lot here that will translate. His team is deep and his role is pretty set -- he's probably a pick due to the plus shooting tools and defensive profile.

**Daniel Gee:** September 18th, 2021


Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Up and down game for Fraser Minten, who was chasing play throughout long stretches of this game (but dominated in the faceoff circle against the Cougars smaller centre core.) Minten's pace is a big issue; it's below NHL average and affects all aspects of his game. He's a slow processor and a slow mover, which seriously limits his involvement in the offensive zone.

In sustained scenarios, Minten provided very limited off-puck support; he didn't have the lateral ability to react dynamically to open passing lanes, defaulting to static slot occupations and down-low activations in an attempt to leverage his frame. The problem is, he is easy to knock off balance, which limits any impact his frame could provide. In terms of his slot activations, he has limited catch-and-release ability, and weirdly defaulted to low-speed spin-o-ramas to avoid oncoming pressure. In the third, he actually recorded an assist after his spin pass/shot missed and a teammate jammed his rebound in the net. His is more mechanically inconsistent

than anything -- so many opportunities were squandered due to poor precision, obtuse form, and weight-transfer issues. He did score a pretty significant goal with an extra attacker off the left-hand circle -- this shot had much better mechanics than his previous three shots in the game. Arms were unlocked and integrated, fully leveraged lower body, and perfect placement top-shelf glove side. Not sure many aspects of his game are too translatable right now, however.

Transitionally, Minten is also limited. He barely got any power on a one-timer off a beautiful cross-crease pass by Seminoff. While he has some large-ice maneuverability, his few transitional carries were on the perimeter. Off-puck, he usually filed in as a trailer, stick set for shot opportunities. Some ability to implement stop up moves, but lacking in the manipulation department.

In his defensive end, Minten doesn't head check much and can't achieve much play stopping due to poor four-way mobility. He needs to activate into a better defensive posture, using his stick and a higher pace to clog lanes. Minten has some nice escapability on retrievals, and can leverage some strength on his stick to strong-arm exits. He was on for multiple goals against, often behind the play. Bad habit of overshooting on backchecks in this game. Committed defensively, just not effective this game -chalk this up as a rusty game. 



65  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# TOMAS HAMARA

D | TAPPARA

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. MAR.9,2004  
WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS LEFT

32%	24%	24%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s.	32	6	19	25
Liiga	24	0	2	2
Mestis	6	0	8	8

## Scouting Report

Tomas Hamara started the season slow in the Finnish junior circuit but eventually found his game in Liiga play and capped things off with a strong showing at the 2022 U18 World Hockey Championships, earning All-Star Team honours.

That strong finish to the scouting season under the bright lights may have been enough to earn Hamara a stroll across the Centre Bell's stage in the middle of this July's draft. He's the next-best blueliner out of Czechia after David Jiříček, certainly.

Not blessed with any one defining or separating skill, Hamara instead relies on a well-rounded profile that offers some utility in every situation. At his best though, the Czech defenceman is a capable puck-mover with enough skill and sense as a distributor to score at an okay clip at the professional level.

"Hamara is one of the better skaters in this year's class coming out of Finland. He doesn't have high-end top speed

but is very mobile and agile on his edges," Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen wrote in his year-end report.

"When at his best, [Hamara's] always looking to activate into play and likes to play fluidly in the offensive zone. Not a high-end shooter or a passer, but passable in both regards. He quarterbacks a power play competently with his passing and has second-unit power play upside."

There was some concern among our staff about Hamara's ability to defend, but his work at this year's U18 makes clear that it won't be a significant barrier to NHL minutes. Tasked with playing a ton of high-leverage minutes against the opposition's best, Hamara acquitted himself exceptionally well for his country in Germany.

The lack of a clear identity, about-average size, and the absence of a separating skill may hurt Hamara's stock in the draft, but there's no doubt he'll eventually hear his name called. It's only a matter of when, not if.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Esa Lindell YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 88%	2 Joonas Lehtivuori YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 87%	3 Mikko Lehtonen YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 85%	4 Valteri Viljanen YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 82%	5 Antti Weckstrom YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 81%
6 Konsta Makinen YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 81%	7 Mikko Maenpaa YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 81%	8 Jesse Jyrkkio YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 81%		

**Lassi Alanen:** May 1st, 2022

Czechia vs. Finland - U18s

Hamara was logging huge minutes once again on Czechia's top pairing, playing on both special teams, mostly on the penalty kill in this one. A rather mediocre showing from him compared to some others in the tournament. Hamara's off-puck NZ defence was pretty good and he was able to take away the middle option consistently. Some odd aggressive defensive plays, but some decent stops, too. Positioning in the defensive zone was a bit hit-and-miss. Target selection on the breakouts was a little bit off, not recognizing the optimal lane all the time, resulting in passing into pressure and turning the puck over. There were some decent no-look passes and rushes, though, even if he wasn't activating as much as in some U20 league games, likely due to playing so many minutes. I like how much he scans on retrievals, which allows him to make the best play most of the time, even if his execution was lacking in certain spots. Not a whole lot of PP time due to Finland not taking many penalties, but that's been a strong point during this tournament for Hamara. I don't think he's a high-end playmaker or shooter, but quarterbacks a power play well and could have PP2 upside in the NHL.

**Marek Novotný:** April 26th, 2022

Czech Republic vs. Canada - U18s

Hamara is the leader of the blueline of this Czech team. He moves very smoothly on the ice, his edgework, change of direction at speed and puck control make him the best defenseman of this team. Hamara has grown as a hockey player in Finland, he is very poised in the defensive zone where he uses quick brakes, puck control, vision and the ability to carry the puck up the ice. Hamara had a great performance against Canada, recording 3 primary assists. He was very aggressive defensively, his style is based on controlling his opponent by trying to stay close to them as much as possible. He was also part of the PP/PK units. During power plays, he dominated as a quarterback and blue line checker. He also sent some hard one-timers. Overall, he had 18 attempts, 6 of which went on goal. He's often involved in the counter attack and his mindset is great at changing/adapting depending on what zone he's in.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 22nd, 2022

Lukko vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Hamara logged a big chunk of minutes, being back on the top power play duty, too. He had some good moments but also some uncharacteristic misplays. I liked his defensive zone coverage. He's a solid 1-on-1 defender and he reads multi-variable situations competently, doing a good job at keeping a tight gap when switching coverage. He was also his usual self off the rush, always looking for opportunities

to activate and even finished some sequences behind the OZ net. Then again, he did turn the puck over a few times on the breakout, ended some power play sequences by shooting into shinpads, etc.. He's honestly looked better in Liiga compared to the U20 SM-sarja this season. I'm still rather high on him based on the previous three years of viewings, but I don't think he's necessarily lived up to the expectations in the U20 level this season. We'll see whether he raises his level in the upcoming playoffs.

**Marek Novotný:** February 20th, 2022

Tappara vs. Jukurit - Liiga

Hamara played with very limited ice time. Despite that, he was able to show some nice situational awareness and overall was responsible/aware defensively. He wasn't shy from joining the rush and working behind the opponent's net and protecting the puck. The gap work on the other hand is not good enough and is an area of his game to be addressed. Hamara was able to work with the walls, whether it was for passes or zone exits.

**Marek Novotný:** February 7th, 2022

Tappara vs. JYP - Liiga

Hamara was again skating on the third line, this time vs. JYP. He was definitely more confident and collecting 8 shots on goal at this level is really impressive. His ice time was also great, as he finished with slightly over 20 minutes on the ice. Hamara was able to carry the puck and also tried to be creative with it. His passing game was once again good and worked well under pressure. The Czech defenseman is able to send some nice feeds to the slots. Hamara was able to battle against 2 attacking opponents deep in the defensive and find a way to send the puck to his linemate in extremely tight space.

**Marek Novotný:** February 4th, 2022

Tappara vs. TPS - Liiga

Hamara was skating on the third pair for Tappara in Liiga vs TPS. It was obvious that he was under pressure and felt nervous as he lost the puck several times. The Czech defenseman showed good skating, had three shots on goal and joined the rush a couple of times. He is a two-way defender, but you can clearly see in a game like this that he likes to be involved in offense as he is battling deep in the offensive zone and is not afraid to take the puck on the blueline and skate towards opponents and create some dangerous chances. Unfortunately, he doesn't have skilled hands and therefore has trouble making elite play. Hamara is more of a puck distributor and reliable defenseman. There is some potential, but a lot of work to be done.

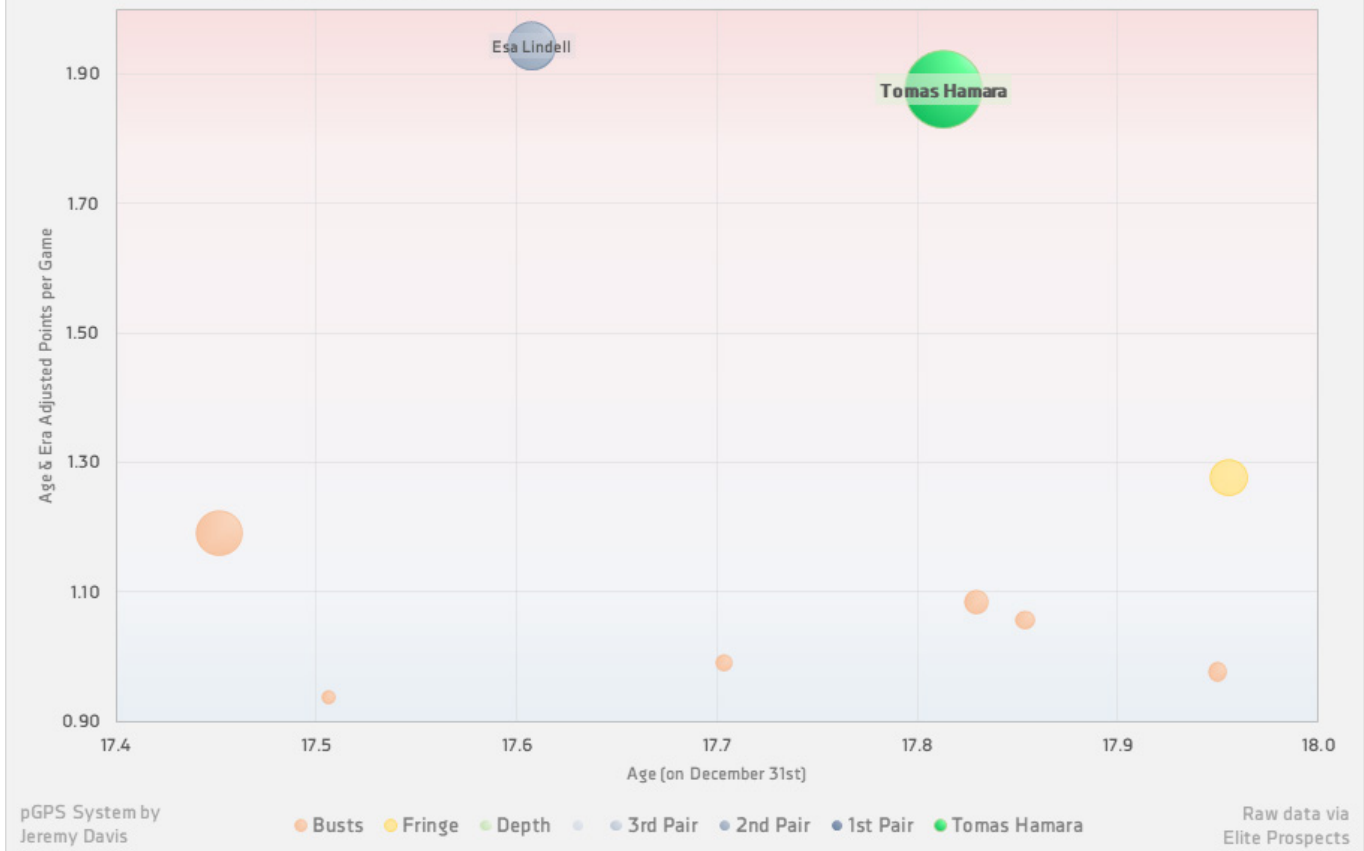


## Tomas Hamara 2021-22 U20-SM-Sarja pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 8 || Base XLS: 31% || Impact XLS: 31% || XPR: 26.4 || Drafted Pct: 25%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**Marek Novotný:** January 29th, 2022

KeuPa HT vs. Jokipojat - Mestis

This wasn't a good defensive performance from Hamara. His gap control and stick work weren't effective enough. Hamara is a good skater, but his backwards skating in this one wasn't overwhelming as well. Another negative thing were 3 turnovers and a couple of lost pucks. On the other hand he controlled the puck really well on the blueline, made some deceptive moves and showed some great vision. Hamara recognizes time and space and with his vision is able to feed his teammates with nice long-stretch passes. He also was quite physical in the defensive zone and worked well under pressure. Hamara joined the rushes, he likes to be involved offensively. Made a great pokecheck in the defensive zone leading to an odd man rush.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 10th, 2021

JYP vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Pretty average game from Hamara. He scored on the power play with a slap shot from the point, which went through without much mask - very easy goal to let in. Hamara was doing a good job at joining rushes as he has been doing lately, leveraging his mobility and skating to cut through pressure. He does have a couple of bad plays per game,

where he reads the situation wrong and makes a blunder. I liked his defensive awareness quite a bit in this one and his gap control and NZ defence looked solid. He's a very solid quarterback on the power play, too. I'm intrigued to see him at the upcoming U18 Youth Olympic tournament now that he was left off Czech's WJC team.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 4th, 2021

HIFK vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Hamara continues to have games where he has excellent moments and some not-so-good moments mixed in. He made one of the better plays I've seen this season, retrieving the puck after a DZ face-off (good shoulder check to identify pressure and make the right pivot) and having the vision and execution to throw a long saucer stretch pass that led to a breakaway goal for Tappara. There were other great moments where he was joining the rush and making quality feeds to the slot or cross-slot, from forehand and backhand. Hamara's defensive play looked fine and his gap control is decent, although he's not looking to kill plays too often on the blue line and instead just shadows his man. The worst moment of the game was on the power play where he threw a blind pass towards the point with nobody there, resulting in a free breakaway for HIFK's penalty killer.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 19th, 2021

TPS vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

As usual, Hamara skated on the top pairing and played on both special teams in Tappara's 3-2 shootout win over TPS. I'm a fan of Hamara's game for the most part. He's not the fastest north-south skater, but his lateral mobility and edgework are very strong. He had multiple strong moments in transitions where he used crossovers and fakes to gain the zone. His play in the offensive zone is very free-flowing. There are times where he's the player deepest in the OZ and he's often looking to activate, although there's another level he could take it. Right now he activates, but doesn't always make himself open as a passing target. His defensive footwork is good, too. Puck skills also grade out at least average and you could make a case for a higher grade, too. Hamara's biggest value is probably going to come from transitions in the future. The big question is whether he's going to add more layers to his offence in the future, because I wouldn't call him particularly dynamic even if he has some good OZ habits. His point production hasn't been on the level I expected from him either.

**Marek Novotny:** November 12th, 2021

Czech Republic vs. Sweden - U18 Four Nations

Hamara did a great defensive job in the corners of the d-zone where he was physical and fought for the loose pucks to gain possession back. He played a very tight defensive game in 1 on 1 battles along the walls and wasn't afraid to join rushes and showed how good of a skater he actually is. There was a specific sequence when he was involved offensively a lot, the Czechs were pushing during the third period to score a first goal of the game. He tried a lot to get a puck on his stick so he could make a difference and was the most visible player when they „locked“ the Swedes in their own zone. Thanks to his skating he was able to change directions very quickly and his opponent wasn't able to react quickly enough. He was also part of the PP and PK units. The Czech defender also cleared the zone a couple of times/was able to carry the puck out of the zone. Overall it wasn't a bad game by Hamara, but the Czechs came out short without scoring a goal and lost 5:0.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 2nd, 2021

KalPa vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Is Hamara the best skater in the U20 league among defenders? Looking at purely mobility and edgework, you can make a pretty good case. His acceleration and top speed in straight lines is not on a similar level, but I still think he projects as a good NHL skater overall, especially with little tweaks to his stride form and straight-line skating. There were shifts where he was leveraging his mobility on the offensive

zone, constantly adapting his location and making positional shifts with his teammates, once drawing a penalty during an activation from the point. Is he a high-end OZ creator? I'm not sold on that (haven't seen high-end vision), but he's pretty good. Hamara's passing execution on the breakout was a bit off in this game and he was just barely missing his target on multiple occasions. He also has the habit of making one or two weird decisions with the puck, ie. flipping the puck way too deep for an icing.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 18th, 2021

Kärpät vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Hamara was back playing with Tappara's U20 team and logged a lot of ice time on the top pairing and top power play unit. It was a good showing, especially at the beginning of the game. Hamara's skating looks strong at this level. He isn't particularly explosive, but has strong mobility and pretty effortless edges. What stands out is his poise with the puck and the ability to navigate through pressure. He managed to maneuver his way out of trouble multiple times with good mobility and puck control. He was jumping on rushes and made a few well-timed activations from the point. He defended one 2-on-1 situation brilliantly. Also shows good communication with his teammates, commanding them according to his positioning. Strong breakout passer overall, though offensively I'm not yet sure how big his upside ultimately is as a playmaker or a shot threat. He's still pretty dominant at this level overall.

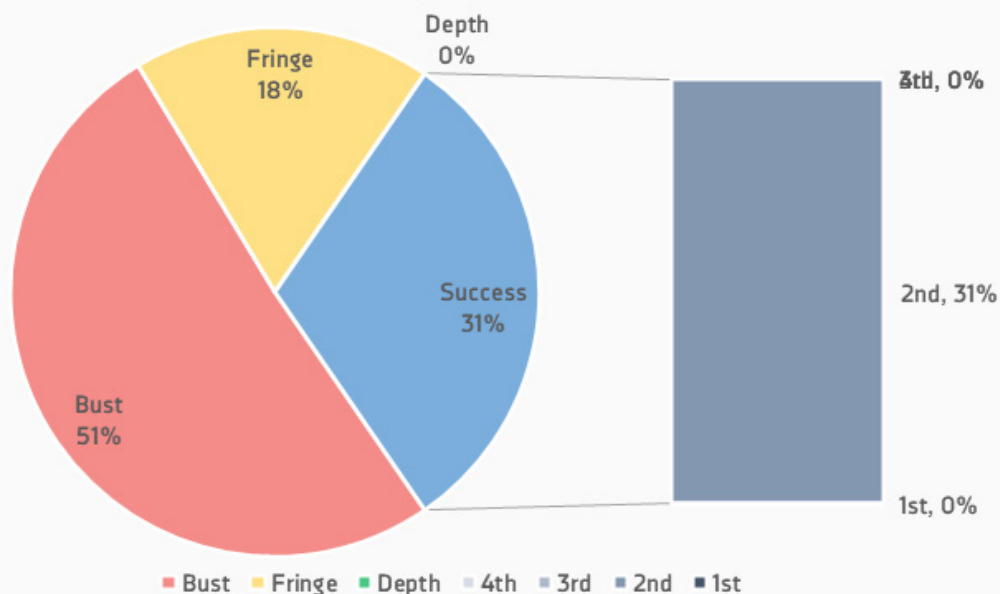
**Lassi Alanen:** September 9th, 2021

Tappara vs. Sport - Liiga

A pretty solid showing from Hamara in his regular season debut with Tappara. Sure, there were a few ill-advised plays that didn't quite work out, but there were also flashes of the same player I've watched for a few years now. He's a modern defenceman built for a style that prioritizes puck control. He executed his passes with solid consistency, once making a very good cross-ice feed to an open forward at the OZ blue line, basically creating an exit and an entry at the same time. Didn't get beaten off the rush, instead making a few breakups, taking good angles and keeping a rather tight gap. One bad defensive read where he forgot his man in front of the net and glided towards the puck - better scanning would have probably prevented that. DZ scanning is something Hamara could do more of. Still, aside from that, there were no big mistakes. He's a fine one-on-one defender in the DZ, too, though he does his best defensive work against the rush. Excited to see how he builds off of this.

## Tomas Hamara 2021-22 U20-SM-Sarja pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**Lassi Alanen:** March 5th, 2021

Tappara vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

Hamara logged big minutes on Tappara's top defensive pairing with mixed results. Hamara's offensive game differs quite a bit from most defenders in the league in that he's much more involved down low, which stands out a lot compared to the majority who only stand on the point. Often when he joins the rush, he doesn't just stop at the blue line, instead going deep to the offensive zone. That being said, he didn't accomplish much offensively in this game, mostly due to off-puck timing. Hamara's biggest strength at this level is probably his transition game. He's got the patience to open up passing lanes and solid lateral mobility and stickhandling skills to get around forecheckers. There were a few glass-and-out type plays in this one, but also a couple of really good sequences on the breakout. Hamara's skating has some weaknesses, but most of them are likely indicative of lack of lower-body strength. His ankle flexion seems good, but he lacks knee bend, especially late in his shifts. He also skates quite a lot with the pitchfork, which makes his upper-body movement inefficient. He also relies a lot on crossovers while defending the rush, which makes it easier for forwards to get him to commit hard on a given direction. Hamara could benefit from scanning more defensively and he doesn't make that many breakups. There's a lot of raw potential but a lot of refining needed, too.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 27th, 2020


HIFK vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

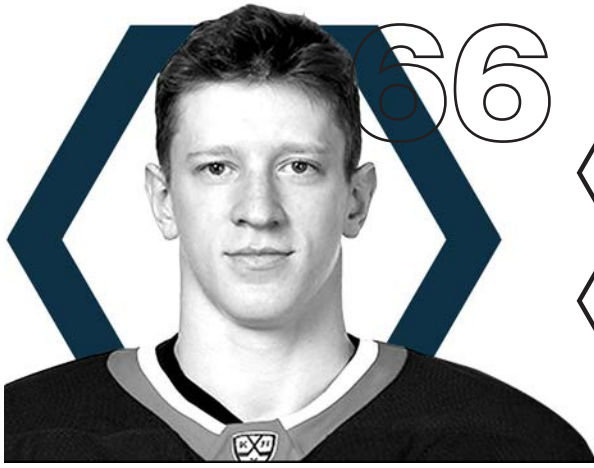
Hamara has gotten a big role on Tappara's blueline as a

16-year-old, playing big minutes and getting a role on the power play. He didn't have the strongest performance as he had some defensive issues and wandered around without the puck a bit too much instead of making himself available as a passing option. Still, there were impressive moments, too. Hamara's deceptiveness as a puck-carrier is notable and there were multiple times where he was able to use subtle body fakes and stickhandling to fool forecheckers in the neutral zone. Hamara's poise with the puck is admirable, even though it occasionally can cost him turnovers.

**Lassi Alanen:** August 14th, 2020

Tappara vs. Ilves - U20 SM-sarja

Hamara was playing on Tappara's top defensive pairing in their dominant 7-2 pre-season win over Ilves. Hamara has to be one of the top 2004-born defenders on the planet right now, certainly among those playing in Finland. There was some shakiness here and there, a few missed passes and defensive assignments, but there's so much to like as well. Hamara is a strong four-way skater with good mobility on the point. He didn't hesitate at all to join rushes and he did have the skating ability and smarts to do so effectively. He's got very good body fakes, especially for a defenceman. Hamara was running Tappara's top power play unit from the point and while he fumbled the puck a couple of times, he's also effective as a passer and as a shooter. He's got very good poise with the puck, too. The potential is big with Hamara and it was only his first or second game ever at this level. 



66  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

# ALEXANDER PELEVIN

D | CHAIKA NIZHNY NOVGOROD

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAY 16, 2004  
WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS LEFT

9%	5%	0%	0.36
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
MHL	29	3	5	8

## Scouting Report

Alexander Pelevin is a hyperactive, shutdown defenceman, one who is not content to just grab on to a single opposing player in the defensive zone, but who jumps from threat to threat to try and remove them all from the play.

His energetic footwork exposes him sometimes; he can be over-reactive and bite on opposing player fakes, but his enthusiasm and the pride he takes in his defensive game is projectable to the higher levels. With time and experience, the defenceman should learn to better mix aggressiveness and positioning.

"Any time he misplayed a loose puck or made a poor pass, he got right back into position, played that hard style, and corrected his mistake," Elite Prospects Russia regional scout

Dylan Griffing wrote in a December 28th game report. "He plays with his head up and scans well."

Pelevin's awareness also translates to his puck-moving game. While the defenceman is more conservative than some of his counterparts, he doesn't default to rims and chips; he tries to make plays to teammates and open spaces most of the time. Improving the precision of his puck-handling would help him reach more options on breakouts.

You'll need to temper your expectations a bit with Pelevin. You're probably not getting a high-flying offensive dynamo in your favourite team's top-four, but a defence-first role on a bottom-pairing doesn't seem out of the question.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Zakhar Arzamastsev YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 95%	2 Nikita Nesterov YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 95%	3 Roman Dubinin YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 94%	4 Grigori Zheldakov YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 94%	5 Pavel Koledov YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 94%
6 Konstantin Vorshev YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 92%	7 Viktor Postnikov YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 91%	8 Mikhail Tikhonov YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 91%		

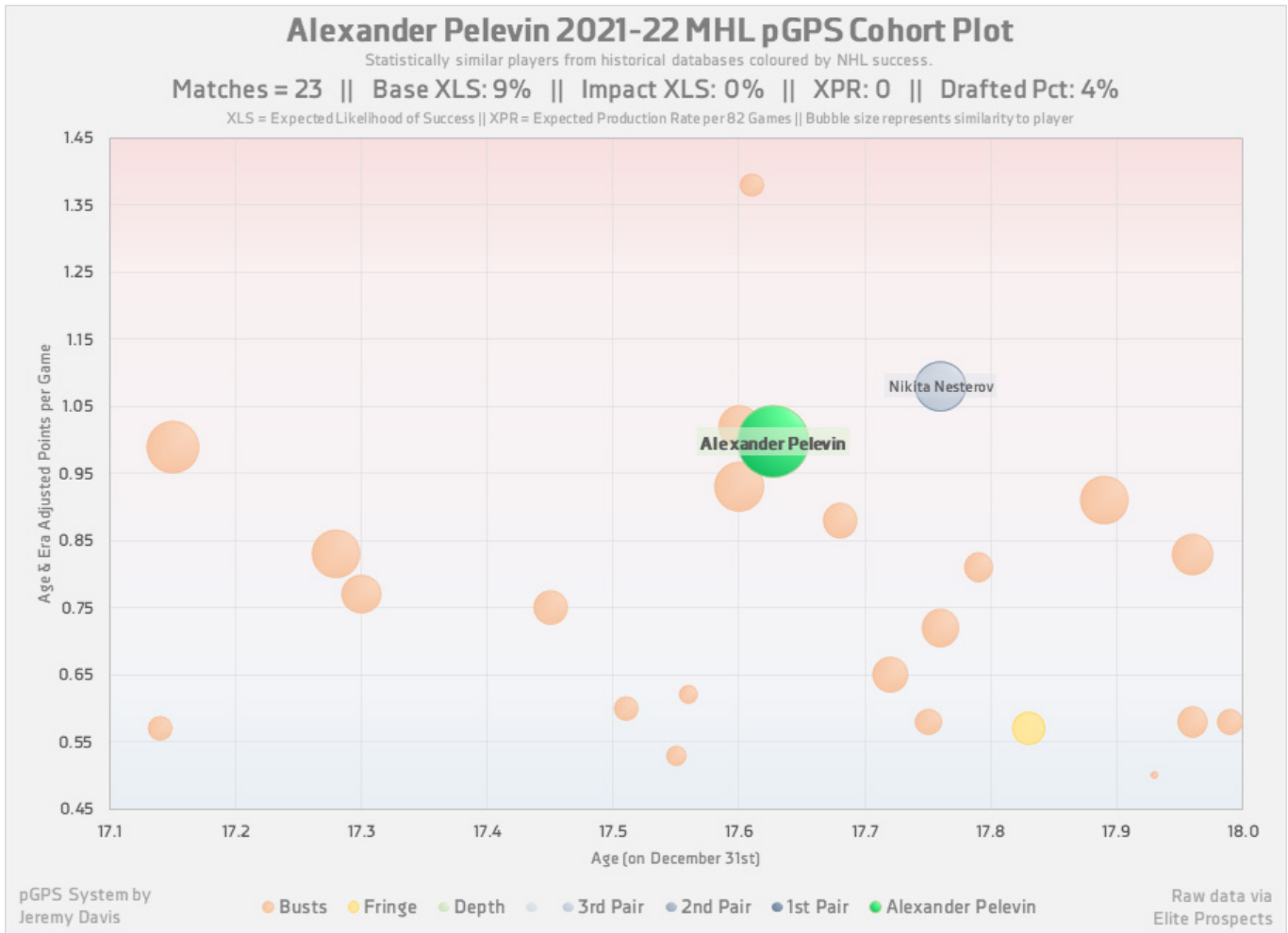
## Game Reports

David St-Louis: March 15th, 2022

Sputnik vs. Chaika - MHL

Pelevin has shutdown defenceman potential for sure. His

level of activity defensively is rare for the MHL. He doesn't just stick to his check; he covers a whole area of the ice with his constant footwork and moving stick, always scanning



the puck carrier and behind him for the opposing options. He steps up in the neutral-zone, kills plays at the blue-line, and hits when possible. He defends the front of the net and intercepts passes. He's a bit reactive -- I don't think the hockey sense is high-end, but so activate that it didn't matter. The puck-moving flashes were interesting, too: a few uncontrolled plays, rims, but also backhand passes through opponents and chips to teammates inside space. He recognizes space and teammates and uses them. The skill-level seems about average.

**David St-Louis:** March 11th, 2022  
Sputnik vs. Chaika - MHL

Pelevin has some puck-moving moments, but mostly his game is about defence and preventing chances. He does it through a high-level of activity and reactivity, which is less projectable than anticipation, but still, the care he puts into that facet of the game is projectable. He will become better at figuring out opposing plays when he plays inside a better structure and gains experience. The tools are about average for me.

**Dylan Griffing:** December 28th, 2021  
Chaika Nizhny Novgorod vs. Loko-76 Yaroslavl - MHL  
Pelevin was playing angry. Not throwing big hits or being

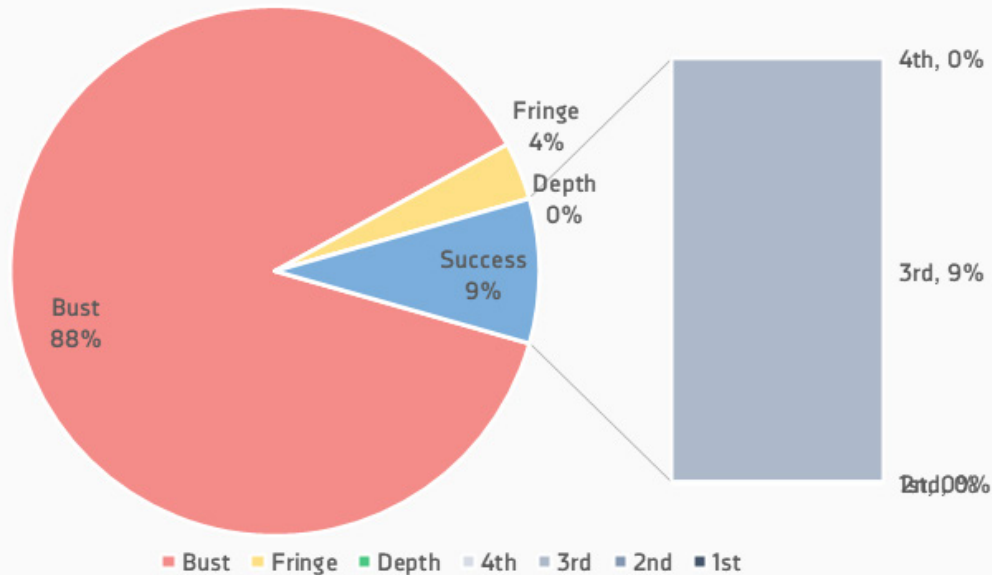
a troublemaker, but he defended with so much aggression. Hounding puck carriers with heavy pressure and using his stick like a weapon to jam the puck away from them. He did use his body effectively, pinning players along the boards, but it was his stick that was most effective. With the puck, he was mostly a problem solver. It wasn't a perfect game for him, turning the puck over a fair few times, but it was his adaptability and recoveries that saved this from being a throwaway game. Any time he misplayed a loose puck or made a poor pass, he got right back into position, played that hard style, and corrected his mistake. Plays with his head up and scans well, though his decision making wasn't great, missing passing lanes to skate through traffic himself or shooting from low percentage areas with no bodies to help screen the shot.

**Dylan Griffing:** December 14th, 2021  
Belarus U17 vs. Russia U17 - EYOF

Pelevin's mobility is just fantastic. Agile, smooth, and plays with pace, his movement with the puck allowed him to generate breakouts with control and push forward into the rush and set up offense for his side. Uses give-and-goes often to find space. Scanned really well, notably on his clean retrievals. Engaged physically often, cutting off the

## Alexander Pelevin 2021-22 MHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



puck carrier with his body. While he did lose around half of those physical battles, he did enough to jostle his target away from possession or disrupt the flow of play. He was a bit uncontrolled at times in the defensive zone – getting drawn away from his area and having to try to quickly recover and chase play. He shot the puck twice in this one, his wrister looked good, but his slapshot mechanics are really strange and out of control, trying to go all-in on getting as much power as he can behind it while sacrificing everything else.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 5th, 2021

Metallurg Novokuznetsk vs. AKM Novomoskovsk - VHL

After disappearing for nearly a month, Pelevin returned to the ice and made his VHL debut for AKM. He received ten minutes of ice time including some shifts on the penalty kill. He was relentless along the boards to scrum for possession and won almost all of his battles. Always reading his surroundings and engaging quickly to disrupt the puck carrier or cutting off lanes. His breakout passes were concerning, but the thought process was there, it was just a failure to execute. Joined the rush a few times to no avail and didn't touch the puck in the offensive zone at all this game. A solid performance for a young player in the league who was making his debut after sitting out for an extended period of time.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 14th, 2021

Torpedo Nizhny Novgorod vs. Dinamo Riga - KHL

Pelevin got his first taste of KHL regular season action

after an impressive start in the MHL and saw the ice for two minutes and ten seconds. Just three shifts in the first period and then watched the rest of the game from the bench. When he was out there, he looked comfortable on the puck and ready to join in on the rush whenever possible. He only touched the puck a few times and for the most part, it was just basic D-to-D passes. His one adventurous pass from the defensive zone to the neutral zone went straight to a Riga player with no teammates really near it at all.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 5th, 2021

Chaika Nizhny Novgorod vs. Irbis Kazan - MHL

Pelevin has quickly become one of my favorite players in the draft because of how mobile he is. Really smooth skater, utilizes crossovers, pivots, and edgework to cut through all three zones, and can pass the puck playing at pace and then continue his move forward. One play in particular, he made a quick read and pass to his teammate in the defensive zone, never stopped moving his feet, got the return pass, and then sliced through three Kazan players into the offensive zone. Smart reads like that put him a step above MHL players and it really shows on the ice. His offensive tool-set is very promising, with dynamic movement, quick scans, and an above average shot. His defensive game is strong, as well, because he can match his opponents footwork, keeps his body in position, and then can attack the puck carrier. It's hard to distinguish any real flaws in his game, at least at the MHL level.



67  
Rank

C  
Grade

4.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

5.5  
Puckhandling

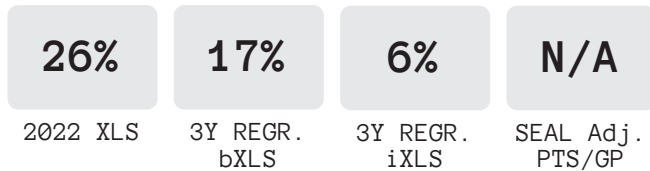
5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

## BRYCE MCCONNELL-BARKER

C | SOO GREYHOUNDS

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. JUN. 4, 2004  
WEIGHT 194 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	23	26	49

### Scouting Report

When evaluating skating, it's important to make a distinction between straight-line speed and skating skills.

In the first category, Bryce McConnell-Barker projects as slightly below-average in the NHL. The lack of ankle flexion and a tendency to heel kick before recovering his stride limits his ability to generate momentum on the ice. But McConnell-Barker compensates for his lack of straight-away speed in other ways. He has the skating skills down – the cutbacks, pivots, and general edgework to still elude defenders.

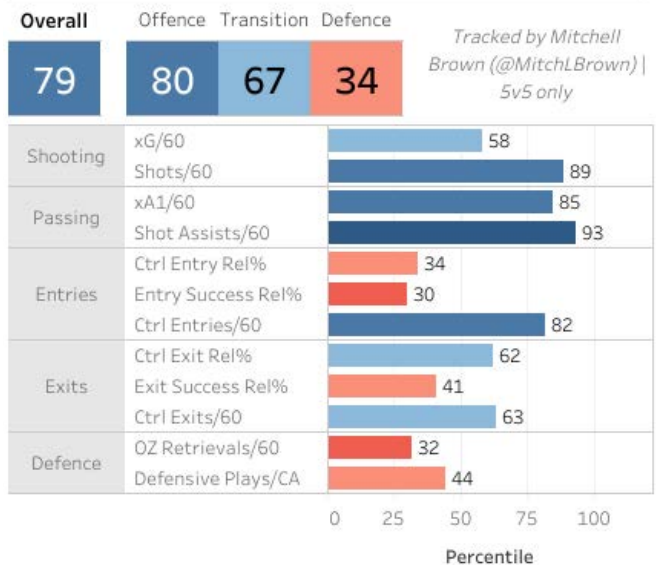
To earn an offensive role in the NHL, McConnell-Barker will have to lean even more on those separation techniques and in his passing game, specifically his ability to beat the opposition with give-and-goes.

"The skating continues to limit his game, but I've become less critical of it," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote on April 13nd, 2022. "It's clear that he has skating skills and the off-puck instincts to play in the NHL at a skating disadvantage. Still, he has to deepen his stance."

That said, McConnell-Barker's elusiveness with the puck is not what impressed our scouts the most this season, and it probably won't be what NHL coaches will like the most about him, should he get there in the first place.

The centreman's supporting game is his biggest asset. He's the link between all of his teammates' plays, a predictable and timely ally all on the ice, offensively and defensively. He

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 107.0



understands the shutdown game, the necessity to balance pressure and effort with sound positioning, to remove options from the opposition, and limit the time spent running around the defensive zone.

His good defensive positioning also translates to more offence for his team. When the puck flips to his team, he's right there, inside space, ready to create the breakout or to come down to get a pass and fire on net.

This supporting ability should at least earn McConnell-Barker a role on a bottom line in the NHL.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Lucas Lessio YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 95%	2 Gabriel Landeskog YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 95%	3 Eric Locke YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 95%	4 Corey Locke YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 95%	5 Blaine Down YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 94%
6 Brett Ritchie YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 94%	7 Miguel Delisle YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 94%	8 Jamie McGinn YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 94%	9 A.J. Jenks YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 94%	10 Josh Brittain YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 94%

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

I continue to be impressed with McConnell-Barker. One sequence, he beat a defender by pushing the puck into space, then beat the other by going backhand-forehand just in front of his own feet. The next touch was a sneaky shot around a defender's stick. That sequence required a ton of body control and handling skill. He's still a proactive off-puck mover. He shows better skating skills than form. But he plays a game that's largely based around him having a speed advantage - which he doesn't. He gets stuck into out-racing defenders along the boards, leading to turnovers and low-percentage shots. He rarely delays or cuts back to invert pressure (i.e., get it on his back) or wait for the trailer. To make the NHL, his style of play has to better align with his tools. He has the skills to play a more change-of-pace-focused style.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 13th, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Another solid game from McConnell-Barker, showing off details and skill. He used the give-and-go to create a scoring chance. When the pass wasn't an option, he faked one direction, then cut across. Doesn't cut back after crossing the blue line, but he hits the brakes in open-ice as he awaits support. Better defenders will manage him along the boards, but for now, he's quite effective because he makes plays quickly and reads pressure. Noit creating high-value offence, but he's not too far off. The skating continues to limit his game, but I've become less critical of it. It's clear that he has skating skills and the off-puck instincts to play in the NHL at a skating disadvantage. Still, he has to deepen his stance. I have no issues with McConnell-Barker in the 50s or 60s.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

McConnell-Barker did things in this game! Scored with a projectable wrister on the powerplay. Along the boards, he didn't just pass to the point. He waited for the defender to come, then cutback and attacked the inside. Quick passes to the middle allowed him to create a couple of scoring chances. And he showed handling skill and pace. The skating's still a problem, but he has skating skills. More ankle flexion will

allow him to use those skills consistently. Off-puck instincts remain the best part: find space, get open, move the puck quickly. Hardly notable on the defensive end. Could be a late-second, but the inconsistent creation probably makes him more of an early-third. I wouldn't be surprised if he scores a ton next season.

**David St-Louis:** March 29th, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Another uneventful performance. I can't identify any NHL projectable strengths besides the average skill-level and game engagement. He projects as an AHL player to me, or a checker if a coach really trusts him and likes him above other players of his type for a reason or another. I guess he has an interesting supporting game? He makes good reads. Are they enough? He's not scoring.

**David St-Louis:** March 12th, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

McConnell-Barker didn't show me anything interesting about this game, good or bad. He made the right plays mostly, but the safer ones; he didn't look to create any kind of advantage for his team, just found the next teammate to move the puck to, and then went inside to maybe get his stick on a dangerous puck. Defensively, he was engaged, picking up his man, and all that. My main issue is that he doesn't really seem to know what's going to do with the puck before he gets it. He seems, to me, like a player who got to this level based on his tools and his relatively smart game (in a coaching sense) overall. Not sure I see much potential overall.

**Lauren Kelly:** March 9th, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

I still think McConnell-Barker has faded a bit as the season's gone on. He still picked up two points in this one, and on his goal, he found space in the slot but the shot itself wasn't a particularly strong one, it was kind of just whipped on net (it looked like a similar kind of release to Shane Wright, actually). He had a power move up the ice to chase after a loose puck and force a turnover in the offensive zone before passing off to a teammate for a scoring chance. I don't know if the skating has gotten any better, but he did keep up with

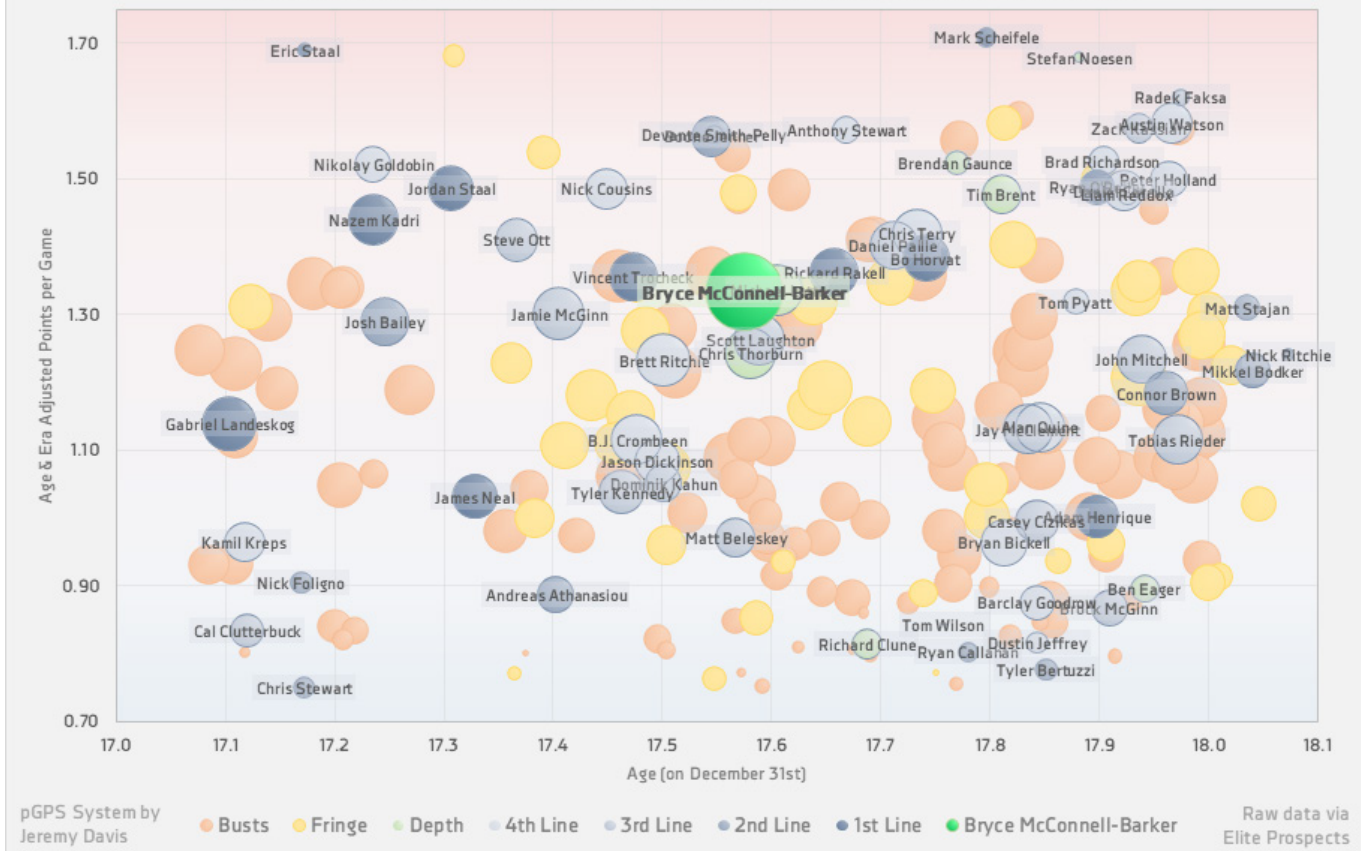


## Bryce McConnell-Barker 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 212 || Base XLS: 26% || Impact XLS: 9% || XPR: 37.7 || Drafted Pct: 72%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



the pace of play well in this one. It's really his first two steps that look heavy and impede him from any quick-reaction movement. He had an outlet pass up the middle of the ice that was picked off before it could clear the zone. He had good moments, but I didn't think he had that much impact on puck possession and I don't know if I'm confident that he's a first round pick at this point.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 21st, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

McConnell-Barker had good flashes in this game, but they were few and far between. He was on the third line and played on both special teams, protected the puck well when he had it and would hunt for loose pucks in battles. He's good at finding open areas and space in the offensive zone and works to evade defenders. Didn't pick up any points in this game but could have, he fired a shot in the slot from his knees that was stopped, and the eventual rebound was buried but not before he collided with the goalie, leading to the goal being waved off. He had a nice rush on the power play late, stickhandling around defenders and driving wide before cutting to the net. I don't know if he's a first rounder based on this performance, but there was enough to suggest he's worth at least a second round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 15th, 2021

Owen Sound Attack vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

McConnell-Barker has a ton of work to do on his skating, but he already has a crossover integration, understands how to work give-and-gos into his rush patterns, and gets pucks to the inside lane. Understands how and when to delay or cutback and wait for the backpressure to overshoot. His off-puck movement and passing both lack some timing, but he generally has the right idea on his plays. Skating improvement will likely benefit this area of his game. As usual, a threat on the forecheck from his anticipation and ability to read the puck carrier. Looked like a mid-rounder in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 25th, 2021

Soo Greyhounds vs. Erie Otters - OHL

I fear my initial excitement for McConnell-Barker might've been a bit unfounded. The skating looked even worse in this game. Functionally zero ankle flexion, a wild heel kick, and a lack of any sort of quickness in any direction. The shot looked worse too, with his hands closer to his body during release. Lacks pace and not just from his feet -- he takes too long to make decisions with the puck. Sometimes, his target gets removed the play and instead of finding a new one, he

tries it anyway. It's not all bad, however. He had one sequence where he prepared space, waited for the defender to commit, then cutback. Weak turn with zero power, but timed well. As usual, a strong off-puck player in terms of disrupting plays in the defensive zone, supporting, and finding space off-puck. He's a skilled handler and understands how to protect the puck with his outside leg, hips, and back. He's probably more of a mid-to-late second if the skating improves this season. There's a ton of work to be done there.

**J.D. Burke:** November 21st, 2021

Soo Greyhounds vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Really strong performance from McConnell-Barker. Shows an advanced understanding of how to create offence through traffic in the middle of the ice - he draws in defenders, uses his body to set a pick, and then dispatches the puck into space for a teammate with ease. Worked the give-and-go on a few occasions to great effect. Really impressed me with his ability to change the release point on his shot under pressure. The skating needs a tonne of work. It's not even close to pro-ready. The speed of his decision-making could stand to improve, too. Looked a lot more like a mid-round player than a late-first or early-second. If you can't skate, you can't play, and so on.

**Cam Robinson:** November 17th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

This was not a stand out performance by BMB. Lacking a lot of jump, intensity and overall awareness in this one. Gave the puck up at the top of the offensive zone on a bad deke attempt - breakaway and goal against. Not a great look with a lackadaisical backcheck. Tried a power move wide, got turned back and opened up a lane but passed it right to the defender. Looked lost in the d zone on a couple of occasions - chasing the wrong man, losing position. Missing mates with passes - even on the PP while extra time is afforded.

Still showed the good fakes to make defender miss and gain the zone a couple of times.

Had a good backcheck on the PP to disrupt a shorthanded chance against.

Team was overall flat and he was moved up to the 2LW for a few shifts with his late in the 2nd. In the third, he flew the zone way too early and the puck was turned over, took him a while to get back and HD chance against and shift pinned as a result. Obvious lack of focus and effort on that play. And to wrap it all up, it almost looks like he's afraid to make contact. Ever. Let's hope this is the bottom of the barrel of outing for McConnell-Barker.

**Cam Robinson:** November 13th, 2021

Windsor Spitfires vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Played C and RW in this one. I have a lot of questions about the stride mechanics and overall posture - Upright skating stance, sluggish looking stride, short, bent too far over - really not an effective or clean stride. Had a nice punch turn in the mid frame and looked a little more dynamic as the game wore on with shifty in-flight moves. Clear skill package though - made a nice hesitating backhand dish in flight to wait for a lane to open up. Had a very slick cross-slot feed for an A1 in the first on the PP. Slick hands through NZ - unafraid to try some creative handles and moves. He made defenders miss on three occasions in the NZ during transition that allowed him to gain the zone. Made a nice chip off the wall to himself with a pinching defender coming down. He then accelerated to create a 2 on 1 - sent a nice sauce over but couldn't be corralled.

Should've been credited with another assist late in 2nd off of a nice behind the net pickup and send it out front. Went shot, rebound, back to shooter who shot again for the goal. Created that sequence earlier with a nice move to beat a defender coming into the zone. Took some abuse going to the net on the PP - complained but still went to that hard area.

Overall, I like how he demands the puck - especially in transition and is unafraid to try some creative moves. On the PP he was dangerous and assertive. Skating is clearly an issue at this point though.

Looks more like a B level player who could end up a mid six guy if progressions continue.

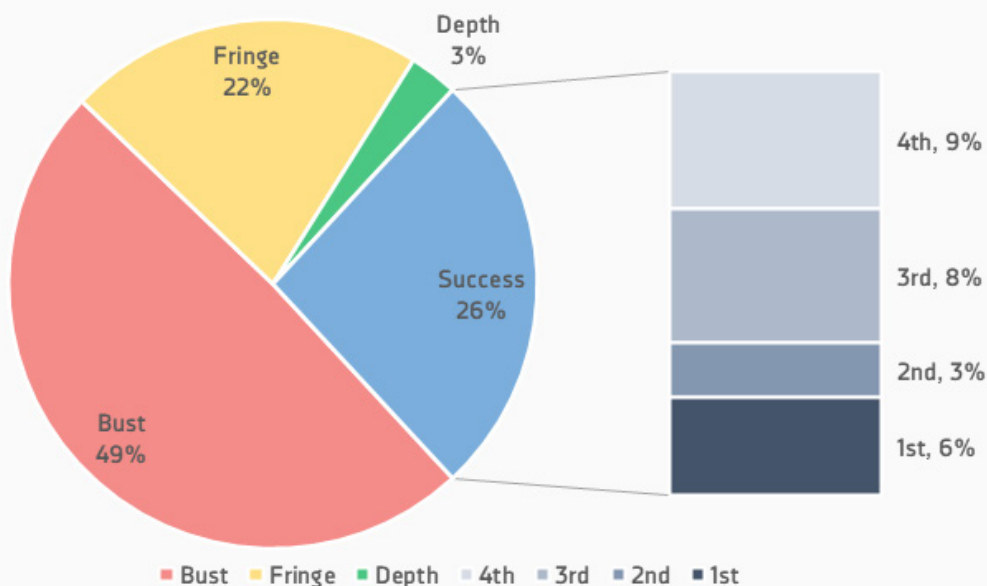
**Lauren Kelly:** November 13th, 2021

Windsor Spitfires vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

McConnell-Barker started off this game strong but sort of faded into the background as the game continued. He had a great pass on the 1-1 goal to the crease on the Soo's first power play after taking some time to evaluate his passing options, and he was also a solid distributor on the man-advantage throughout the game. He also had a nice little steal in the neutral zone and then stickhandled through a defender to get free, but unfortunately a teammate put the play offside at the blueline. I did notice that though he was good at entering the zone with the puck, he would quickly turn the puck over and none of his entries really led to much extended zone time. His skating is also pretty inefficient at this point - though he makes a good effort to try and close gaps, it slows him down from being able to pressure puck carriers effectively and it puts him behind the play by several paces when he doesn't have the puck.

## Bryce McConnell-Barker 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Soo Greyhounds vs. London Knights - OHL

McConnell-Barker's in a fight every shift single -- against his feet. His feet kick violently as if he's sprinting. He doesn't drive his recovering leg forward, and his right knees caves inwards. Lacks ankle flexion and any sort of hip engagement. Very weak skater overall. There are lots of good ideas: delay, cut inside, overpower players. For a player with significant skating limitations, his understanding of when to use skating skills (cutback, cut inside, etc.) is really advanced, even if he basically stops dead. He doesn't consistently scan and throws away possession as a result. He misses options by handling a bit too much, but also powers through checks and fights to stay on the puck. Off-puck movement and general supporting reads are consistently strong. He moves around the slot, occupying space higher or closer to the net depending on where the puck is, and if he can keep his stick free. As his timing develops, he'll start scoring goals. He's one of the smartest players in the OHL, but the execution's way off. And skating's a major problem.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Guelph Storm vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

McConnell-Barker's skating looked like a concern in this game. He doesn't really sink his hips into anything -- strides, crossovers, turns. His crossovers are clumsy and weak, while his stride generates little power. Skating's clumsy, sloppy, and weak overall, but it's clear that he's working hard. And the offensive mind is really strong. Give-and-goes, off-puck movement, supporting reads, etc. The give-and-go led directly

to his second goal, which he intelligently started with a little look-off pass under a stick. The way that he links together different ideas bodes well for his future (high mental pace). He turns a retrieval into a deke into a pass, and by the time the puck leaves his teammate's stick, he's already open again. Strong one-touch/quick possession game. Seems very aware of his limitations in general, but still has plenty of room to grow. Honestly, I like every part of his game except skating. A middle-six winger seems like a fine projection, provided he keeps this play up throughout the season and the skating improves.

**EP Rinkside Staff:** October 23rd, 2021

Soo Greyhounds vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

No points tonight, but BMB continued his streak to start the season with at least one shot on goal - he had 3 tonight. His trend of turning pucks over just inside the blue line showed up, but he also has no support when he enters the zone. He was consistently in puck support positions all over the ice, and did not get caught cheating offensively. His skating is going to need some work as he skates with his stick parallel to the ice and does not get nearly enough power in his stride extension. However, he is smooth in his pivoting and edge work, which indicates that this is an acceleration problem related to strength and technique. It's clear the coaching staff values him defensively, because his penalty killing role has increased since the beginning of the season. On the PK, he's pressuring, taking away passing lanes to dangerous areas and blocking shots. He didn't do much of anything offensively, but this was a good showing on the defensive side of the

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**"His good defensive positioning also translates to more offence for his team. When the puck flips to his team, he's right there, inside space, ready to create the breakout or to come down to get a pass and fire on net."**

puck - stripping pucks, intercepting passes and taking away lanes in transition. There are a lot of translatable skills and habits in BMB's game - if he can improve his stride - could be a middle-6, two-way winger.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 23rd, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

McConnell-Barker didn't do much in the first part of this game. In the second period, they put him with MacKay and Kerins, and he had several of the most impressive sequences in the game. Routinely attacked the inside in transition, and in one sequence, set up a teammate with a crafty backhand through pass. He deceives defenders to draw them away from his desired space, highlighted by an NHL-calibre manipulation sequence to get a scoring chance. And, of course, the off-puck movement. It's timed, sneaky, and continuous. He understands how to flip between supporting and scoring position at a high level, surely among the best in the draft class. Handling has some unnecessary up-and-over movement, and the skating's a problem. Weight's always on his heels because he can't push his knees far enough, wide stride recoveries. He looked like a first-rounder with middle-six upside -- off-puck acumen, advanced offensive mind, and some defensive value.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 22nd, 2021


Soo Greyhounds vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

BMB was a little less involved in the play in this one, but he still registered a primary assist on the 4-1 goal with a quick pass at the top of the offensive zone. He had a couple of good rushes with the puck and was almost always the first player in on the forecheck. He has good edges and pivots well, but his stride lacks acceleration and power - though it didn't prevent him from getting in on the forecheck in this one. He protects and controls the puck well, and I like that

he wasn't cheating out of the defensive zone early. Though he was sometimes playing up a bit high in his own end, he was reading the play well and pressuring players along the boards to turn possession over.

**EP Rinkside Staff:** October 15th, 2021

Guelph Storm vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Second game of a 3 in 3, and a second straight two-point night with a goal, a secondary assist and 3 shots on goal for BMB in 17 mins of TOI. Playing on the 2nd line, BMB played the left side and the left flank on the 2nd PP unit. He started the play that led to the PPG by reading the battle, supporting in the corner, and winning his battle to release the puck to the point. He got the puck back, attacked the middle and found a player at the side of the net for a pass that fooled the PK - leading to the cross ice pass for the goal. He created multiple scoring chances with cross-ice passes - my guess is about 8 shot assists. He got in on the forecheck, stripped the puck off the goalie and wrapped it in the empty net - a great display of his ability to read the play, strip pucks and take advantage. He didn't get a point on the 4th goal, but given that he was the only net front presence on a point shot - the goal doesn't go in without him being there. He consistently found quiet ice in all three zones to ensure he was an outlet - very good at anticipating the play. He's comfortable on both his backhand and forehand which allows him to be more confident in his plays with the puck. Defensively, he consistently stopped on pucks, tracked back through the middle and supported low in the DZ. He won battles all over the ice, stripped pucks off sticks, but was not physical in how he did it. It spoke volumes that he played nearly half of the third period while his team was holding a lead. Overall, I was impressed with his game, particularly that he seems to be the straw that stirred the drink. 



68  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

4.5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

B  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

# KASPER KULONUMMI

D | JOKERIT U20

HEIGHT 6'0"

D.O.B. MAR. 1, 2004

WEIGHT 174

SHOOTS RIGHT

0%	0%	0%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s.	40	3	26	29
WJC-18	6	0	5	5

## Scouting Report

You likely haven't heard much about Kasper Kulonummi going into the draft, but he's quietly strung together one of the better seasons among first-time draft-eligible defenders coming out of Finland, and he's a strong candidate to be the first blueliner off the board from that region.

The foundation of Kulonummi's game is his skating stride. He's a contemporary do-everything defenceman who uses that tool to make plays at every corner of the ice, settling comfortably into his forward stride and flashing four-way mobility to evade opponents in transition and at the offensive blue line.

"An above-average skater with strong four-way mobility and solid acceleration," Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen wrote in his year-end player report for Kulonummi. "He retrieves pucks well and transitions the play with equal comfort as a passer as he does a puck-handler. Kulonummi often shows the ability to beat forecheckers at the point, even if he could do it more often."

You'll never mistake him for Cale Makar between the blue lines, but this part of Kulonummi's game should translate to the NHL without much fuss.

Where Kulonummi most impressed our staff this season, though, was in his ability to comfortably handle a shutdown assignment playing a boatload of minutes for Jokerit's U20 team. "Kulonummi is a solid rush defender overall, forcing a lot of dump-ins," Alanen added in his player report. "Doesn't make big mistakes defensively, even if he lacks stopping power."

Still, the absence of a defining quality to his game or a separating skill could leave teams sour on Kulonummi through the first two rounds of the draft. This Finnish blueliner definitely has a chance to play NHL minutes, but you're probably looking at a bottom-of-the-lineup defender who can do a little bit of everything but nothing at an exceptional level. The type of player who often only ascends to No. 7 on a team's defensive depth chart.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Joonas Lehtivuori  
YEAR: 2006  
SIMILARITY: 88%

2 Mikko Lehtonen  
YEAR: 2012  
SIMILARITY: 87%

3 Antti Weckstrom  
YEAR: 2000  
SIMILARITY: 86%

4 Konsta Mäkinen  
YEAR: 2010  
SIMILARITY: 85%

5 Valtteri Viljanen  
YEAR: 2012  
SIMILARITY: 85%

6 Jesse Jyrkkio  
YEAR: 2007  
SIMILARITY: 84%

7 Mikko Maenpää  
YEAR: 2001  
SIMILARITY: 84%

8 Aleksi Mäkelä  
YEAR: 2013  
SIMILARITY: 83%

9 Esa Lindell  
YEAR: 2012  
SIMILARITY: 82%

10 Jimi Karonen  
YEAR: 2013  
SIMILARITY: 82%

**Lassi Alanen:** April 23th

May 1st, 2022 - U18s

Kulonummi had a strong tournament on the top pairing playing alongside Kiviharju, also getting a lot of use on special teams. Kulonummi was very involved in the play in every zone. He did record the most shot contributions at 5-on-5 and his transition numbers were the best on the team alongside his defence partner. Skating looked above-average. He's not a burner, but has good four-way mobility and edgework that I wish he would use more often on the point in the OZ. As I said, very involved in transition, carrying the puck a lot by beating the first and maybe the second forechecker to gain the zone, but can also exit and entry by passing. Kulonummi is a bit too trigger-happy from the point at 5-on-5, considering I wouldn't call him a big shooting threat. His passing vision in the final third of the ice is also a bit of a question mark; there were quite a few situations where he went for the shot attempt instead of going for a rather open cross-ice pass. Needs to close his gaps a bit better on rush defence, but I'm rather confident in him being able to become serviceable defensively. A late second/early third-round pick in my books.

**David St-Louis:** April 30th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - WJ18

He's the transition motor of Finland and on the ice for a lot of minutes because of it. He's also good at shadowing his check in the zone, but needs to learn how to use his stick better and to time his intervention better, ahead of the play, instead of reacting to it. He joins the offence at every occasion, he carries the puck up-ice, but he's not really manipulative. He looks more like a 3rd-4th round prospect for me than a top-two rounds. The skills are there, especially the skating, but I'm not overly confident in his ability to drive NHL offence.

**David St-Louis:** April 28th, 2022

Finland vs Canada - WJ18

Kulonummi still has a lot to learn to become an NHL defender, like using his stick off the rush, and boxing out players, and speeding up some of his plays. But he's elusive and willing to make plays on breakouts, to attract forecheckers and beat them. He's scanning a lot, too, which helps him solve offensive and defensive situation. The hockey sense is about average for me, however.

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - WJ18

He continues to be more of a mover than a thinker of the game for me. He doesn't plan offensive sequences, but

just relies on his skating to get himself out of trouble or to discover plays. But with a bit more time to think about his plays, the creation side of his game resurfaces. He can adapt to closed lane and his head is up, there is less tunnel vision. The skating is projectable. It looks like an above-average grade. He can shake defenders on his back and defend the rush but he tends to pick up his stick as he defends between blue-lines, which gives space to the opposition. A sequence at the start of the game showed a glimpse of his potential, he stopped a play, picked up the puck on the wall and lobbed it to a teammate accelerating through the neutral-zone.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Finland vs. Switzerland - WJ18

Reminds me of Havelid for Sweden. He has the same desire to make plays. I think he's more of a mover than a creator, but that style of play still has value. He aimed to find teammates on the breakout, evaded forechecker, didn't force plays but turned back to find something else if a defender stood in the way. I liked his poise at the top of the zone. Good distribution. He's aware and engaged. The skating looks potentially above-average (projection). He's agile and can dangle closing-in defenders.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 6th, 2021

Finland Blue vs. Finland White - U18 Camp

With the majority of the big guns missing the U18 camp, I expected Kulonummi to dominate and I'd say he did so. In the first period, we saw the more stable and reserved Kulonummi, but he started to activate more in the OZ and try different stuff as the game progressed. Kulonummi's skating looked like a strength as he was able to maneuver his way through the defensive layers with very solid edgework and some deception, too. Very stable gap control in the NZ, was able to create some breakups before the play ever got to the defensive end. Played together with Aron Kiviharju and the two clicked well, with both being able to move the puck effectively. I'd think those two would be a great fit to play together at the U18 Worlds, too.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 28th, 2022

Kiekko-Vantaa vs. RoKi - Mestis

Kulonummi played his second Mestis game with Kiekko-Vantaa, with the U20 league still on pause. It was pretty similar to the first showing, but this time, he saw quite a lot of ice time on power play. The power play itself was pretty stagnant and did run mostly down low and through the other four players, with Kulonummi making the occasional pass to either wing. Defensively, I thought he had some very

## Kasper Kulonummi 2021-22 U20-SM-Sarja pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 15 || Base XLS: 7% || Impact XLS: 7% || XPR: 31.9 || Drafted Pct: 40%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



solid moments. One especially good 2-on-1 defence comes to mind where he was able to break up the play after a pass to the middle, following that up with another breakup down low. There was maybe only one clear misread defensively, and even that didn't result in much for the opposition. He does lack reach and lateral explosiveness, which means he occasionally gets beaten wide. Breakouts were a bit hit-and-miss, though mostly positive. He does panic a bit at times and just tries to make a quick uncontrolled play instead of looking for a higher quality look. When he has time, you can count on him to make the best decision.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 18th, 2022

Kiekko-Vantaa vs. KeuPa - Mestis

Kulonummi played his first career game at the men's level, being loaned to Kiekko-Vantaa with the U20 league being on lockdown due to restrictions. He was immediately able to gain the trust of his coaching staff, logging a lot of ice time at even-strength and penalty kill. There is definitely an adjustment period; the players are stronger and quicker. Still, I thought Kulonummi was able to hold his own defensively pretty well. Not a lot of breakups, but smart positional hockey, which is really his trademark. More limited time forced him to make some breakout errors, but he also had a very im-

pressive moment, evading pressure before launching a stretch pass that split the opposition and resulted in a breakaway. He made a couple of weak-side activations, but kept his OZ play very simple and didn't get many puck touches there.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 27th, 2021

Jokerit vs. JYP - U20 SM-sarja

Kulonummi continues to churn out solid performances one after another. I don't think I've seen him have a bad game this season, even if he doesn't do game-breaking stuff that often either. He scored a very nice goal on the power play, rushing the puck up the ice for an entry and using the defender as a screen on a shot, transferring his weight to the inside-leg before releasing -- good stuff. He's solid in pretty much every facet of the game. I would have liked to see more activation from the point. He's been more conservative in that regard at the U20 level compared to international U18 games. He defends competently, moves the puck well under pressure and makes very few glaring errors. The upside probably isn't that high, but the floor is.

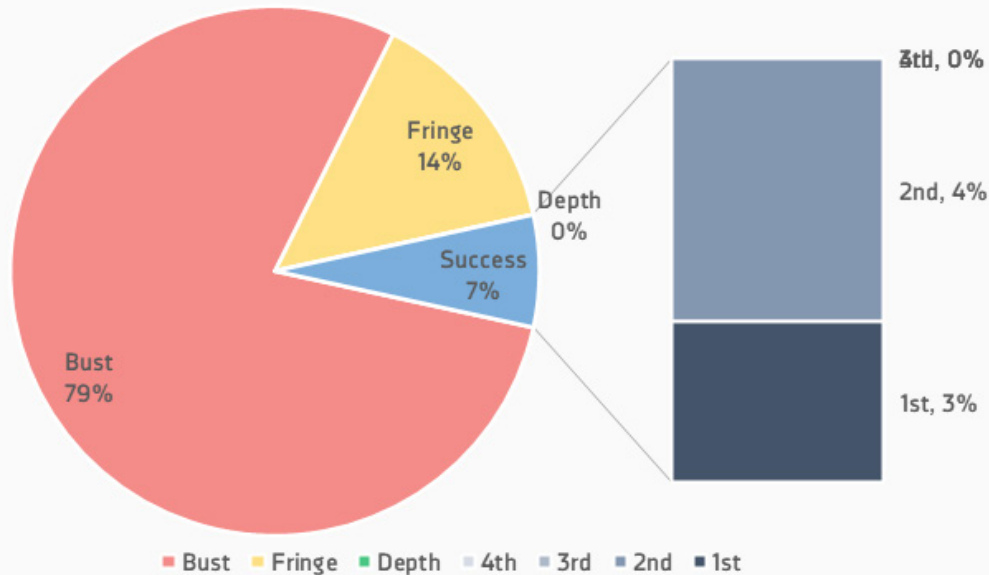
**Lassi Alanen:** November 12th, 2021

U18 Five Nations, Switzerland

Kulonummi played big minutes on Finland's top pairing

## Kasper Kulonummi 2021-22 U20-SM-Sarja pGPS XLS% Tier

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



and top power play unit for the entire tournament, often logging over 25 minutes of ice time. It wasn't much of a contest in terms of who was the top defenceman on the team. Kulonummi was pretty much the only one who showed consistent ability with the puck. He's a good quarterback on the power play, dishing the puck well and using fakes and no-looks to set up his half wall players for success. At 5-on-5, he showed good mobility at the point, being able to beat the first opponent before activating and either looking to shoot or to pass to the slot. Without the puck, Kulonummi is also pretty steady and doesn't make huge mistakes. He could be more proactive at times, though. He's probably going to go in the first three rounds of the draft.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 8th, 2021

Jokerit vs. JYP - U20 SM-sarja

Kulonummi was yet again logging a ton of minutes on Jokerit's top pairing, playing on the top power play unit and getting shifts on the penalty kill, too. Kulonummi is a player who makes the right decision most of the time, but he's not dominating games either. He keeps his feet moving on the breakout even while looking and executing on passes, which is pretty rare to see in this league for a player his age. He has a good command of the ice, giving instructions to his linemates and organizing the play that way. He's a solid power play quarterback with his passing, though his shot hasn't been that impressive in either one of my live

viewings. He rarely gets caught off position on the defensive side of things, and he has impressive amounts of poise with the puck. That being said, I haven't seen high-end skating or skill from him this season, even if he's racking up points pretty well, adding one on the power play today.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 26th, 2021

Jokerit vs. KOOVEE - U20 SM-sarja

Kulonummi logged a ton of ice time in Jokerit's win over KOOVEE in the U20 league, playing on the top pairing and on both special teams. Kulonummi's talent level shone through on multiple occasions. His calmness with the puck was notable as he wasn't panicking under pressure at the end boards or at the point. A couple of times he was able to maneuver his way past the forechecker at the point, beating him wide before looking to carry and shoot from the hashmarks. Once he went deeper and tried to shoot between the legs. Not sure if that was the best play there, but it sure shows some creativity and handling that you don't usually see from defenders in this league. He also got his shots through from the point with good success percentage. Kulonummi's breakouts were mostly clean, being able to hit the opposite side with crisp and hard passes. Defensively, he was lose some battles against bigger, physical players, but pretty rarely gets caught off position. He's the most impressive Finnish defender in this draft class alongside Salin.





69  
Rank

C  
Grade

4.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

6  
Puckhandling

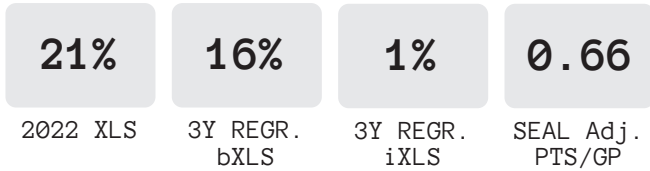
5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# TRISTAN LUNEAU

D | GATINEAU OLYMPIQUES

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. JAN. 12, 2004  
WEIGHT 190 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	63	12	31	43

## Scouting Report

We had high expectations for Tristan Luneau coming into the season, hoping that we would see nothing short of offensive dominance at the QMJHL level.

To some degree, we got that from the Gatineau Olympiques defenceman. He continued to show the same agility and ability to feint and pass around opponents this season. His elusive skating moves were especially effective on regroup and at the point in the offensive zone, where opponents came at him with speed. With heel-to-heels and spins, Luneau easily outmaneuvered them to attack or pass down the ice.

Much of his production came from his ability to create offensive zone entries and passes to teammates around the net. That said, his breakout game left us wanting more. His offensive zone playmaking never translated to that aspect of the game. With his back turned to forechecking pressure, as he retrieved a puck, Luneau seemed to lose his composure. Quite often, he defaulted to rims and chips off the glass, even with open teammates ready for a pass in the middle of the ice.

While Luneau is very agile, his speed and quickness ranked significantly below average this season; his heavier stride didn't allow him to create as much separation from opponents. Once he slowed down to get a puck on the back wall of the defensive zone, his escape routes became more limited. But Luneau's lesser offensive showing this season can't all be attributed to mechanical and decision-making problems, he also seemed to purposely scale back that facet of his game this season in favour of developing a more sound

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 154.1



defensive game.

"This was one of the most physical and defensively engaged performances I've seen from Luneau," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote on March 19th, 2022. 'It may have had to do with this game being the first of Ève Gascon in the Gatineau Olympiques uniform. He defended the front of the net fiercely, ramming and shoving opposing attackers away from her sight."

If Luneau continues to hone his off-puck plays and improves the efficiency of his forward stride, he could find a role as a bottom-pairing defenceman in the NHL in a few years. His agility and playmaking talent could lend themselves to a power play role, too.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Ivan Vishnevsky YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 93%	2 James Sanford YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 92%	3 Nikolas Brouillard YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 92%	4 Aaron Johnson YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 91%	5 Dillon Fournier YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 90%
6 Samuel Carrier YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 88%	7 Mark Barberio YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 88%	8 Brandon Gormley YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 87%	9 Alexandre Neron YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 87%	10 Nathan Welton YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY: 87%

**Mitchell Brown:** May 15th, 2022

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Luneau was the worst defenceman on the ice in this game. At the very least, he was the worst of the guys who played regularly. Not sure he completed a single breakout when pressured. He tried to outrace pressure and got stripped. He dumped the puck out with options. He tried to cut back but his lack of depth means that he actually loses space. All that deceptiveness that shows from the point doesn't translate to the breakout, and Gatineau's no longer the up-and-out team that they were earlier in the year. Now, they use the middle, make controlled plays, and try to create advantages. Just not Luneau.

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

I'm not learning anything new watching these games from Luneau. His defensive game has improved, especially how tightly he follows his chance, and his agility, his open-hips, 10-and-2 moves are the best part of his offence. He showed a bit more at the offensive blue-line, a long manipulation sequence to create a lane to shoot. The reason it was so long is because he lacks the straight explosiveness to immediately create a play; it's a battle of attrition. I come out of this game with more of a positive look on him, however.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Luneau's one of those deceptive, but often purposeless attackers. He uses a ton of different feints and skills to misdirect defenders. Head's always up. He throws in the odd look off, but it's more deception through posture and changes of direction. When he activates, he attacks the middle, turns his back to defenders, then pivots to face them. Sometimes, he makes his next move too early. Other times, too late. Some of his playmaking ideas are advanced, like going off the backhand under a defender's stick, but didn't connect on any of these reads. Skating will be the major question. The stride isn't even close. It's not an NHL stride. Some ankle flexion, but no hip engagement. Better on his edges, but he'll lose the agility advantage in the NHL. Lack of depth limits

explosiveness, and the moves that he uses only work with explosiveness in the NHL. He's still a somewhat projectable defender through his details, but his skating exposes him. Maybe an early-third. I can see an argument for higher because he clearly has dynamic potential with the puck.

**David St-Louis:** April 3rd, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs Shawinigan Cataractes - QMJHL

Luneau's defence continues to shine, at least compared to last season. He's harder on his check, and his rush defence was quite solid in this game: early gapping, surfing, use of stick (but not overreaching). He moves laterally to find passing targets, but it was hard all night for Gatineau in the transition game; most of his plays ended as turnovers. Forward skating is still an issue, but the agility is still there and the puck handling. The shots were relatively weak. He had an assist on the last goal.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Drummondville V. vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

The contrast between Luneau's stride and edges is shocking. He uses cutbacks, heel-to-heels, and pivot turns without issue, often linking them together if given a bit of space. But his stride has little ankle or hip flexion, with his back angle virtually straight (rare to see that). Used a give-and-go to gain the zone. Activated into space off-puck, setting up one his two scoring chances in this game. Offence is mostly shooting. And he's rarely playing a supporting role in the offence. Defensively, he gets on checks early. Sometimes he angles, but he usually just keeps the attacker in front and waits for an opportunity to reach in. Scans but reactions are sluggish at times. Not sure if he's a pick.

**David St-Louis:** March 19th, 2022

Rimouski Oceanics vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

This was one of the most physical and defensively engaged performances I've seen from Luneau. It may have had to do with this game being the first of Ève Gascon in the uniform. He defended the front of the net fiercely, ramming and shoving opposing attackers away from her sight. Otherwise, he was still the same puck-mover, albeit a bit slow in his

## Tristan Luneau 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 15 || Base XLS: 21% || Impact XLS: 2% || XPR: 18.8 || Drafted Pct: 73%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



decision, and when he took all his opportunities to attack up ice with his teammates. I'm still not impressed by him this season, but this was a better game.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022 - Gatineau Olympiques vs. Blainville-Boisbriand Armada - QMJHL

Ugly performance from Luneau. The skating's just so harmful. Even when he takes the right position, he's prone to getting beat. On the last goal, he angled but simply got beat with a not-so-explosive burst of speed to the speed. His cutbacks seem to lose him space, rather than create it. Sometimes showed creativity on breakouts, but it's always hampered by forechecking pressure. I think he sees opportunities, but he can't manage direct pressure. No movement on the offensive end: some manipulation, uses space before shooting, activates off-puck, and prods for openings. He's probably third-rounder. The skill's exciting.

**David St-Louis:** February 27th, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs Rouyn-Norande Huskies - QMJHL

Luneau is disappointing this season. Maybe I overrated him last year. I tend to not watch draft-minus-one players as closely as first-time draft-eligibles. They only catch my eye on the periphery and that might have been a mistake in his

case. The skating is heavy. It projects as below NHL average, especially in terms of pivot and quickness and forward strides. He forces plays, doesn't think about receiving conditions from teammates. It's all first-option choices, no adaptability. He is involved offensively, but his incursions are slow-paced and reliant on the opposition opening up opportunities for him. He's not the manipulative defenceman I thought he was last year. A B or even a C prospect for me right now. I have to be careful not to let my disappointment tank his projection, however. He remains an agile 6'2" defenceman with above-average handling skills, who is becoming more engaged defensively and has offensive confidence (and some tricks).

**David St-Louis:** February 6th, 2022

Dummondville V. vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Luneau flashed some of the offensive skills that made me excited about his potential last year. He manipulated high defenders to create shooting lanes, activated down the wall and attacked inside the slot through seams, and moved along the blue-line in ways to create space for his partner to move under him and get a dropped pass. Defensively, his lane and check recognition has improved since last year. The skating is still a below-average projection, both in terms of explosiveness and mechanics. It will limit him a lot at high-



er levels as it already limits him right now. He has to rely on sub-optimal breakout passes because he can't separate enough from forecheckers to improve the quality of lanes.

**David St-Louis:** December 17th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Val D'Or Foreurs - QMJHL

There is less offensive involvement from Luneau this season than the last, at least that's my impression. He seems more focused on his defence, on shutting down the rush, even though it's not a particular strength of his at this time (skating, again). He doesn't control his plays on retrievals, but rims the puck around the boards to no one, sometimes. The conservativeness might please some scouts, but I preferred the Luneau of last season, the high-event creator. Now I'm not sure how to judge his overall skill.

**David St-Louis:** December 11th, 2021

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Luneau is still at his best on breakouts, where he has a bit of space to escape with his four-way mobility and options ready to take. He's aware and agile and clearly an above-average handler. His quickness and speed (when not using crossovers) and physical skills lag behind his other abilities. He cares about defence, identifies his check, and closes his space, but he's not all that switchable and he doesn't react quick enough to the moves of the opposition. He scored in

this game off a powerplay one-timer, after a nice behind-the-net exchange from Gatineau. Luneau is a project for me, a 2nd or 3rd round pick.

**David St-Louis:** November 24th 2021

Victoriaville Tigres vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Luneau is inherently deceptive with his posture, the puck at his side, but he really needs favourable conditions to pull off his moves, like attackers rushing straight at him, or teammates attracting defenders on themselves. When faced with a fully set defences, Luneau tends to get rid of the puck, passing it to teammates who are not open, or under close checking pressure. His skating hasn't improved. He is high in forward strides and pushes to the back, limiting his speed. There are a lot of flaws in his game that significantly hurt his projection. He tries more defensively this season, but lacks the anticipation necessarily and the mobility to stop plays quickly.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 21st, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Luneau's stride is bad. Some ankle flexion, but his hips stay perpendicular to the ice. Never sinks into a projectable posture, even when he's trying to recover. The lack of depth affects his backwards skating, too. Still, he's a shockingly refined rush defence. He tightens the gap early, takes away the

middle, then drives players to the outside. Where many better skaters (mechanically) use crossovers, he uses heel pushes to keep his weight centred while generating speed. He gets beat because of the skating, but there are defensive instincts here. With the puck, he's a bit of a victim of Gatineau's structure. He plays minutes and abides. That means dump-outs and simple plays. From the point, he manipulates incoming defenders with shot fakes and in motion pass receptions. Reads the feet pre-reception, which helps him determine which direction to move. As soon as he opens a lane, he executes. Not sure about the ultimate skill level, but the ideas seem sound and he's creative. Perhaps a late-second, given the skating.

**David St-Louis:** November 19th, 2021

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Olympiques Gatineau - QMJHL

A better defensive skating performance from Luneau. He adjusted his gap better ahead of time and used shuffle steps to maintain angle. His speed and quickness are still problematic but he has many right techniques to defend rushes. There seems to be some improvements from last year. His puck-moving is problematic in general. He lacks awareness under pressure. Doesn't bother to scan. There are options and he has the skill to reach them, but he seems locked into chipping the puck past the forecheck or going glass-and-out. But other times, he is attracting forecheckers and creating space for others before feeding them the puck. His play alternates between uncontrolled and overly complex. He rarely strikes the right note at the right time. He is probably an early second-rounder. Too much risk in his projection. If the skating was better overall, the speed and quickness, I think I could look past the mistakes and make him an A. I'm not comfortable with that right now.

**David St-Louis:** November 17th, 2021

Saint John Sea Dogs vs. Olympiques Gatineau - QMJHL

A much better performance from Luneau, who finally showed some adaptability in this game or some ability to leverage one option to open a better one. That was the missing ingredient in his puck-moving in previous performances. He would pull off an escape move and then just dump the puck in the general direction of a teammate. In this game, he was way more manipulative. I still love that he takes every puck in movement. Just that act opens up a lot for him. His defence was tighter. He surfed a couple of times to kill plays early. His backward skating is decent, but he has to take a few crossovers to really pick up momentum and face the rush. He's very shot focused in the offensive zone. It's kind of a default play when nothing is open, but he also hit an

open teammate in the slot in the middle frame after faking such a shot.

**David St-Louis:** November 14th, 2021

Val D'Or Foreurs r vs. Olympiques Gatineau - QMJHL

Luneau is all skill-scripts. Good ones, at least. He uses the same skating patterns, the same handling patterns in the same situation, makes the same passes, the same shots from the same points on the ice. He is smooth, but I'm starting to doubt his game-reading ability. He is not scanning enough, always puck focused, and getting surprised quite often, offensively and defensively. His skating limits the directionality of his passing; he has to contort in awkward manners to reach teammates at times. It projects as below NHL average. His lack of recovery speed on defence is a real problem. If he gets beat, he gets really beat. I like the constant lateral movements in his game. He receives every puck in slides. It helps him see lanes.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Drummondville V. - QMJHL

Luneau showed a bunch of skills in this game. Handling skill evaded pressure, then he kicked the puck out to his teammates on the flanks. After moving inside pass receptions, he passed then activated to start a give-and-go. Consistently hit his targets on the breakout, although the difficulty was low. Used space before shooting, but lacked playmaking in the offensive end. Handling looked like the best skill. Didn't defend much.

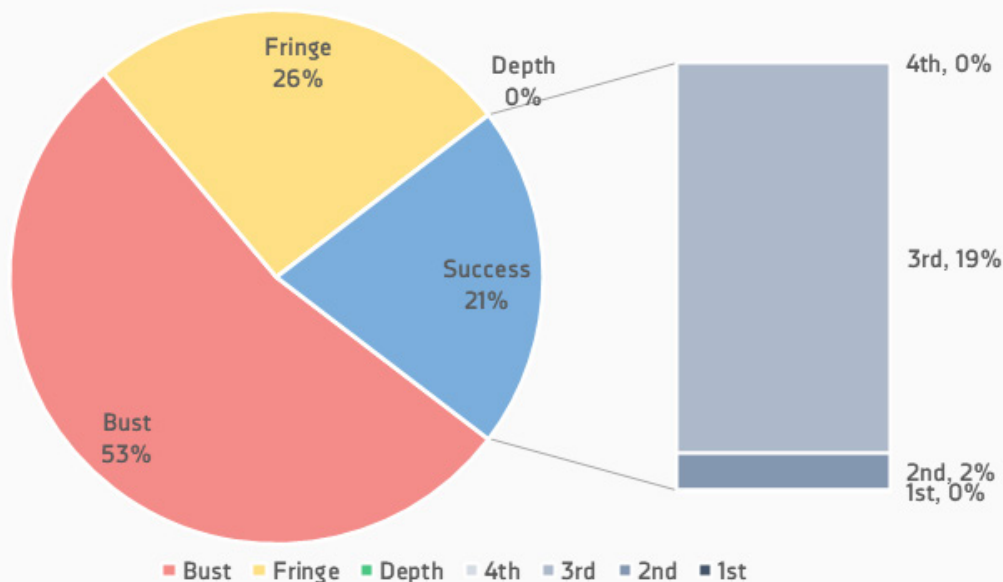
**David St-Louis:** November 5th, 2021

Baie-Comeau Drakkar vs. Olympiques Gatineau - QMJHL

Luneau's attention to defensive details looked improved in the first frame, but it rapidly deteriorated. A strong gap became looser and some poor puck management only increased the issues and the scoring chances against. Luneau reaches a lot in his defensive game, which is often what happens with inefficient skaters. He has trouble defending net-front, boxing out and taking away sticks, but I did appreciate his lane-reading. He cut a couple of passes. His breakouts were mostly poor due to a lack of scanning. He turned back into pressure and passed to the forecheck. The skate fakes and smooth pivots and one edge rides are still there in his game; he uses those moves and a very precise handling ability to beat opponents one-on-one, but his repertoire of escapes to create passing and shooting lanes were pretty much the only real projectable thing about his game.

## Tristan Luneau 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**J.D. Burke:** October 28th, 2021

Charlottetown Islanders vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Pretty strong showing from Luneau, all things considered. His ability to handle forechecking pressure and find creative solutions to move the puck really stood out in this contest – I got a real sense for his problem-solving ability in this contest. Luneau’s defensive stickwork in this contest was great, whether it was swatting away the puck in space or a well-timed stick lift to steal possession on a retrieval. Showed some offensive smarts too, often charging into soft ice off the puck for shooting opportunities. Would’ve liked to see more urgency and pace from Luneau with the puck on his stick, and I thought his skating looked pretty grim in this contest, but I came away fairly impressed by his performance on the whole.

**David St-Louis:** March 20th, 2021

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Olympiques Gatineau - QMJHL

Luneau’s skating was exposed a couple of times, his lack of depth in his stride and his weight locked in between his feet. He is not as speedy, explosive, and agile as he should be to recover defensively, but he still participated in every facet of the game, making controlled plays on breakouts, activating down the offensive blue-line, and manipulating some defenders 1-on-1. One thing that offset his skating: his movement habits; he receives every puck in lateral or forward slides, allowing him to separate and find passing lanes.

**David St-Louis:** February 27th, 2021

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Sherbrooke Pheonix - QMJHL

Shades of Jérémie Poirier. Skating issues but high-end offensive brain. He processes the play fast, finds solutions to closed lanes (problem-solving) and is willing to beat the forecheck himself every time. He understands how to transfer time and space, the need to attract opponents on himself, and the timing to make his dangling move more effective. But he does get wide off the rush due to a combination of projectable below-average skating and bad speed judgment. He is more advanced in his understanding of the playmaking game than Poirier at the same age and better in transition though. Let’s see how much he improves defensively.

**David St-Louis:** February 13th, 2021

Olympiques Gatineau vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Dynamic. Luneau will likely be an above-average skater and handler and he really makes use of those abilities. High-confidence on every shift, carrying the play up-ice in a multitude of ways: passes, transportation, counter-attacks after an aggressive break in the neutral-zone. Luneau looks like a potential high-pick in 2022. He sets up every single one of his plays with look offs and fakes. Very projectable stuff. Very raw also, but he’s a D-1 who can’t get consistent games this year.

**David St-Louis:** January 31st 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Val D’Or Foreurs - QMJHL

Exciting. That’s the best way to describe Luneau. He jumps

# "If Luneau continues to hone his off-puck plays and improves the efficiency of his forward stride, he could find a role as a bottom-pairing defenceman in the NHL in a few years."

on offence every change he gets, fakes, attracts, opening space for teammates. He repairs handling moves with his skates, cutbacks against pressure and changes the point of attack, recognizes space to jump into and has a good defensive game for a 16-year-old. His offensive reads translate to the defensive side of the game; he broke a 2-on-1 like it was nothing, spinning on himself and cutting the passing lane at the last second. High pick in the 2022 draft, maybe top-10. He is a puck-mover, above-average skater, handler, and the way he reads space at his age...Wow.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 24th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Drummondville V. - QMJHL

Luneau has the skill to be a difference-maker any given shift, and he knows it. His skating's an issue, but the flashes with the puck on his stick are incredible. He's so advanced in his understanding of manipulation, lane creation, and play-building. Virtually every touch is made with the intent to improve the position of the puck. Lane deception combined with convincing head fakes to opening up lanes, and he even adds in the layers of deception that aren't necessary in the Q, but will be in the NHL. Shows defensive timing, too, even his positioning isn't always great. Should be a high pick next year.

**David St-Louis:** January 23rd, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Val D'Or Foreurs - QMJHL

Luneau is bold and dynamic. It bodes well for his future. His plays miss as often as they succeed, but I honestly don't care due to his age. The refined timing will come and it's good that he tries to move the puck, to beat F1s, and to improve offensive plays with quick activations. He has deception, mobility, and superior handling skills. He will probably be a top defenceman in this league as soon as next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2020

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

A bit of everything from Luneau in this game, setting up

chances, conceding chances, and everything in between. The highlight of his performance was crafty pass into the slot after activating off the faceoff, looking off his target through a shooting stance. He had another lateral sequence where he used the mohawk to shake off a defender, then escape along the boards with a stiff-arm before the backhand dish for a long-range shot. He struggled with just about every type of transitional attack in this game, even the easier ones -- passive. In the defensive zone, he's constantly scanning to identify threats. Closes space well, but could stand to follow through his stick checks. Skating was upright, lacking depth through ankles and hips, but he engages his hips into crossovers. Careless puck management in transition hurt Gatineau, but I liked his mindset of looking up the middle, activating, and trying to work give-and-goes. Puckhandling looks advanced for his position, allowing his top hand to flow freely across the body while rolling out the back in-tight. All-in-all, he looks like a top prospect for 2022.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 20th, 2020

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Luneau was the best defenceman on the ice, perhaps by a health margin. He was clinical. Only real complaint was a couple of poor off-puck defensive reads and an uncontrolled exit that could've been a pass to a teammate moving through the middle. Otherwise, he showed advanced transition habits, locating teammates under pressure and passing in motion. His rush defence habits are already decently polished, leading to a pair of failed entries against on four attempts. Offensively, he looked to pass more than shoot, but fired off three shots at 5-on-5 and another four on the PP. He's more focused on activating into space, before making the best play. Didn't see a ton of deception. He's also a really average skater at times, struggles to maintain depth through his shifts -- that will improve with added strength. Reminds me a ton of Carson Lambos, but with a bit more skill.



70  
Rank

C  
Grade

4.5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

5.5  
Puckhandling

4.5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# FILIP BYSTEDT

C | LINKÖPING HC

HEIGHT 6'4"  
WEIGHT 205

D.O.B. FEB. 4, 2004  
SHOOTS LEFT

"He's had a really solid season... I think once you get past the exciting players in this draft, Bystedt is going to go as one of the most solid ones. He's probably going in the first half of the second round." - Eastern Conference Executive in May 2022

37%

2022 XLS

13%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

5%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	40	16	33	49
SHL	15	1	1	2
WJC-18	6	2	1	3

## Scouting Report

The NHL's power brokers still covet power forwards more than just about any other player type in the sport. After all, who doesn't like a player who can combine size, skill, and speed? Filip Bystedt doesn't exactly fit that mould at the moment, but even the slim chance he'll one day get there will be enough to elevate his stock, perhaps even to the first round.

Right now, Bystedt has size and handling skills to offer. The speed will have to come later. While improving the output of a player's stride is a difficult endeavour, the finer mechanics of the Linköping centre's skating are better than for most 6-foot-4 forwards, which suggests that he could become more agile with the appropriate coaching.

Just improving his speed won't be enough for Bystedt, though. He will also have to learn to use it against defenders. Most of his plays are currently made in a glide. The forward prefers to slow down the tempo of the game. He attacks in a straight line and then cuts his motor to dangle through the stick and feet of defenders, something he can pull off at the J20 level, but that won't be possible at the SHL or NHL level.

The long development path that Bystedt has ahead of him and some concerns about his ability to see plays develop had us drop him on our board this season. He is a project for an organization with a strong development team.

## Game Reports

David St-Louis: April 27th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - U18s

Not sure what to make of Bystedt. The puck is always in front of him when he rushes, which forces him into dangle and he seems to have based his game around going through opponents and outrushing them. His upper-body is constantly shifting up and down inside moves and he has no planning ability; he just goes. That said, he can initiate passing plays when he looks and find teammates. There are some skills there, but I'm not all that interested.

David St-Louis: April 24th, 2022

Sweden vs Switzerland - U18s

I'm not sure if Bystedt is slow or more of an average skater; the closed-in camera makes it hard to distinguish. I don't like his rush patterns: it's all dangles and the puck is maintained in front of him at all time (which contributes to the fact that his rush game is all dangles as he exposes the puck to defenders and is then forced to move it around their stick). All he did in this game is try to move wide on opponents. He has some handling skills.



**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 10th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs Linköpings HC U20 - J20 Final four

For some reason they pushed Bystedt out to the wing for these games. I can see some upsides there with his speed and size. He covers the puck and can beat opponents with his speed. He had some trouble getting to the inside even if he had a physical advantage. It is still clear that he needs to get better at creating with both hands and feet at the same time. Now when he dekes, his feet stop moving.

He played a big role and had two power play assists. One he sauced into the slot from below and the other was an easy pass up to the blueline for a shot. I like his passing game on the power play. He moves up and down the right side searching for a chance to get the puck to Hävelid for the shot or up to the point or down below. His puck control and passing is a big part of that power play. At even strength he did not create much and as said, there was a lot of skating with the puck on the outside and behind the net.

If he can connect better technically there is some bottom six upside to Bystedt. Mid round draft pick for me but there are always chances for players like him to go earlier.

**Lassi Alanen:** April 9th, 2022

Linköpings HC vs. Örebro HK - J20 Final Four

Bystedt clearly has some nice tools, but he's not even close to maximizing them. You can view that from many angles: he does have unlocked potential, but on the other hand, how confident can we be in him ever unlocking it. For a big-bodied player, he's an overall solid skater with good first few steps. Knee bend, ankle flexion are both solid. He had some impressive handling sequences where he pulled off complicated moves, mostly while gliding, though. He's clearly very talented player for this level. On the other hand, he seems to completely miss a give-and-go game, often just trying rush and deke players until he got himself into a shooting position, at least at 5-on-5. He did have an impressive primary assist with a cross-ice dish, but he wasn't really looking for passing plays until it would have been the defining pass into a one-timer instead of passing and moving to new location to get the puck back again. Defensive game is also not that strong. He would be a worthwhile project, but at what point in the draft?

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 9th, 2022

Linköpings HC vs. Örebro HK - J20 Final four

Bystedt had a good game. He uses his speed to drive play. He had a strong assist, walking around the goal finding a teammate with a back hand on the other side with an open net.

His skating is mostly impressive with short distance

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Kristoffer Jobs YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 97%	2 Peter Oberg YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 97%
3 Ludvig Rensfeldt YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 96%	4 Loui Eriksson YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 95%
5 William Karlsson YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 95%	6 Niklas Flodin YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 95%
7 Joakim Andersson YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 95%	8 Lars Eller YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 94%
9 Richard Gyngö YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 94%	10 Pontus Netterberg YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 94%

speed which he can contain but lacks an elite gear. His agility and balance is still not strong but that could also be a case of needing more muscle power. I like how he can cover the puck with his legs wide though.

Skillwise it is like before, his hands can't work when his legs are moving. His vision with the is mostly simplistic, a lot of puck carrying rarely shifting pace or finding open space. Does not seem to plan well, drives mostly with power. Competed well and was strong on the puck.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 22nd, 2022

Rögle BK vs. Linköping HC - J20 Nationell

Filip was a top centre for his team and played in all situations. The game was quite typical of what we are used to seeing with Bystedt. He is a highly involved force with his speed and size in the middle.

Bystedt drove play for his team with puck transportation and did not hesitate to take the puck to the net. He seeks the middle and is most successful when he takes it the whole way himself. Bystedt north-to-south skating stands out at this level and he is a train hard to contain being 6'4 and fast. He had some good deking moves while moving forward but his offence is mostly his speed though and this will not translate well to higher levels. His puck skills are average. He cannot manipulate defenders or create space for others with his hands or feet. He is not able to plan ahead either. He takes the puck and drives with it. He has some degree of awareness and can make nice passes and can be a decent passer on a power play.

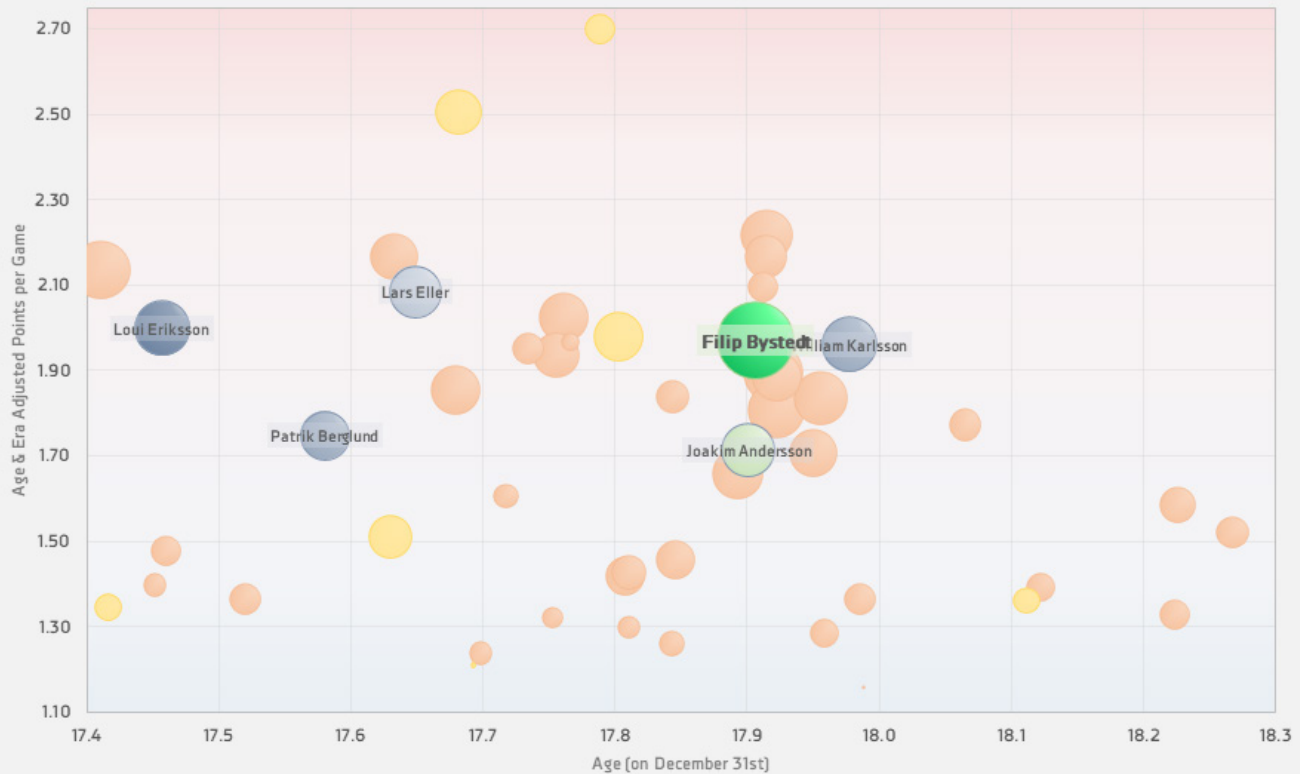
His skating has some flaws and his lower-body balance

## Filip Bystedt 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 49 || Base XLS: 15% || Impact XLS: 11% || XPR: 42.7 || Drafted Pct: 55%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



pGPS System by  
Jeremy Davis

● Busts ● Fringe ● Depth ● 4th Line ● 3rd Line ● 2nd Line ● 1st Line ● Filip Bystedt

Raw data via  
Elite Prospects

is not strong and that prevents from being a strong puck protector. He rarely skates with his legs wide and his stride could be longer and not as upright in position. Somehow his speed is very good anyway but the flaws still limit his game on higher levels in more tight spaced games.

For an NHL projection he is a bottom six player and for him to reach there he needs to get a bit smarter, a bit more skilled with the puck and better his balance and agility. Speed and size down the middle is enough to get drafted but not to be a player.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 21st, 2021

Timrå IK vs. Linköping HC - SHL

Filip plays regularly on the second line with no special teams time. He played a total of 13:27.

Filip skating does not stand out at SHL level. He is explosive but could improve his technique. He skates with legs wide and the stride could be longer. He needs to work hard to keep his speed up. With that explosiveness he should be able to develop his skating if adjusts his stride.

Filip plays a simple game with the puck. He had a couple of good passes and some bad. He is not a play driver and does not make that much difference when he is on the ice. He controls the puck well in tight situations and tries

a couple of dekes without success.

His game away from the puck is okay. He reads the fore-checks well and can cheat to get first to the puck because he sees the game. He sees where the playing is heading fast and acts on it. He finishes his checks but does not win many puck duels in this game though. He could use more speed and relentlessness to be more effective. He looks mostly to be a big and explosive player. With the puck, Filip lacks high-level vision to create time and space for himself. He often plays with a high muscle tone and does not look relaxed enough in his body to be creative.

All in all, I do not see any elite traits in Bystedt other than maybe the combination of size and explosiveness. The skating looked more impressive at junior level than here in the SHL. There are some technical issues that need to be fixed if he wants to be able to capitalize on his physical attributes. He has good puck control and a good shot, but lacks vision. For the draft, I would not pick Bystedt in the first two rounds.

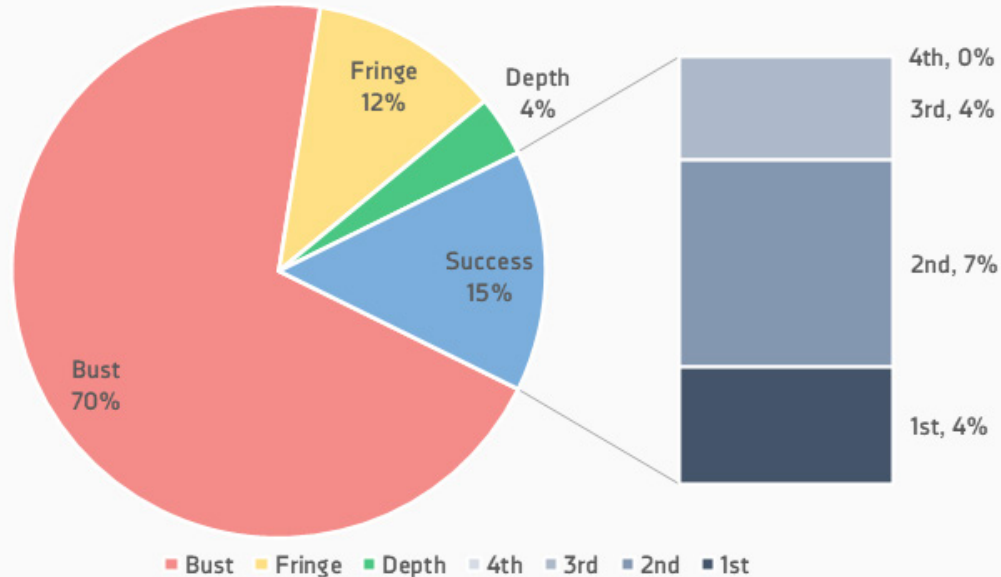
**Lassi Alanen:** October 16th, 2021

Linköping HC vs. Frölunda HC - SHL

Bystedt received around 10 minutes of ice time in this one, playing on the wing. It was a rather inconsistent show-

## Filip Bystedt 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



ing and it's hard to say what kind of a player he is based on that. He had some good moments with the puck, ie. dishing a slip pass quickly along the boards for a breakout. He didn't get many puck touches in OZ. Defensively, he pressured the puck-carrier pretty well multiple times, but had one bad sequence where he lost his man completely at the point. His skating looked fine in stretches, but his pace wasn't very high or consistent.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** September 8th, 2021

Linköping HC vs Södertälje SK - J20 Nationell

Filip played the role as a second line center and was used both on the PP as the PK. He was a useful player and one of their best puck carriers.

Filip is an above average skater. He has a long powerful stride and can pick up speed fast. He can use his skating as a weapon and it helps him to move up the ice with the puck. He is a strong puck transporter. He skates best "north-to-south" and is not as strong in his agility in tight spaces.

Filip has good puck skills, I would grade them as average for an NHL prospect. He has a quick release with his shot while skating forward. He did not score in this game but is a decent goal scorer. He likes to take the puck to the net and is good at doing so. He has good puck control but does not stand out in creativity.

Filip's vision could be better, I would rank it as below average for an NHL prospect. He drives play more with puck transportation than creativity. He is not a particularly strong playmaker and when size and speed does not stand out as much as it does now he could get into trouble.

Filip is big in size and strong on the puck. He has strong balance and can cover the puck well. He is 6-foot-4 and still needs to grow into his big body, but strength will not be an issue for him if Linköping decides to give him SHL ice time this season.

All-in-all, I see as either a strong bottom six center or as a bust. The hockey sense is my biggest issue, but he has good potential in his skating, size and puck skills to become a good 3rd or 4th line center. For the draft, he could be a good pick in the middle rounds.

**J.D. Burke:** August 4th, 2021

Sweden U18 vs. Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

The one thing that really stood out in this contest was that Bystedt's confidence as a handler greatly exceeds his skill. Hands don't operate independently of his feet. He doesn't set up any of his manoeuvres with false signals or deceptive posturing. He's not even particularly crafty. I don't get it. It's as if he's built his identity as a player around one of the weakest components in his game. Lacks a separating gear as a skater. Turned a potential 2-on-1 into a low percentage shot from the corner, lacking the speed or processing power to get around the obstacles in his path. Made a really well-timed charge between two defenders at the defensive blue line, collected a pass at full speed, and fired a wrist shot past the goaltender at full speed to pick up a goal in the third period. Other than that, I'm not sure I saw much of anything to suggest this is a player that warrants even mid-round consideration.



71  
Rank

C  
Grade

3.5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

6  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

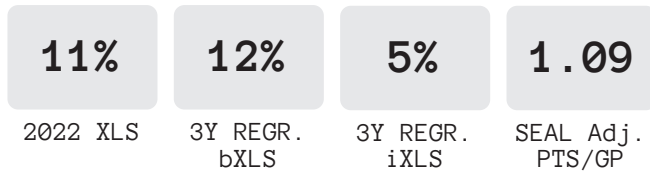
6  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# MATTHEW SEMINOFF

RW | KAMLOOPS BLAZERS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. DEC. 27, 2003  
WEIGHT 183 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	64	26	31	57

## Scouting Report

It's rare that a prospect's NHL future hinges as much on one element of their game as is the case with Matthew Seminoff. Should he improve his skating, then he has a high chance to play in the top league. If he doesn't, that scenario seems almost impossible.

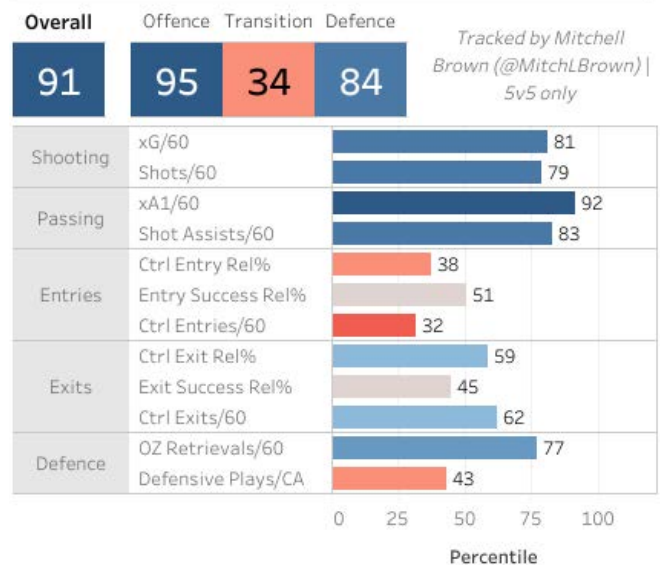
"He struggles to get his knees to his toes, preventing him from engaging his hips. His feet kick and his skates recover outside his shoulders," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a February report. "The skating gets him locked into straight-line attacks, especially if he's not able to access his teammates immediately."

Seminoff's below-average stride, even for the WHL, prevents him from reaching passing and shooting lanes that others can easily access. It limits his ability to break in the offensive zone with control, to escape defenders along the board, and forces him to rush many of his plays in all three zones, as the pressure mounts quicker on him.

At first look, that deficient skating can make Seminoff look like a lesser thinker of the game than he is in reality, but after digging into his game, one starts to understand that the winger is, in fact, a high-level play-connector, who makes up for his lack of mobility by moving ahead of both teammates and opponents alike.

"Seminoff's a smart player - one of the smartest from the WHL this year. He identifies space proactively and times his movements into it," Brown added in another game report. "The off-puck instincts boost both his shooting and passing games, often picking the best play instantaneously.

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 141.0



Adaptable, too. He never seems stuck or locked into a play in the offensive end."

The winger has one of the highest hockey sense grades in the draft. If he can improve his skating to an acceptable level, a slightly below-average NHL grade, the game will open up for him. He will gain more options and an ability to leverage, fake, and use those options to create more and better scoring chances.

There is another way to think about Seminoff's current WHL experience as a lesser skater, too. As he has to make more of his plays under a high level of pressure, with defenders right on his back and in his face, he might be more prepared for the professional game than other players

who can more easily outmaneuver their competition.

If Seminoff can improve his skating, a role on an NHL team's second line doesn't seem out of the question. Without it, well, maybe not so much.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

It's really a shame about the skating. Seminoff's a smart player - one of the smartest from the WHL this year. He identifies space proactively and times his movements into it. The off-puck instincts boost both his shooting and passing games, often picking the best play instantaneously. Adaptable, too. He never seems stuck or locked into a play in the offensive end. In transition, however, that's a different story because of the skating. Sometimes, he's too focused on funnelling plays towards the net and misses the trailer. Others, he gets locked to the outside and gets forced into a low-percentage play. If the skating improves to, say, a 4.5, he could be a top-nine forward. On a normal development curve, he becomes a Quad-A player who just can't quite reach NHL pace.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Seminoff's skating alone could prevent him making the NHL. High stance without much power. Struggles to change directions. The lack of lower body flexion could prevent his board game from translating. For now, the skating's most limiting in transition. He can't separation. He throws pucks away too quickly and the vision that drives his offensive game doesn't consistently appear in the other two-thirds of the rink. Questionable playmaking choices, trying to funnel everything towards the net instead of finding the next layer. Didn't look like a pick in this game, although the defence was strong as usual.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

The skating's still bleak, but I have a lot more optimism for him than Lindgren. While he lacks Lindgren's creative handling, he's comfortable on the backhand and doesn't keep that top hand on his hip. Gives him more control. While lacks ankle flexion, he understands the dynamics of body positioning and leverage: get low, make early contact, cut away inside contact. Finishes every single off-puck route. Finishes every single backcheck. He's an excellent supporting piece and a projectable defender because he takes the extra stride, wins positioning, and makes the next play immediately. His board game follows the same ideas. There's no overhandling or needless cycling. He just makes a play to the inside as soon

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Dustin Johner YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 99%	2 Jeff Lucky YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 98%
3 Geordie Wudrick YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 98%	4 Zach Franko YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 98%
5 Brandon Magee YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 98%	6 Nathan Smith YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 98%
7 Max Reinhart YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 98%	8 Dylan Stanley YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 98%
9 Jordin Tootoo YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 98%	10 Burke Gallimore YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 97%

as possible, bolstered by scanning, backhand passing, and confidence when inside defenders. Late-second, early-third. Interesting debate between him and Mikey Milne. Seminoff's more skilled, but Milne's a better skater.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 21st, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Seminoff's skating looked worse than I remembered. He struggles to get his knees to his toes, preventing him from engaging his hips. His feet kick and his skates recover outside his shoulders. The skating gets him locked into straight-line attacks, especially if he's not able to access his teammates immediately. In transition, he lacks both problem-solving and planning abilities. Offensively, he does both at a moderate level. He works a ton of pucks into the slot, usually with well-timed, accurate plays. Capable off the backhand, as well as with hook and slip passes under pressure. Skating limitations will hurt his board play at the next level. For now, he times his cutbacks perfectly, understanding how to draw in defenders and then get them on his back. He's mostly a skilled connector with puck protection and retrieval ability, but the skating will prevent him from playing that game at the next level. Likely more of a mid-second for me.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 12th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

Will Seminoff be a puck-driver at the next level? Probably not, at least not in transition. He's too straight line, his skating stands out as a major weakness, and he's not creative in the least. Even just a couple of crossovers would dramatically change the effectiveness of his game. But at either end of

the rink, he's solid. He can either be in the middle of the possession sequence or at the end. Several shooting tricks (curl-and-drag and more subtle angle changes) make him a threat despite some mechanical hitches. In both situations, he shows an ability to make timed movements into space and then immediately complete the next play. A capable down-low playmaker who quickly alters puck positioning before passing to ensure the puck makes it through. Game is heavily dependent on his puck protection, which might not scale up because of his lack of ankle flexion, elevated hips, and collapsed torso which both limits explosiveness and balance. Shows the timing and awareness of pressure to overcome those, however. It really comes down to development. Third-line skill set. Perhaps a fine 30-40 pick.

**Daniel Gee:** January 21st, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Seminoff was put on the wing with fellow draft-eligible centre, Fraser Minten, and while he was able to involve himself in a couple of high-danger chances, this was a relatively poor viewing.

In general it was apparent that Seminoff struggled to create at the same level he has in the past this season, when most of the play of his line funnelled through the centre position. Too many offensive zone sequences were driven outside or to the end-boards with Seminoff playing more of a pass support role, rather than the down-low pressure thriving puck retriever. This meant most of Seminoff's work was off-puck -- which just seems odd given what we have seen in the past. Regardless, Seminoff tried to get to soft areas of the ice. The most apparent plays happened in the first and third. On one sequence he was able to execute a jam play after a spinorama Minten pass came from the far corner. Later, he crashed the net, stick down, missing a wide open net on the redirect. He even almost converted a rebound off a Minten wrap-around. Not sure if this is the best role for him at the end of the day.

When he had his moments on-puck, Seminoff was impressive. Tonnes of pressure resisting board-work; give-and-go attempts, and inside focused play. He supported a battle in the second, chipped a puck forward and skated onto the puck alone, missing a shot high. So inside-focused and determined to create through his pace. Seminoff actually played off Minten's transition play well in this viewing. One one shift he executed a really nice slip past the Cougars defense to allow Minten to chase on-puck from the weak side -- just one of multiple proactive puck placement sequences in this game. Seminoff's on-puck rush patterns were excellent; wide entry, sharp cuts inward, delays to open lanes, and pass execution. Looks for pass-off-pad rebounds when he can't cut into the centre lane. Stride is a limiter; very choppy from push-off

to push-off; short recoveries, limited power generation. He really relies on foot speed and pace to move. Takes a lot of short steps in his crossovers-- really inefficient. Strong defensively in the limited DZ shifts he participated in; had a couple of pass interceptions and pressure swings that created turnovers. I guess this viewing showed he needs the puck more to really be an overwhelming creation threat.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 17th, 2021

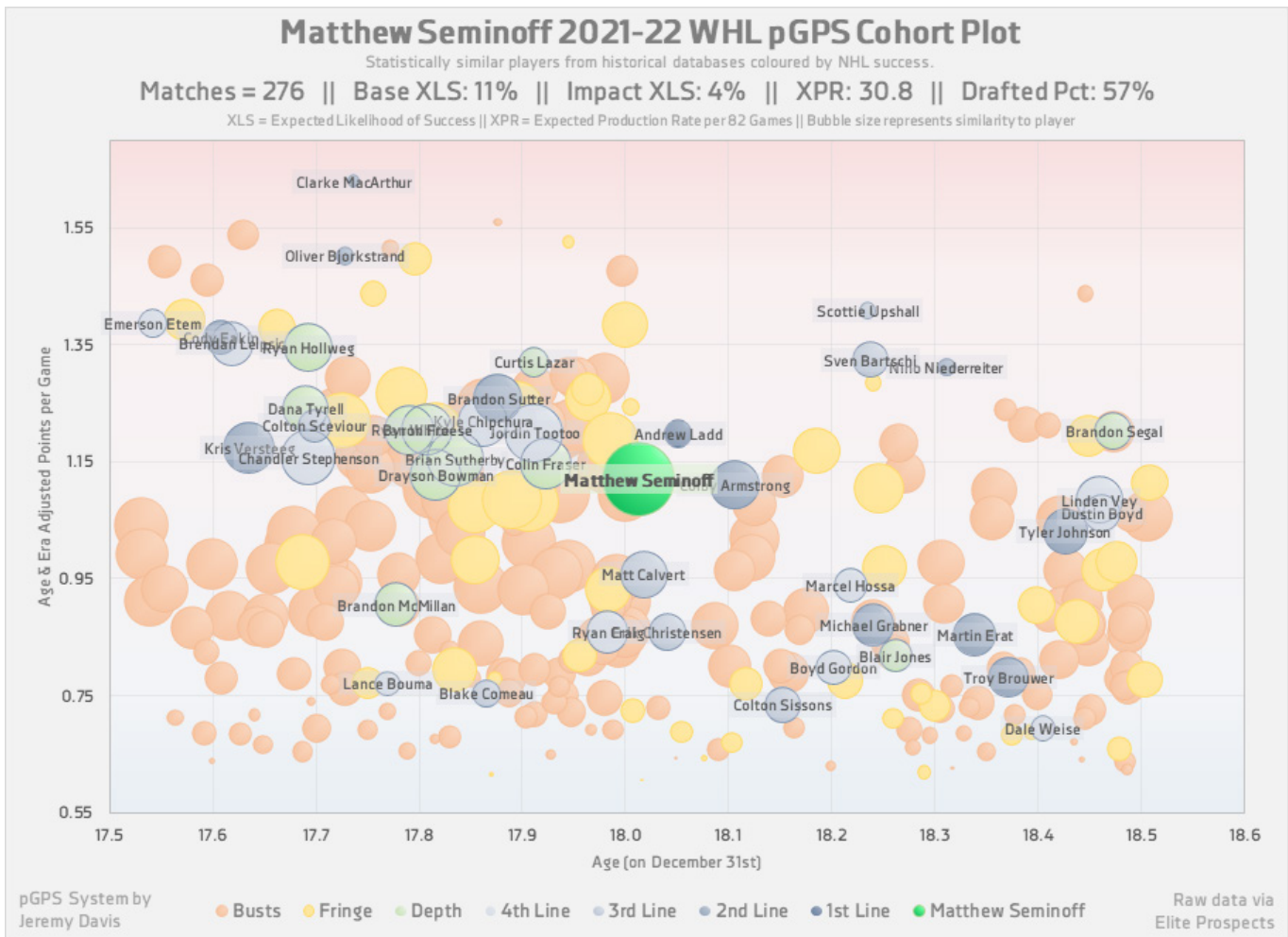
Prince George Cougars vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

With no Stankoven, Seminoff's clearly the driving force. He's playing much more aggressively with the puck, trying to part-finesse, part-bulldoze through defenders to gain the inside of leaning more on his playmaking ability. The results were stellar. He consistently beat defenders, grabbed heaps of chances, and didn't run into any major efficiency issues. Still could benefit from more diverse rush routes in the NZ, but he uses the necessary skills in the OZ: hesitation moves, changes of pace, crossover-laden attacks, and give-and-goes. Without the puck, he's always impactful through his balance of supporting and scoring position, routes (and willingness to finish them to create space), and puck pursuit. His skating lacks depth, mechanical refinement, and he's certainly not innately quick. But he creates advantages for himself through that off-puck game, also how he establishes positioning. He nudges players entering puck battles, before spinning back and stepping inside. In one sequence, he anticipated space before getting the puck, leaned on the defender (between him and the puck), eliminated their stick, and spun -- winning possession, establishing body positioning, and clearing the path to the net in one move. Not a play-driver in the NHL, but could be a top-nine forward.

**J.D. Burke:** December 15th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

Starting to see Seminoff as less of a passenger at this level. The Blazers had him on a line with Caedan Bankier and Josh Pillar, and he was every bit as critical to that line's success as the other two parts. Some of Seminoff's best work came on the rush. His ability to perfectly weight passes through sticks and bodies to teammates in space produced two partial breakaway chances. In general, Seminoff displayed an advanced sense of timing throughout this contest. Picked up a scoring chance in the middle frame by timing his route to the net-front perfectly for a deflection chance. Used some advanced concepts trying to break down defenders in space, changes lanes and speeds to create space for himself, and even turning the corner on a defender on one occasion. Took some odd lines to the puck on the forecheck, but one has to admire his gusto all the same; Seminoff was launching himself at defenders on puck retrievals all game long. I'm



still not sure that I see a first-round pick, but there's no doubt in my mind that he belongs in the second.

**Daniel Gee:** December 11th, 2021  
 Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars- WHL

Kamloops dominated play, putting up close to 50 shots, and Seminoff (who drove play in the absence of Stankoven) was clearly the games best player, despite the loss to Prince George.

Seminoff just thrives within tight checking pressure -- shifty, balanced, inside-oriented, and insanely quick processing, he creates such an overwhelming presence below the dots. Add in the ability to distribute, a plus-motor, and you have, what in my mind, is a first-round quality prospect. In the first Seminoff pushed a high pressure forecheck behind the Cougars net, creating a turnover to start sustained pressure. He then shifted to the slot and jammed a rebounded puck in -- a result of inside positioning. On a subsequent shift Seminoff crashed the boards to prevent a flip out, hemming the Cougars in their own zone. As the play developed he took a pick behind the net and fed a teammate quickly on the left-hand circle who placed the puck off the post. He had multiple expected-assist passing plays in this one -- fighting through box outs, pins, and general physicality throughout.

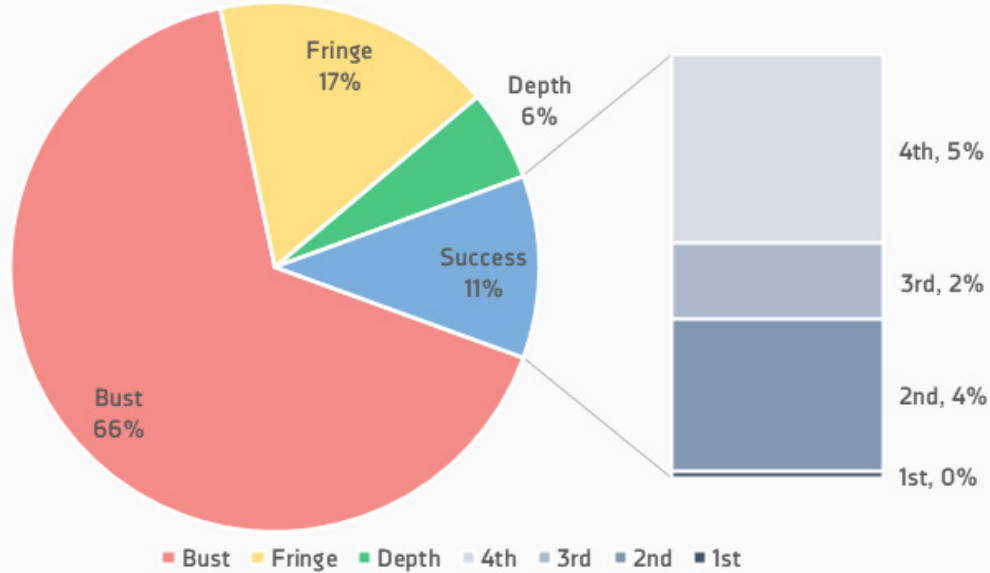
Passing was ambitious in this viewing, especially when he drove around the perimeter on-puck -- execution waned; the thing is, he's such a good retrieval player, who wins races that the inefficiency is relatively nil. In the third he won a retrieval through upping his pace, slipped pressure on the boards and passed to a supporting teammate. He shifted to the inside, heeled a shot wide and then later spun out of the near corner to get a low slider on net.

In transition, he was smart. Tries to execute power moves and can handle and protect with one arm. Hope passing is still a major patterned habit. Loves to chip-and-chase which doesn't project too well with his forward stride inefficiencies ( no ankle flex, wide recoveries). He's super skilled though -- on one shift he pulled a loose puck behind him through his legs and in one motion snapped a shot off the right-hand circle. Drew a penalty on another inside-outside handle in the second. Thinks a couple sequences ahead constantly -- shot-off pad-passes, teammates driving the slot, proactive stick lifts into retrievals, etc. Fun player.

In terms of his defensive impact, Seminoff was once again involved. Whether it was deeper activations where he was able to corral rebounds, or pushing pressure on the backcheck and the point, he is just as competitive in his own zone. Became a bit stagnant on the Cougars GWG; fatigue being a factor.

## Matthew Seminoff 2021-22 WHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Seminoff can play a number of different roles on a line. He can act as the triggerman, combining his refined shooting mechanics with some off-puck instincts. He can win battles down low and draw pressure towards him. A sturdy puck protector, he combines changes of pace, active feet, and an innate understanding of managing pressure to escape with possession. Uses his bottom hand to keep the defender on his back really well. He'll turn forechecking sequences into scoring chances with his playmaking. Patience and handling allow him to freeze defenders and prolong passing lanes. Overall, I find him too passive at times -- like, he's fine being the tertiary force on his line. I think there's a first-round argument, given his well-rounded skill set and adaptability. How convincing is it? I'm not sure, but I've definitely seen better performances from him.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 20th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Hat trick for Seminoff. All three goals in different ways. A PP deflection in front of the net, an outside lane dash finished with a backhand, and a one-timer after finding space off the rush. The skating's an issue, but he has the skills to overcome it. Always establishes body positioning, keeps his feet moving through pressure, deceives, and makes one-touch passes. Knows his play before getting the puck and shows adaptability when things change. The term dual-threat is overused, but he's a player with 5.5-or-better shooting and

passing grades, and he uses the threat of one to set up the other: Looks off shots from sharp angles to give him a chance and look off passes to keep the lane open and freeze the goaltender. Inside-driven, combining deception, skating, and handling into one fluid motion to gain the middle. He's more of a facilitator than a true creator given his linemates, but he clearly has the skills to be a play-driver. He has middle-six upside. First-round pick.

**J.D. Burke:** November 14th, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Seminoff was a total passenger in this contest, playing on the top line with Logan Stankoven and Josh Pillar, often fading into the background as they did most of the damage. Also played a fair bit in both phases of special teams. Mostly played the role of the net-front presence in this contest. Missed a few passing opportunities overhandling the puck with his limited puck touches in this contest. The needle, it didn't really move with this one.

**Cam Robinson:** October 30th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

A really nice showing from Seminoff in this one. Showcased the engine and intelligence early with a smark puck retrieval behind the net on the PP, turned it into a craft HD chance/shot assist. Showed the wheels on a nice wide lane rush and cut well with his edges. The skating isn't ideal but I think there's a path to it landing as NHL average. He needs to work on his acceleration form to chop it up sooner and then extend that stride long and deep. As it stands, he



loses a lot of power early and then shifts to the wide stand at medium speed. His edges, dot-line heavy approach and cross-over heavy carrying skills make him difficult to contain on the rush even with the flawed mechanics.

I really enjoyed the defensive positioning and smart stick work. Disrupts lanes like a sociopath out on the town.

Oh, and he dropped three points - two of which came primarily off of his dynamic rush patterns and heads up awareness of open ice and his mates positioning. He's a smart player and is justifying the point totals early.

I see you, Seminoff.

**Daniel Gee:** October 30th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Dominant effort for Seminoff who flexed constant translatable habits, created on the majority of his shifts, and executed on his opportunities.

Oh boy, this was an impressive transitional effort. Seminoff's forward stride is rough, but his linear crossovers and pace changes provide enough speed generation to turn defenders. This combined with a handling and manipulation blend make him a terror to play against. Constantly scanning for the next play Seminoff was executing slip-passes non-stop. In the first he handled past a defender slipping a pass to a teammate on the far-boards creating a two-on-one. Later in the game he executed a give-and-go play, started by slipping the puck through forechecking pressure in the neutral zone, eventually cutting into the middle with a deke and reading a dangerous in-stride shot off the toe of his stick -- chaos resulted in a Blazers' goal and a Seminoff assist. His on-puck drives were what created the most for Seminoff in this game. In the first, he took a hard pass in-stride, upping his pace along the right-wing, driving wide, shooting off a sharp angle in an attempt to create a rebound. He practically dunked on the Cougars in the third with a transitional effort born out of a mohawk/shimmy manipulation in the neutral zone. Seminoff once again burned off the rightwing, turning the opposing defenders and executing a cross-crease pass for an easy one-touch goal. On the sustained efforts born out of these transitional plays, Seminoff was equally as effective. He was an effective forechecker, stringing together timed stick-lifts into steals. He took a ridiculous amount of punishment on the perimeter but handled it well. One shift in the second, he dragged to the backhand on a perimeter carry, fighting through multiple checkers to get the puck on net (big rebound created). On a powerplay, he jumped on a puck behind the net and quickly wrapped the puck on his forehand and scored. Could have had a fourth point in the third after he stole a puck behind the net, swinging into an instant slot pass as he drifted into the corner, waiting for a teammate to activate in the crease. Ridiculously smart.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Seminoff was the best player on the ice in this game. Defensive stickwork was killer; he racked up the steals across all three zones. In one shift, he stole the puck twice, cut inside, fired off a dangerous shot, moved the puck and dashed to the slot leading to an assist. Another disrupted exit followed by an interception lead to a spin-around pass into the slot for a teammate. His best offensive play -- a cross-slot pass after beating two players without outside speed -- was also his least projectable play. His hands and feet are locked in rhythm, and while he's somewhat skilled in that limitation, he always keeps the puck centred in between his feet. The skating's really rough, especially during acceleration as laid out in the last game report. Still, he thinks a step ahead of everyone else on the ice; he understands how off-puck movement and support lead to offence. He attacks the inside with every possible opportunity, using body positioning, passing, and handling to execute. The limitations are real, as is the intelligence. Probably an early second-rounder at this stage.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Seminoff was hardly impressive from strictly a play-creation sense, but the ideas and tools were strong -- this viewing was more than likely a one-off. High crossover integration helps offset a short stride, and he understands how crossovers make defenders move their feet, creating space. Still, he ran into defender and got forced into dump-ins during his most dynamic skating sequences. One NHL play: Intercepted a pass by knocking it down, then backhanding it through two defenders (behind his back) for a point-blank chance. Two-touch passing under pressure -- incredible read. A crafty pass under a defender's stick on the entry to set-up an in-zone 2-on-1. Moves proactively, first on pucks, anticipate passes, funnels the puck carrier into support -- lots of off-puck details. His stride's interesting: lacks depth, over-rotates upper body (at times), fails to extend most strides, and recovers without much forward drive. He drops into his stride too early while accelerating (he generally takes two acceleration steps before dropping his hips and widening his stance when he should be doing the opposite). There's a lot of promise in his game; looks like a top-two rounds prospect.

**J.D. Burke:** October 12th, 2021

Victoria Royals vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

A really, really strong performance from Seminoff in this one. Could've easily finished with three or four points with better puck luck. Instead, he had to settle for the one point, an unremarkable backhand goal at the side of the net with a

puck that corralled from a wide point shot. The pace really stood out for me in this one. Seminoff knew what he was doing with the puck well in advance of securing its possession. The same could be said of his work ethic. Seminoff made second and third efforts on puck retrievals and often managed to escape with possession as a result. Definitely looks the part of a first- or second-round pick.

**Daniel Gee:** October 2nd, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Came away with another positive viewing of Seminoff, who probably should have come away with more than one point in this game against the Cougars.

Seminoff again profiled a dual threat on both the transition and sustained offensive scenarios. His habits are so consistent from a game-to-game basis. On transitional attacks, he facilitates the puck well through the neutral zone, crashing the middle lane off-puck, planting in and around the crease, setting up passing targets for his teammates. Weakside activations, drop off plays after perimeter entries, and on-puck power moves permeated throughout his shifts. Again, while he has limited explosiveness due to his short stride length, his details were super impressive. Seminoff gets low, sharply cutting on his edges to create a low-centre of gravity, pushing the puck outward while using his right-arm to deflect away the defender's stick. He usually is enveloped physically by the time he makes it to the net, but above-average edge work allows for cut-back plays into sustained offensive pressure. He loves to throw the puck sharply on net off these drives. In the second, he almost scored off of one of these shots and mixed it up in the third on a similar drive, pivoting off of the Cougars defender.

In sustained scenarios, the best word I can describe Seminoff with is "menace". His motor is so high, constantly rotating into the slot off-puck, getting open and attacking soft areas of coverage. In the first, he got a quick shot off, with additional rebound wack attempts after planting on the right of the crease. He's excellent on the walls, reading pressure extremely well off his back. He constantly sweeps in front of defenders on retrievals, winning body positioning to continue cycle plays. On the powerplay, he acts as a net-front and one-touch facilitator into the bumper. With the game tied 4-4, he completed an amazing pass from behind the net, into the slot for a one-timer (GWG). There were a ton of similar passing sequences below the goal line like this throughout that didn't hit (hope passes) until he finally got that one. Moved up to the Stankoven line halfway through the game.

Defensively, Seminoff was on for a couple goals against -- not really his fault. He's very engaged on the backcheck, helping with transitional angling. In sustained scenarios positive habits are present; headchecks, lane clogging, spec-

ification of secondary threats. Stride mechanics can waiver on longer shifts making him slower on stop and start plays. Love how engaged he is.

**Daniel Gee:** September 18th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Scored a hattrick and generated a bunch of other high-danger chances.

Seminoff has advanced habits along the boards, reading pressure off his back extremely well, while blending a ridiculous amount of small-area moves to add to his escapability. I'm talking behind the backboard banks behind his back, passing to himself off the net, and incorporation of punch turns and pivots -- just excellent stuff. This skill allowed Siminoff to not only continue Blazers sustained cycle plays, but translate into production. On top of this board skill, Seminoff's playmaking blended extremely well out of these scenarios. He has true give-and-go ability, can facilitate off both his forehand and backhand, and can layer the puck well. In the second, after multiple passes from below the goal line and through the Cougar's defense, he shifted to the net front, popping in an end-board rebound -- off-puck positioning being another strength.

The most dominant part of Seminoff's game was transitionally. While he is an average skater who possesses a very short stride length with limited extensions, he implements a ton of weight-shifts and hip pocket manipulation on his carries. In the second, Seminoff rushed up the left-wing, cutting sharply into the slot. While using eyeline manipulation, he took a very deceptive, low, shot that completely tricked Brennan. The release was wild due to how quick he got it off. His shot in general is pretty strong -- definitely above average. In the first after a failed drive, and a teammate disrupted a Cougars exit, he ended up with the puck all alone in front, picking the top-right corner with barely any room. (arms are unlocked, tons of blade deception). Seminoff's transitional drives are also fairly interesting. He manipulates constantly, trying to push stutter steps and changes in pace to freeze defenders -- skating and strength had knocked him off balance quite a bit, but the habits are there. Should have had an assist on one cross-crease passing play, but Minten didn't take the pass cleanly.

Defensively, Seminoff was competent; head checks, physical, smart activations, and constant pressure pushing were definitive patterns. In the first, he saved a goal, locking down a stick going after a Ziemmer rebound. Seminoff's stick is constantly pushing lanes, and he has some ability to disrupt releases. Engaged back checker as well, took a hit from-behind penalty stopping a slow entry. He made a huge play in OT, stripping Ziemmer of the puck. He has the habits of a player who will translate well.



72  
Rank

C  
Grade

5.5  
Skating

4  
Shooting

6  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

# ILYA KVOCHKO

C/LW | STALNYE LISY MAGNITOGORSK

HEIGHT 5'9" D.O.B. FEB. 22, 2004  
WEIGHT 159 SHOOTS LEFT

15%	10%	10%	0.85
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
MHL	51	17	32	49

## Scouting Report

When Ilya Kvochko played to the best of his ability this season, there were flashes of skill that would be enough to earn him a spot in the first two rounds of this draft. And sure enough, at his peak, Kvochko was our 48th-ranked prospect at about the midway point in the season.

A heady, playmaking centre, Kvochko likes to slow the game down to a pace at which he's most comfortable and pick apart the defence one pass at a time. You just won't find many more patient distributors outside of the first round of this year's draft. Kvochko has an excellent knack for letting plays develop before dispatching the puck, often with the perfect weight and placement for his intended target.

"[Kvochko] may be one of the smartest players in the MHL with how well he reads and anticipates play," Elite Prospects Russia regional scout Dylan Griffing wrote in a December game report. "[He's] constantly scanning the ice, making really smart passing options, and taking solid off-puck routes."

If you could coax that out of Kvochko with more consistency, perhaps he would've stayed in the middle of our second round, too. As his position on our final board indicates, though, that wasn't always the case.

Far too often, Kvochko faded into the background. His work rate would diminish, and he would get left behind as the game passed him by. If you had the misfortune of catching one such performance, you could be tricked into thinking there wasn't a place for him in this year's draft period.

"Just a grim, uninspired performance pretty much from the first shift to the final horn for Kvochko," EP Rinkside Editor-in-Chief J.D. Burke lamented in one of his game reports. "He was mostly unbothered when it came to the defensive zone."

You likely won't hear Kvochko's name called early in this draft, but there should be room for him somewhere in the later rounds. His quality as a playmaker and high-level defensive details (even if the effort isn't always there...) are enough to form the foundation of an NHL career, and that's more than you can say for a lot of players past the second or third round.

Continued growth as a skater, better game-to-game consistency, and the ability to sustain physical pressure will give Kvochko a real shot at playing in the middle of an NHL lineup at the height of his career.

## Game Reports

**Dylan Griffing:** December 29th, 2021

Omskie Yastreby vs. Stalnye Lisy Magnitogorsk - MHL

Kvochko's first two shifts ended in him picking up primary assists. First one was entirely Rybin's individual effort, but

the second was some nice work behind the net followed by a wrap-around pass through three opponents and to his teammate. His tight area game was incredibly impressive in this game. Lacks the physicality to really hold off players,

but he makes quick moves in those situations with his hands and body to open up more space for himself. He may be one of the smartest players in the MHL with how well he reads and anticipates play. Constantly scanning the ice, making really smart passing options, and taking solid off-puck routes. The main concern for me with Kvochko is his open ice play. He lacks any sort of real separation ability – not quick enough on his feet to get around defenders and his hands while playing at pace aren't quite there. He relies heavily on using his quicker, flashier wingers to drive the play forward when going through traffic in the neutral zone because he has no individual way to get past. His skating mechanics are already above average, though, so I would expect his pace to improve with time.

**Dylan Griffing:** December 14th, 2021

Belarus U17 vs. Russia U17 - EYOF

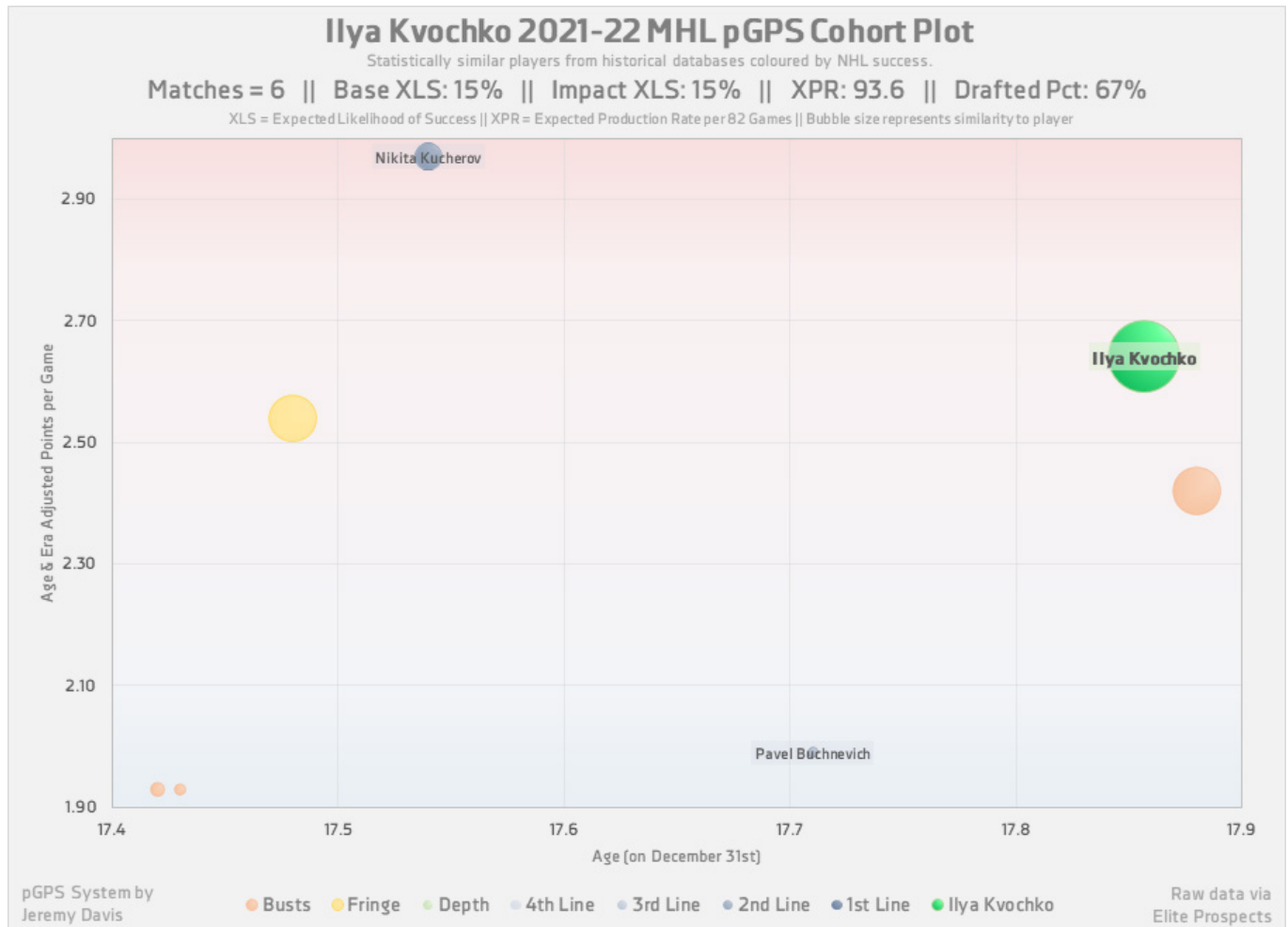
Uninspired. Kvochko was basically just a connector in this game, hanging out in the neutral zone to try to pass the puck to Ivan Demidov as quickly as possible and let him do all the hard work. His passing was poor, though, so a lot of pucks to his teammates' feet or too far in front

### Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

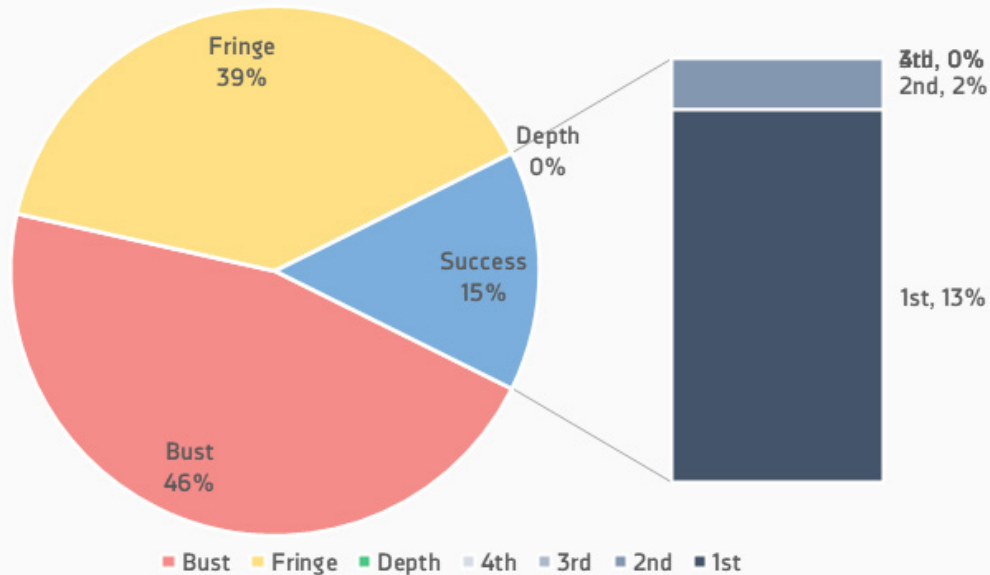
1 Anatoli Golyshev YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 89%	2 Nikita Gusev YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 88%
3 Nikita Kucherov YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 83%	4 Mikhail Plotniko YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 81%
5 Sergei Barbashev YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 80%	6 Pavel Buchnevich YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 80%

of them. He set up one big scoring chance from behind the net, but other than that, he rarely touched the puck in the zone. Not all that effective off the puck, either, getting dragged around the zone defensively and poor in battles. Overall, he looked very rusty, which may just be the case as he's barely played in the last month, but an ineffective outing for him.



## Ilya Kvochko 2021-22 MHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**Dylan Griffing:** October 28th, 2021

Stalnye Lisy Magnitogorsk vs. Sibirskie Snaipery - MHL

Another dominant performance. He continues to excel at waiting out his opponent and taking advantage, knowing exactly how much time he has to handle the puck before he has to move it. He was a lot more active shooting the puck in this game than most of his other outings and it was the weakest part of his game. While he had some good looks and is showing pleasing progress with his shooting mechanics, the usage of his shot was quite poor. Needed to take more advantage of the open ice he was afforded, but too often he put it on net from a low percentage area and hoped for a deflection or a rebound. Other than that, an excellent game from the center. Super responsible defensively.

**J.D. Burke:** October 17th, 2021

Sputnik Almetyevsk vs. Stalnye Lisy Magnitogorsk - MHL

Just a grim, uninspired performance pretty much from the first shift to the final horn for Kvochko. And I mean it when I say first shift - Kvochko failed to scan pre-reception on a pass and skated directly into a hit that could've ended his season maybe 15 seconds into the game. He was mostly unbothered when it came to the defensive zone, but it was easy enough to understand this posture on the rare occasion when he would pressure the opposition defensively. Kvochko's footwork in body-on-body defensive sequences had him falling over with even the slightest bit

of resistance. It was the same story in the offensive zone, where Kvochko would be forced from the puck with even the slightest bit of contact. Simply put: He has absolutely no wall game. At least, that was the impression I left this viewing with. To his credit, Kvochko was robbed on a pair of Grade-A scoring chances on the power play, a pair of one-touch shots from the slot. He failed to make much of anything happen at even strength though. His off-the-puck pace was so, so low, leaving him a step behind every developing play. It's just one game, but it was a bad one.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 28th, 2021

Stalnye Lisy Magnitogorsk vs. Tolpar Ufa - MHL

Kvochko's adaptability puts him a step ahead of most players in the league. Pre-scans and knows what to do with the puck as soon as he gets it. Drawing defenders towards him to make a move to get around them. He shot the puck well this game when he had the time to get his feet set, but his shot off the rush really let him down. Quick release on his wrist and earned himself a goal in this one. His tight area game is super impressive for a player who doesn't have a big frame. Separates the defender from the puck with his body and can make a quick turn the opposite way to get clear and distribute. Overall, just a really smart player whose skillset is all translatable to the next level. A loan to the VHL would really benefit him in the long-term.

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**Dylan Griffing:** September 24th, 2021

Stalnye Lisy Magnitogorsk vs. Omskie Yastreby - MHL

After an underwhelming first few series, Kvochko finally hit his stride. His playmaking ability is fantastic. He makes his read and then challenges his defender to open up the lane. Playing with two high-skill wingers, he knows exactly when to give them the puck to spring them into space for the transition, or he'll take the reins and use his quick hands and feet to control possession into the offensive zone. His aggressive nature puts him at a distinct advantage because it makes him so dynamic and difficult to stop. Away from the puck, he utilized his quick hands to get aggressive with puck checks and control large portions of the zone with his body/stick positioning and footspeed. Really agile, swift skater. High motor player. His shooting definitely looked below average in this game. Not much power or accuracy and a lack of deception made it very easy for the goalie and defenders to read that a shot was coming. He did score when the goalie left the net completely open, at least.

**Dylan Griffing:** August 2nd, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Finland U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Impressive outing from Kvochko, centering Russia's top line. He picked up an early goal on the power play on a rebound from a Michkov shot, scrappy but effective in the net front area. One-twos, spring passes, and adaptability with the puck on his stick made him quite the facilitator. Made smart reads with the puck and didn't force anything. He was also able to push the play forward himself with elusive skating and skill to create space for himself to operate. He basically played the role of Fyodor Svechkov at the U18s playing with Yurov and Miroshnichenko, but with Michkov instead of Yurov. Scanned well in the defensive zone, positive body positioning, and generally not giving up much room. 

**"You likely won't hear Kvochko's name called early in this draft, but there should be room for him somewhere in the later rounds. His quality as a playmaker and high-level defensive details are enough to form the foundation of an NHL career."**



73  
Rank

C  
Grade

5.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

5.5  
Puckhandling

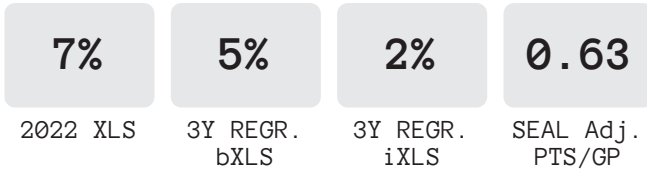
5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# JORIAN DONOVAN

D | HAMILTON BULLDOGS

HEIGHT 6' 2" D.O.B. APR. 5, 2004  
WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	64	3	19	22

## Scouting Report

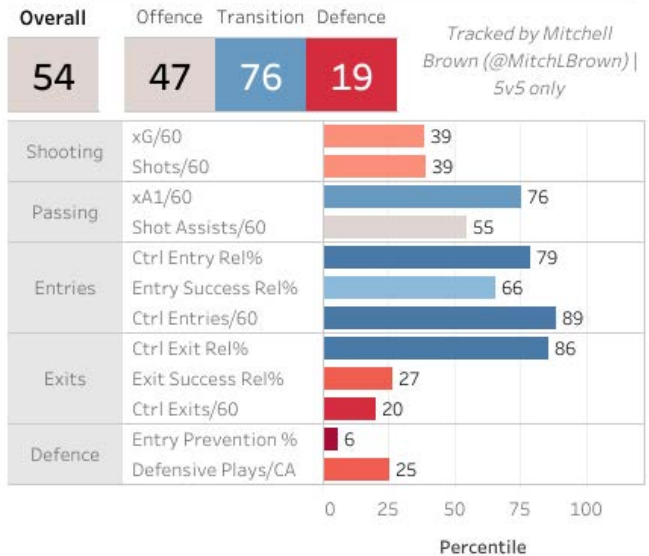
Ranking prospects in the public sphere is a largely futile exercise. There's so much that the evaluator doesn't know. Even rankings that seem justifiable in the moment can prove to be dead wrong in mere months. Jorian Donovan's ranking could prove to be the biggest whiff of them all.

While Donovan played a bottom-pairing role, his tools and flashes of skill probably would've earned him a top-pairing spot on most CHL teams. His mechanical ability is his strongest offering, as a mid-January game report explains: "[He] maintains lower-body depth through strides, crossovers, and turns," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a January report. "Quick, sudden punch turns exited with a crossover to escape pressure. Keeps his top hand in front of his body, accessing dekes, passes, and shots without any additional movement."

Those tools shine the most in small moments, like an in-motion pass reception before passing cross-ice for a zone entry or cutting back to escape pressure. When he leads the charge, he shows a projectable approach, skating at incoming defenders to manipulate their feet while constantly changing directions with crossovers.

The key for unlocking more offence from Donovan is activation. He does it inconsistently. And when he does, he's often just sprinting instead of adapting his speed and route to the play around him. There are flashes of more advanced reads, like a give-and-go from the point. His shooting and passing skills both pop when he's activated, whether that's with a quick-release wrister or a crafty pass through a defender to a shooter on the inside.

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 96.3



The fluidity of Donovan's game appears defensively. Well-timed backpedals take away the middle, while his mobility erases space quickly, even when the attacker gets the jump. He doesn't just mindlessly present his stick; he angles and times his checks. While there's an element of physical play to his game, inconsistent body positioning across the defensive zone hinders his effectiveness. And he's too willing to concede ground to attackers.

Donovan's a bet on tools becoming impactful elements in an expanded role. Right now, his game is mostly simple plays with defensive flaws. That combination usually results in a depth player, even with tools. But the flashes of brilliance suggest a player who could play middle-pairing minutes with development.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 25th, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Donovan could go either way: explode or implode with more minutes. I lean explode because he has skating and handling form and skills. Even if he remains a mostly risk-averse player with the puck, he'll get points because he can find separation and understands the basics of off-puck activation. His potential as a defender remains quite high. He backpedals at the right moments to take away the middle. Stays close to his check as they fly the zone. Times his engagements and angles. Defends effectively in both face-to-face and early pivot and surf situations. Follows stick with shoulder. I didn't see this side of his game earlier. Tools and defensive potential probably justifies inclusion on our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Donovan played a bigger role in this outing, being late in the season. He thrived. Late in the game, he went for a skate, dangled around a defender, then fired a cross-slot pass for a near-chance. Another time, he activated, delay, then passed to the middle. A give-and-go from the point got him activation, where he showed a mechanically sound wrister. Grabbed a pair of assists by shooting deflections. Took the pass in motion into the shooting lane, then fired right at his teammate's stick for the first one. Tools remain strong. Flexion isn't perfect, but he has high output and crossover integration. Used a pivot turn to suck in the F1. Handling's a bit choppy and he exposes the puck in front, but his top hand moves across his body and he handles the puck and moves his feet independently. Highly fluid player overall. Defence and breakouts are a bit concerning. He has the habits when defending the rush but doesn't close distance. Failed to establish body positioning on many of his retrievals, and gave up his stride too early when skating back for the puck. Scans and clearly aware of his options, but defers on breakouts. He should make our board near the end. Bottom-pairing upside.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Donovan's still a tricky one. He hasn't tightened up the defence at all. So passive off the rush, even with his tools. He concedes ground and doesn't make up the distance, preferring to let the attacker come to him and dictate his decisions. In the defensive zone, he's a bit more aware and proactive. Physical, although usually as a reaction to a missed assignment. The handling and skating both look like NHL projections, but his decisions with the puck are consistently

poor. He throws pucks to teammates more covered than himself, doesn't manipulate, and doesn't reverse or delay. Joins the rush regularly, but lacks the details to become a threat from those positions (usually just skates without adjusting to play around him). Didn't look like a draft pick in this one, but the tools remain intriguing.

**David St-Louis:** March 27th, 2022

Oshawa Generals vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Donovan's decisions with the puck this game were pretty much all poor. He requires a lot of space to make the right play and he didn't get that this game. I liked his rush defence: posture, gapping, and stick use. The tools in general are interesting, the puck handling, the skating, and potentially, the physical skills. Donovan could be a n.6 NHL D based on those but he requires a lot of reads development.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 8th, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

A much better defensive performance from Donovan than I've previously seen. While he wasn't dictating space, he pivoted early and contained well. He's worse in face-to-face situations because he tends to back off until he's conceded the slot. Shows a lot more aggressiveness after pivoting early and skating forwards. He still gets stops primarily through his mobility (and over-extending), but the path to improving his defence seems a lot clearer. Few puck touches, although he nearly created a chance by activating, recovering a loose puck, delaying, and spinning a puck into the slot. The transition impact that he had in previous viewings wasn't there. Still, I think Donovan's tools are definitely worth a spot on the board.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 11th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Donovan's tools are the biggest selling point. Maintains lower-body depth through strides, crossovers, and turns. Quick, sudden punch turns exited with a crossover to escape pressure. Keeps his top hand in front of his body, accessing dekes, passes, and shots without any additional movement. He still prefers to handle the puck in front of his body rather than across, but he has some ability to change pace and encourage defenders to reach. However, that did result in a turnover on the point. Several notable transition passes in this game, including a cross-ice saucer pass for a clean entry after resetting. The odd intriguing OZ pass, but his game mostly boils down to volume shooting. Appreciate the off-puck movement, but he rarely picks the best space to occupy. Atrocious defensively, conceding the zone without much



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## "Donovan's a bet on tools becoming impactful elements in an expanded role. Right now, his game is mostly simple plays with defensive flaws. That combination usually results in a depth player, even with tools."

friction and regularly overextending to compensate. Tools enable some corrective ability, but they're not good enough to do that at the next level. Definitely a draft pick, maybe as high as the second round depending on the second half.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Donovan was impressive in this game, setting up a goal and getting a few tricky stops in transition. Mobility forms the basis of his game. He's more quick than mechanically sound, limited by inconsistent depth, a heel kick, and a stiff upper body. But, he builds speed quickly, wins most of his races, and fluidly transitions between backwards and forwards skating. Far too single-track with the puck - always looking up the boards and executing immediately instead of surveying for better options, but he shows patience, handling skill, and creativity to access those lanes. Interesting balance. The inception of activation instincts. The defensive requires some tweaking inside the DZ, as he commits his weight to easily or completely removes himself from the play by dropping to a knee. I think his game will improve quickly as he becomes more comfortable with the pace of the OHL.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021


Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Donovan wasn't particularly good in this game. It seemed like he fought the puck at times, didn't do much of anything defensively, and ran into pressure for a couple of turnovers in transition. But I like the ideas driving many of his

plays. He activated, pivoted away from the pressure as he slowed, and flipped his toes caps and escaped down the boards. He tried another handling sequence that failed, but again, the set up showed high-level thinking. A couple of rush activation sequences, balancing off-puck defence and activation well. Stride mechanics require tweaking, but he starts his acceleration with a series of driving crossovers and settles in a near-optimal amount of depth -- lots of reason to believe he'll be an NHL-calibre skater. I'm intrigued, for sure.

**EP Rinkside Staff:** October 8th, 2021

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

Donovan wasn't all that noticeable in this game and when he was noticeable, it was a positive thing. He's a smooth skater, which was particularly evident in transition. While his gap and rush defending left some to be desired, he has the tools to develop into an effective rush defender. In his defensive zone, he jumped on bobbled pucks and played the body to effectively separate players from the puck. He made simple, quick decisions on his breakouts and set up his teammates for easy exits. Offensively, he jumped up in the play a few times and effectively drove lanes. He lacks confidence handling the puck at the blue line, and it showed in some of his reads, resulting in bobbled pucks and turnovers. He improved as the game went on and with his skating and physical tools, it is fair to think he develops into a good transition defenseman who uses physicality to regain puck possession. 



74  
Rank

C  
Grade

5  
Skating

4.5  
Shooting

6  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

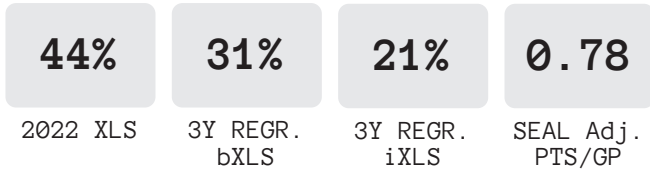
4.5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# MATS LINDGREN

D | KAMLOOPS BLAZERS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. AUG. 26, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	68	5	39	44

## Scouting Report

There was a time this season when the Elite Prospects scouting staff thought well enough of Mats Lindgren to place him comfortably inside the first round on our debut ranking for the 2022 NHL Draft.

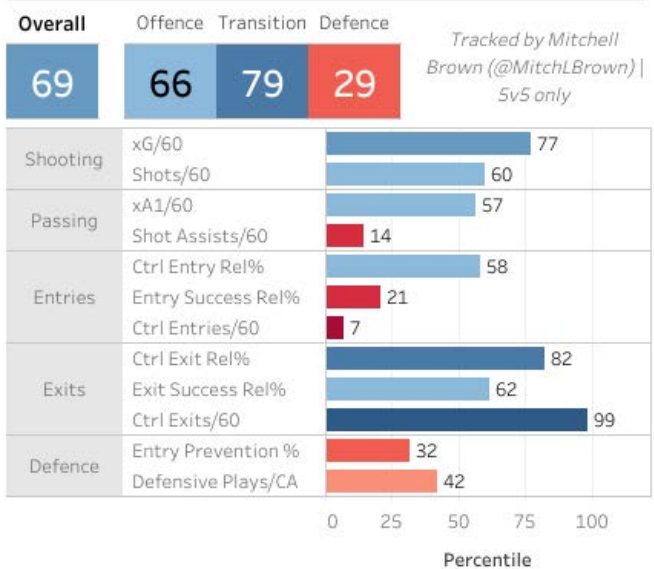
His proficiency on the breakout coupled with strong boxcar stats as one of the youngest players in the draft class in a top-four role for a Kamloops Blazers team with Memorial Cup aspirations was enough to pique our interest and view him as a player with the potential to play second-pairing minutes in the NHL somewhere down the road.

The lack of exceptional tools barely registered as a concern for our staff at the time. Lindgren would make up for the lack of a separating gear as a skater with veteran details on the breakout, drawing in the first forechecker, handling past them with deception, and sending the puck up-ice with precision and pace.

We still believe in that part of his game, but it became clear as the season wore on that the lack of projectable tools would become a far greater limiter than we initially gave credit.

"Lindgren's limited by his mechanics, not by his brain," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown remarked in a December game report. "He keeps that top hand tight to his hip through everything: shooting, handling, pass receptions. When combined with his lack of outside edge use, he gets stuck, quite literally. He'll try to deke but end up in the exact same place he started, simply moving the puck from his backhand to forehand in a long motion without any

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 171.5



ability to move into the space or even beat most players."

Eventually, we had to ask ourselves: How exactly does one bet on a defensive prospect when the best part of their game at present carries a significantly fraught projection? We couldn't answer that question, and his stock plummeted as the season wore on as a result.

There's still some hope for Lindgren to develop into a bottom-of-the-lineup, puck-moving defenceman, but it will require significant work on his part. The lack of any real creativity or high-end skill limits his offensive projection, as do his tools in transition and as a rush defender.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Derrick Pouliot YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 95%	2 Thomas Hickey YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 94%	3 Joe Logan YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 94%	4 Mike Card YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 92%	5 Nick Ross YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 92%
6 Logan Pyett YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 92%	7 Eric Roy YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 92%	8 Nathan Paetsch YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 92%	9 Mark Pysyk YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 91%	10 Nick Schultz YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 91%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

At this stage, Lindgren's value comes solely through breakouts. But he's not consistently executing (forechecking pressure significantly limits his decision-making) and the mechanics are already problematic. Wide stance, limited ankle flexion, always on his heels. He keeps that top hand glued to his side. He can't shift his weight or work the puck laterally. Easily pressured into poor decisions on the breakout. Backhand passing looked like an issue in this game. Offensively, he's all simple plays: point shots and D-to-D passes. Defensively, he'll engage in battles and try to establish positioning on attackers. It failed because he can't get his hips low enough. Prone to getting knocked off balance without much contact. Rush defence is passive, then too committing. Attackers can beat him up in the middle without little resistance. The projection's based on the breakouts, but there isn't a ton of evidence that he'll keep doing the breakouts going forward - too easily pressured. Based on my last few viewings, he's not a candidate for our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 21st, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Lindgren was the worst of the Kamloops big-three draft eligibles by a decent margin in this game. The well-structured, consistent game of the "Tips killed his transition game, basically eliminating him from the game entirely. He didn't use the inside consistently, didn't bother going cross-ice for options, and didn't have puck patience. 10 failed exits in this game through a combination of missed up-the-boards passes, dump-outs, and turnovers from mechanical limitations. He had one crafty deke into space play that created an exit, but his skating mechanics and the top-hand-locked-to-hip handling style prevent him from getting the most of his mind. Infrequent scanning on retrievals led to a couple of turnovers. Better rush defence performance than earlier in the year, but he's still passive vertically and too aggressive laterally. Steps outside the dot lane too soon and gets cooked. Some activation, some

pinching, but nothing that suggested NHL skill. Didn't look like a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 12th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

Mixed performance from Lindgren. He had some flashes on the breakout, hitting cross-lane passes and using teammates on the inside. But the layers were few, lacking deception, a delay game, and the inside routes that make him so effective. The handling mechanics (top hand locked to his hip) led to a couple of turnovers, including one in his only interesting offensive sequence in the game. When coupled with his skating mechanics, he struggles to separate. And he doesn't use enough deception to offset it. Major mechanical improvements are required for Lindgren to play this breakout style in the NHL. Defensively, he's a bit tighter and engages better. Takes away space off-puck and throws the odd hit. Too easily dragged to the perimeter, and doesn't have any recovery ability with his skating. Nothing in this performance suggested a top-64 pick.

**Daniel Gee:** January 21st, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Lindgren was remarkably dynamic in this game, both in his transition game and his work with sustained offensive zone pressure.

Pretty much all of Lindgren's transitional play created issues for Prince George's defenders. Long in-motion, two-line passes constantly turned neutral zone defenders, and heavy manipulation-based carries, focused through the dotted-lines initiated easy offensive zone setups. Lindgren was dunking on the F1 all night, taking feeds in motion, easily shifting past the resistance, using their poor body positions and momentum against them. In the first he carried a puck through the neutral zone, starting a give and go, took the return pass on the left-hand circle, executed a stop-up move to freeze the resisting defender and got a high-danger shot on net. Later in the third, Lindgren used shoulder manipulations to gain an entry, popping a backhand pass to a trailing teammate, leading to another

chance. Too many good transition examples to even talk about in this viewing.

I don't think I have personally seen a game where Lindgren was this dominant in sustained offensive zone pressure. He activated more, rotated with the developing play to add himself as a pass option, and had more outside-to-inside movement on the blueline, than what I have seen in the past. In the first, Lindgren activated backdoor, eventually taking a pass, punching into the slot through open space to take a high-danger shot. Later he pulled a puck off the boards, walked into the middle of the slot and fired a low shot that was converted on the rebound. Just a tonne of foresight. He is fairly limited by his shot; has zero finishing ability and his release is predictable. Showed some true passing skill, however; slips, hooks, no-looks.

This game wasn't too competitive so Lindgren spent a limited amount of time defending. When facing sustained pressure, similar proactive scanning habits persisted. Some strength issues clearing the crease, but Lindgren did a great job processing rotations and keeping man-on-man coverages throughout his shifts. Transitionally he was inconsistent; way more assertive in creating stops on perimeter entries. Better gapping helped that in this viewing. He killed a Ziemmer and Eastman entry with some physicality -- the step inward to kill the lane with his body was something that wasn't really a part of past viewings. Gets caught up the ice a lot; will overshoot on the backcheck and then concede space. Somewhat raw, but the improvements since the start of the year are noticeable. Stride is somewhat of an issue; stiff upper-body, somewhat wide recovers -- it will hurt him at higher-levels.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 17th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Lindgren's limited by his mechanics, not by his brain. He keeps that top hand tight to his hip through everything: shooting, handling, pass receptions. When combined with his lack of outside edge use, he gets stuck, quite literally. He'll try to deke, but end up in the exact same place he started, simply moving the puck from his backhand to forehand in a long motion without any ability to move into the space or even beat most players. This was the most advanced game I've seen from him in terms of OZ reads, but not execution. Lots of give-and-goes and using space, but rarely got the puck back. His rush defence is limited by his skating -- his weight's always on his heels. In one sequence, that led to him stumbling before his poor off-puck defence did the rest to allow an opposition goal. Tighter gap in the NZ than normal, but doesn't show

much stopping power and his skating leaves him chasing against crafty WHL attackers. Lindgren's best attribute remains breakouts, limited by his handling and retrievals, but offset by his manipulative mindset, planning, and a keen awareness of how forecheckers close space on him. At the next level, I think he's mostly a breakout player, but he'll require significant mechanical overhauling to get there.

**J.D. Burke:** December 15th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

It's becoming increasingly difficult to imagine a scenario where Lindgren is a productive player offensively at the next level. I just don't see the creativity with the puck, the dexterity as a handler, or the speed as a skater necessary to put up points in professional hockey. Then there's the skating... it's bad. Lindgren fails to engage his outside edges in space and relies far too much on the heel-to-heel when pressured. It's made him a relatively evasive player in transition at this level, but I suspect it's going to be a problem against much larger, more physical competition. Having said that, the rest of his transition game should translate without issue. Lindgren consistently identifies the best option and gets them the puck with pace. This was a really strong defensive performance for Lindgren too, particularly through the neutral zone. I'm starting to see Lindgren as more of a mid-day two pick than someone fit for the first two rounds.

**Daniel Gee:** December 11th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars- WHL

Lindgren lacked refinement, but he was very strong in a game that featured a weaker Kamloops lineup, void of Stankoven and Garand.

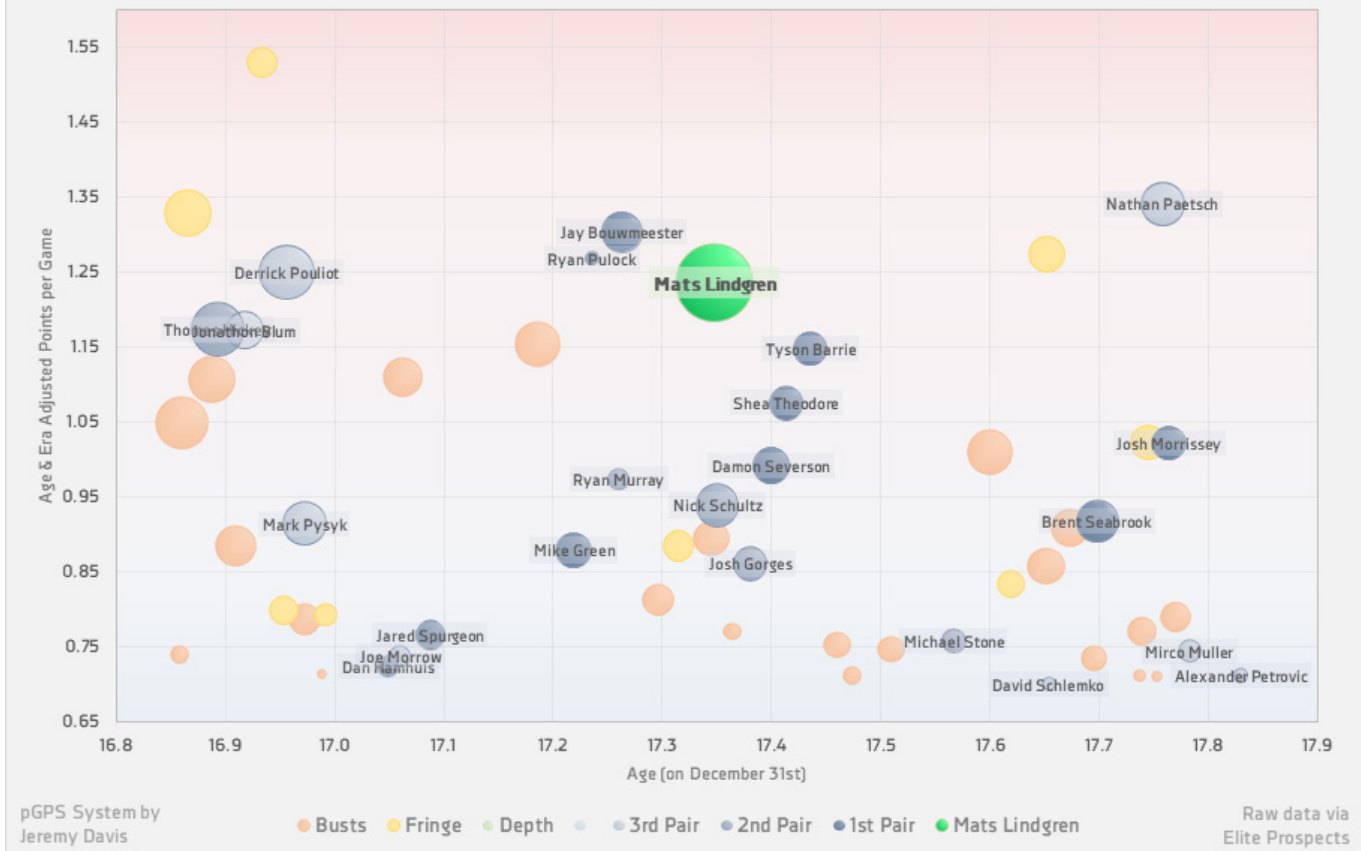
The August-born defender put forward a much better performance defending transitionally than I have seen. In the past, troubles with decision making permeated on his shifts. Too aggressive, too passive, it was really a mess. While there was still an element of that, Lindgren pushed some guiding, physicality, and better stick-work to create stops. His standout sequence was in the third where he angled-off, guided, and destroyed a Cougar on the outside. On top of that he had multiple stick-check/pokecheck sequences that just weren't present before. In practically every period he was getting his stick-in-releases, actually exploiting his gap and reach to knock poorly protected pucks away. Hopefully this trends. There were a limited amount of sustained defending sequences in this game -- the Cougars barely were able to set up in the first place. He made a major error screening his goalie in the first;

## Mats Lindgren 2021-22 WHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 53 || Base XLS: 44% || Impact XLS: 30% || XPR: 30.4 || Drafted Pct: 68%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



he could have moved out of the lane and recognized the layers better. Lindgren was also a bit reactive on a far-board pin, getting caught behind the play. Probably the best part of his play in his own zone is his retrieval habits. Attacks headon and manipulates with his feet, scans (sometimes multiple times) to mental-map pass targets. Shakes off close pressure with shoulder-shimmies and weight-shifts. His motor is relatively high, even with how frozen his upper-body is. (arms, shoulders, and core are locked together like he is always bracing for physicality) -- how limiting will that be? Can he work out of it?

Transitionally, he was constantly in motion in this game, backwards motion that is -- often a result of trying to avoid the F1 or an aggressive forechecker with his c-cuts and crossovers. He's a quick facilitator, who just constantly connected in this game -- two-touch passes trended throughout. Executed a couple of give-and-go passing sequences in the neutral zone. Best sequence was a left-wing drive where Lindgren took the puck deep in the offensive zone, mohawked to circle behind the net, and had his wrap-around sticked away. Very simple in his approach and it works at the WHL level -- needs to exploit inside more.

Lindgren was a constant rotator and activator in the offensive zone in this viewing. He is an almost robotic

scanner on the blueline, reading the developing play, looking to always activate on the weak side. Lindgren competently executed a one-touch bumper pass play on a power play but was hardly a threat himself from the point. Lacks consistent manipulation -- only really using a stutter-step on a first period play to work past a defender. Not sure he has a lot of planning on-puck. Shot attempts were very limited in danger level -- had a couple blocked in the layering of the Cougars defence. In general he will require constant looks, especially at the end of the year -- his birthday complicates the evaluation -- only three full months since turning 17-years-old. What is Lindgren at the end of the year? That is the question.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

This viewing really challenged my previous thoughts on Lindgren's game, but not necessarily in a good way. His two best plays of the game were in the offensive end. Well-timed weak-side activation allowed him to get a pass with heaps of space and an open teammate on the far post -- easy play but he delivered it at the right time. He beat pressure when activating off a faceoff, cut inside, and sent a fluttering backhand shot on net. This was a much better

DZC game from him, eliminating net-front threats and ending the cycle twice by wrapping up the puck carrier. However, I didn't see any of the transition skill or even ideas that I've previously seen. He step inside a couple of times, but then immediately coughed up the puck. He either fixated on his original option or missed a better one entirely in multiple sequences. The worst was one where he had a far-side option, but chose to keep the puck on his backhand and send a soft pass to covered teammate on the inside. The hands are going to be an issue, too. That top hand is locked to his side at all times. He tries to compensate by bringing his bottom hand higher up his stick, but that limits the weight that he can put over the puck. His range of control's limited and he keeps the puck centered between his feet most of the time -- that directly limits his ability to pass as soon as he identifies options. Rush defence is a disaster: he commits too early, doesn't commit at all, and lacks details (like keeping his stick on the ice). He gets beat because he doesn't heel push when angling across, because he crosses over too early, and because he doesn't drive off his rear leg when pivoting. Maybe a late-round pick based on this game, but I've seen better.

**J.D. Burke:** November 13th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Vancouver Giants - WHL

A pretty unremarkable performance on the whole. Lindgren proved most proficient in transition, shoulder-checking on retrievals, layering deception onto the first touch, and accelerating up-ice. Gets pretty deep into his forward stride, but his recovery lands way wide. Strong skating habits, though. Skates through passes, pass receptions, shots, etc. Pretty limited as a handler. His high glove is more or less glued to his hip. Showed strong supporting instincts in the defensive zone. Total no-show in the final third. Ultimately, playing a matchup role against Justin Sourdif, that's about all one could ask for.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Vancouver wasn't remotely competitive in this game, and Lindgren was a reason for that. He was creating offence way more than I've previously seen. He activated with the puck, without it, prodded for openings, and deceived. There wasn't any true lane creation, but he kept them open with the look-off. Once sequence where he circled back, attacked the inside, and set-up a goal was a great example of deception, planning, and awareness of space. More aggressive shooting, trying to step into space and once even

cutting through a defender with the shot build into the cut. His stride and defensive skating are issues, but he uses crossovers frequently, and often to mask his intentions in the OZ. In transition, it was mostly the same: skate into lanes and execute quickly. Uses the inside regularly, too. The hands could be an issue. He keeps the puck centred instead of his across his hips, and that top hand is stuck on his hip. He still dekes around players on occasion, but his range of motion's extremely limited. Got trapped in the corner in one sequence through a combination of top placement and failing to read the incoming pressure. He lacks strength, but it's mostly a lack of body positioning and awareness on retrievals. I can see a late-first argument for him based on this game. The OZ playmaking's clear there; the puckhandling mechanics will limit his effectiveness, however.

**Cam Robinson:** October 30th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

I like this kid. Not because he's perfect - by any stretch of the imagination, but he has a tonne of upside and some fun skills that should translate over if he can clean up the other stuff. Offensively, this kid can move the puck out of the zone. He sets up his transitional dekes well with head/shoulder fakes and can carve into the space provided. He's unafraid to make high-difficulty passes through folds and coming out of those manipulation spots - and while he doesn't complete them all, the wherewithal to attempt them should bode well for his development and the efficiency rate improving as he grows.

He made one play in the first where he stripped the puck in the DZ, held on, made an elusive move highlighting his footwork, rotational edge work and body control while under duress to make a soft outlet pass.

Now, on the defensive side, he wasn't great. He allowed entry into the zone far too easily and could get caught cheating downlow. His inability to manage the line was the worst of the game today. He'll need a lot of refinement in that regard, but the offensive upside as a transitional player is very strong.

Skating form needs cleaning as well, but the basics are there. Needs strength and to focus on recovering the stride fully and not so wide.

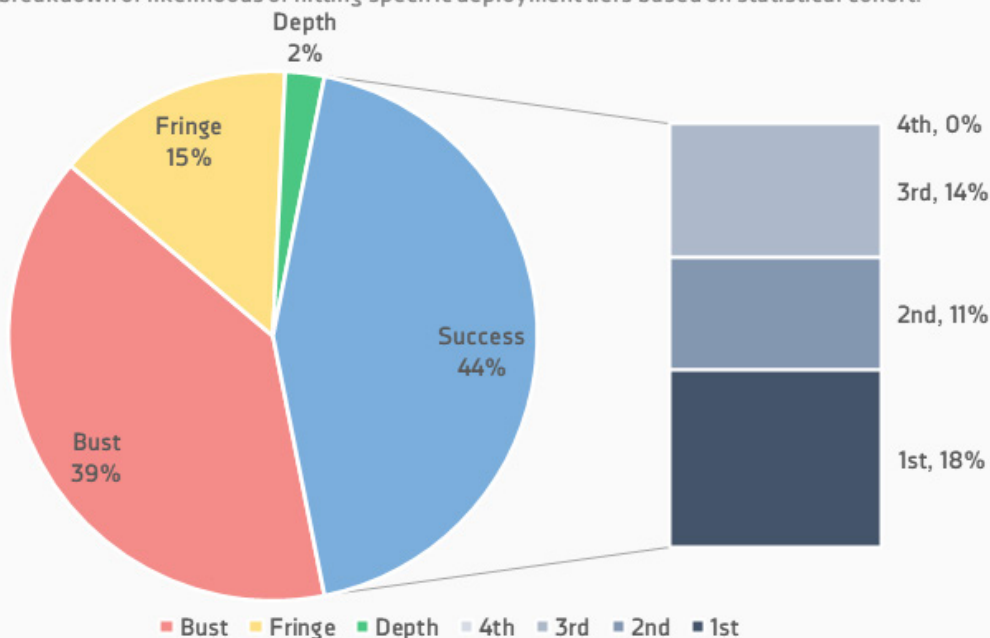
**Daniel Gee:** October 30th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Kamloops went with five defenders and that meant Lindgren played regular first and third pairing shifts -- an extremely high-event game. Once you get over Lindgren's

## Mats Lindgren 2021-22 WHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



stiff shoulder, wide-recovery forward stride, there is a tonne to like in his transition game. He manipulates forecheckers with body-fakes, open-hip pivots, and activations into open space. He will simply pop pucks past over-aggressive attackers, leveraging stutter steps into edge activations, generating speed in the process. He is calm under pressure, on one shift in the first, he spun off a check on a near board retrieval and bisected two Cougars to get the clean carry out exit. While he frankly failed a lot of pass attempts, the level of difficulty was fairly high, with Lindgren looking to hit teammates in stride, activated behind the Cougars defenders. Probably his best transitional sequence was a third period sequence; he jumped on a loose neutral zone puck, drove the left-wing and sent a hard hook pass through a lightly guarded area of the slot. There's projectability here; Lindgren is constantly scanning and in-motion. He was fairly impressive while exerting sustained pressure as well. Much of the manipulation habits translate here as well. Lindgren constantly drags pucks into the middle of the ice, implements stutter-steps/hesitations to freeze high defenders, and facilitates a plethora of one-time plays. In the second after dragging the puck to the middle of the blueline from the boards, Lindgren executed back-to-back backhand passes to open teammates ready for one-time shots. He had multiple shot attempts from the top of the point -- in general he is mechanically flawed, failing to integrate weight transfer (he's an all arms shooter). At this level,, the shots are fairly tippable and create chaos crease plays, but I doubt his shot is translatable in its current form.

Defensively, he has some things to clean up in transition.

He is frustratingly passive with his stick and physicality, opting to hunker down in his gap and defend the middle lane. This leads to a volume of dotted-line attacks forming shift-after-shift due to the limited amount of times he actually activates early to stop an entry in his own zone -- he simply does not angle attackers wide often. His footwork can become a bit erratic, but in this game, it wasn't exploited. The brightside is that his retrieval habits are really strong -- shoulder-peaks lead to cleaner rings and decisions, even if he sometimes gives up body positioning too often. Lindgren was really strong in sustained pressure; clean box outs around the net, mirrored footwork to keep up with activating opponents, and constant harassment permeated throughout his shifts. Tonnes of scanning and mental mapping to jousting for positioning. Had a wonderful near board pass interception to prevent a slot pass in the second. Lindgren was a reactive mess on one shift in the third -- a shift where I believe he lost his bearings a bit. Probably a top two round player that has some outside possibility to be a second pairing guy.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

I already know that Lindgren is going to be one of those players I write the exact same game report for 15-to-20 times this season. He's awesome in transition, of this there is no doubt. He dekes pressure, manipulates it with his eyes, attacks the inside, looks cross-ice/lane for breakout options, and always goes for the best option. He clearly thinks a pass ahead -- not simply hitting the obviously good

target, but hitting the one that will eventually create the best play. He's occasionally inaccurate or overly optimistic, but he's eons ahead of most players in transition passing. Defensively, well, he allowed seven entries on seven attempts -- awful. The gap's loose and he doesn't know how to make up distance other than stopping dead and waiting. Offensively, he flashes the inception of playmaking ability complemented with a weak and unthreatening shot. Unlike previous breakout-only prospects (Iorio), he actually makes his plays under heavy pressure and connects in motion. There's reason to believe he'll add the rest, but I doubt I'm willing to bet on it until later in the second round.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Lindgren's a breakout artist. Now, he's not particularly efficient, but the details are numerous and layered. On retrievals, he pre-scans, establishes body positioning, deceives, and leaves the puck in space for a teammate. Stays active in support to get the puck back and make the breakout pass. Without fail, he steps inside, looks away from his target, and baits the incoming forechecker. Again without fail, he changes the point of attack with cross-ice passes or passes that originate from the outside to the middle. Passes in motion and under pressure. Offensively, he created little save for a couple of shooting sequence and failed passing ideas but with his transition passing, the offence will come. Defensively, he angled out a few of attacks and killed them along the boards. Defensive skating isn't a weakness but it's not a strength -- too many crossovers and too eager to close out outside the dot lane. A bit reactionary in DZC, but he tries to eliminate threats. The stride's bad (wide recoveries, lacks depth, dips chest), but he's quick edge-to-edge in-tight and shows some skating skills (punch turns, double cuts). The posture will need to come along for his skating to work in the NHL, but he'll move the puck effectively given his transition passing skill. Question is will that be as a middle-pairing defender or more of a depth piece? I lean the latter for now.

**Daniel Gee:** October 2nd, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Lindgren spent little time defending in his own zone, with most of his game against Prince George consisting of transitional efforts and sustained offensive zone sequences.

Always passing as he initiates a backwards glide, Lindgren once again pushed some petty translatable habits on-puck. One touch passing, saucer passes through layering, distance passing that facilitated quick-ups -- it's all there. So

much of his transitional carries starts from hard wheels out of below the goal line puck recoveries. This enables Lindgren to build up speed; an example in the second had Lindgren execute a wonderful three-line carry, into a cycle play down low after getting some puck support. Forward stride is a mess due to very wide recoveries. I don't think he is overly dynamic in what he does with the puck on these activations -- while his large-ice maneuverability is present, he mostly exploits collapsing defenders rather than outright beating them. I'm not sure if he can facilitate consistently (hit targets in high-danger areas) on these three line carries like other higher end CHL defenders. He had a level of tunnel-vision on his carries -- he can execute a wonderful crossover weave to just dump the puck deep with pass options clearly present. Has some hip-pocket puck protection habits and can feel back pressure well. I liked some of his retrieval habits; shoulder peaks, some great pivots to shake pressure. Off-puck, Lindgren's habits are very positive. He pushes the initiative by joining rushes constantly. Actively ups his pace to break free of neutral zone defenders.

While exerting sustained pressure, Lindgren was able to push some of his best sequences of this game. In the first he cycled high out of the near boards, cut through two cougars and rush a hash-marked located shot. Later in the second, he floated through the dotted-lines, activating into soft coverage and shot an unsettled puck off a defender. Later in the third, he passed to a cluster of Kamloops players in the slot; Spencer received the puck, spun and beat Brennan clean. In terms of habits Lindgren, activates pretty consistently, often on the weak side. His shot is mechanically inconsistent at times -- one leg weight-transfers, arm compressed to body. He's a true PP QB in terms of his constant rotations and movement on the point -- can run the entire line himself.

Defensively, as mentioned, there weren't many defining sequences. He was more proactive on the penalty kill than in previous viewings, -- head checking habit was better. He's physically able to play more reactive than others due to his four-way mobility; this presents often with stick-in-release stops. He tends to take a backseat at times, passive in his engagements, especially around the crease -- an area he gives up too often. Transitionally, his NZ pinching helped nullify a couple rushes. He had his triangle exploited in the second pretty badly. Doesn't guide or angle off opponents enough in my opinion.



# "There's still some hope for Lindgren to develop into a bottom-of-the-lineup, puck-moving defenceman, but it will require significant work on his part. The lack of any real creativity or high-end skill limits his offensive projection, as do his tools in transition and as a rush defender."

**Daniel Gee:** May 11th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs Kelowna Rockets - WHL

It's painfully obvious that even as a 16-year-old, Mats Lindgren has a ton of skill, particularly in how he transports the puck, both via passing and large-ice maneuverability based carries.

These skills allowed Lindgren to have a successful transition game. He can pass in motion and is supremely overconfident in his ability to escape pressure with spin offs. Lindgren constantly blends his well-mechanic skating and handling through the neutral zone, into drop off passes to aid entries on powerplay sequences. He layered passes well on his breakouts, completing a ton of pivot-passing. This maneuverability blends well into retrievals as well — can escape and execute under pressure.

Lindgren had three assists in a blowout 10-2 game for Kamloops, all off of sustained pressure sequences in the back half of the game. Lindgren's point habits were super impressive; he has dexterous 4-way mobility, can pivot on a dime, all while blending handling and manipulation. He implements body hesitations, look offs, all the while opening his hips up, popping into the mohawk and other edge-based maneuvers that create further deception. In the first, Lindgren jumped on a loose puck at the top of the point, executing a backhand deke, and a dotted-line cut; he ended up sending a low backhand shot on net and the rebound was put in. Later in the period, after dragging the puck from the side-boards and into the slot, he

executed a pass that eventually led to another Kamloops' goal. Finally, while implementing a look-off pass from the point, he recorded another assist on a Levis shot. All these habits, constantly moving the puck through the middle of the ice, while manipulating, makes him dangerous pushing sustained pressure. He was only able to leverage one shot from the point, but his maneuverability helped him get the puck through an open seam . Mechanically his right-arm is locked to his body, with his torso hanging over the puck, but he transfers weight well.

Defensively, Lindgren is a work in progress. Transitional defending habits are somewhat inconsistent. In some sequences, Lindgren was aggressive, flexed his skating to attack perimeter threats early, and was proficient at knocking pucks away with his reach and stick work. Unfortunately, he does little to angle or guide players. He had awful play in the second when he was caught flat-footed, conceding the inside lane and allowing a high-danger chance. He showed the ability to mirror footwork and gap up though -- overall a tough read. He will need to learn to leverage his skating into more aggressive play stopping and limit collapsing. In sustained scenarios, Lindgren struggled with strength. He is typically locked to the net front, and tries to tie up sticks, but containment with bigger opponents was a struggle. He chases regularly to execute pins. Some scanning and proactiveness on lane clogging (head checking as well). Has the tools to be a top pick next year but defensively he will have to improve.



75  
Rank

C  
Grade

4  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

6  
Passing

6  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# VIKTOR NEUCHEV

F | AVTO YEKATERINBURG

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. OCT. 25, 2003  
WEIGHT 165 SHOOTS LEFT

20%	12%	12%	0.76
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
VHL	5	0	0	0
MHL	61	40	27	67

## Scouting Report

Viktor Neuchev thrives in the chaos that his game creates. He's a fast handler who likes to demonstrate his talents; a showoff and an entertainer with the puck.

He attacks defenders most shifts, constantly pulling off creative and unexpected moves.

We came to especially appreciate his ability to veil his passes this season. It seemed like every single one of his feeds to the slot was prepared with a head or shoulder fake that would send confused defenders covering the wrong option.

Our issue with his game was its inefficiency. Some games, there were just as many turnovers as highlight-reel plays. More than that, it's very likely that Neuchev's skating - par-

ticularly his lack of ankle flexion - won't support the type of dangle-heavy game he is playing right now as he rises up hockey's ranks. He will lack the separation speed to pull off many of his moves against better opponents.

"He's a very individualistic player, wanting to be the main focus of every play," Elite Prospects Russia regional scout Dylan Griffing wrote in a December 14th, 2021 report.

While there is a significant chance that Neuchev's playstyle won't carry over to the NHL, his combination of fast processing ability, manipulative playmaking, handling and shooting skills, and his larger stature will interest many teams.

## Game Reports

David St-Louis: March 7th, 2022

Irbis vs. Avto - MHL

A quieter game from Neuchev. The lack of pre-reception awareness hurts him quite a bit, but he processes fast and can still find pass options anyway. He had one sequence where he got the puck behind the net, in his feet, bounced it up to his stick and hit a teammate in stride who rushed the net. Great scoring chance. He attacks every seam to the slot and can play physical but the skating is limiting his puck protection game and ability to win pucks. He can't outrace defenders on loose pucks and get in front of them.

David St-Louis: March 6th, 2022

Irbis vs. Avto - MHL

A better performance from Neuchev, probably because he touched the puck a bit less. He showed his off-puck instincts a bit more. They aren't high-end, but he has some sense as to how to move to position himself for shots. He made plays off the boards, quick passes to teammates, slick ones even. The issues are still present: no planning of touches, lack of awareness, over-reliance on spin moves....A very inefficient player at this stage, but I see more NHL elements: inception of a deceptive playmaking game, some ways he can get off the wall and attack inside to fire shots. He's very raw. He could be a second-half of board project.

**David St-Louis:** February 26th, 2022  
 Sarmento vs. Avto - MHL

Some good. Neuchev had one creative drop pass. He attracted a defender on himself, another one, and then passed back inside space for his teammate. He also had a toe-drag shot that lead to a goal. Well-setup, well-placed. The rest...I don't know. Neuchev thinks he is way more skilled than he really is. The handling moves...They're interesting but all made out of glides with the puck held really in front with a high-grip. That's three strikes in terms of translatability already. He's quick and confident with his hands, but it causes him more trouble than anything. A ton of turnovers, even in situations where he had clear better options open. I'm not sure he cared about the position of defenders all that much. Hyper-focused on being creative. It's detrimental. The skating is below-average. No upper-lower separation, kicking feet, lack of ankle flexion. Big concerns with the translatability of this player's game.

**David St-Louis:** February 25th, 2022  
 Sarmaty vs. Avto - MHL

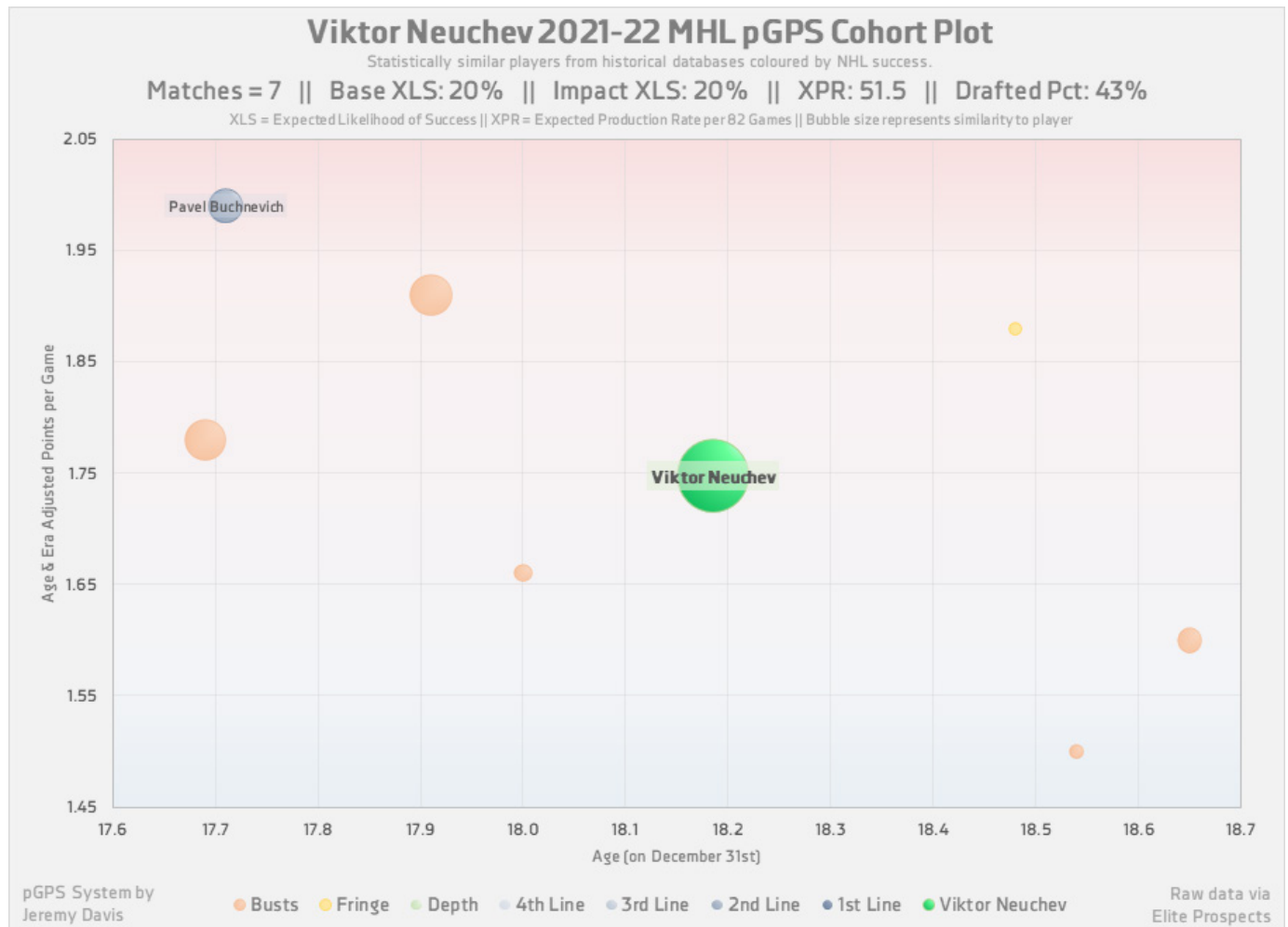
The lack of ankle flexion in his skating really limits his output. The motor isn't all that high either, but he still tried

### Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

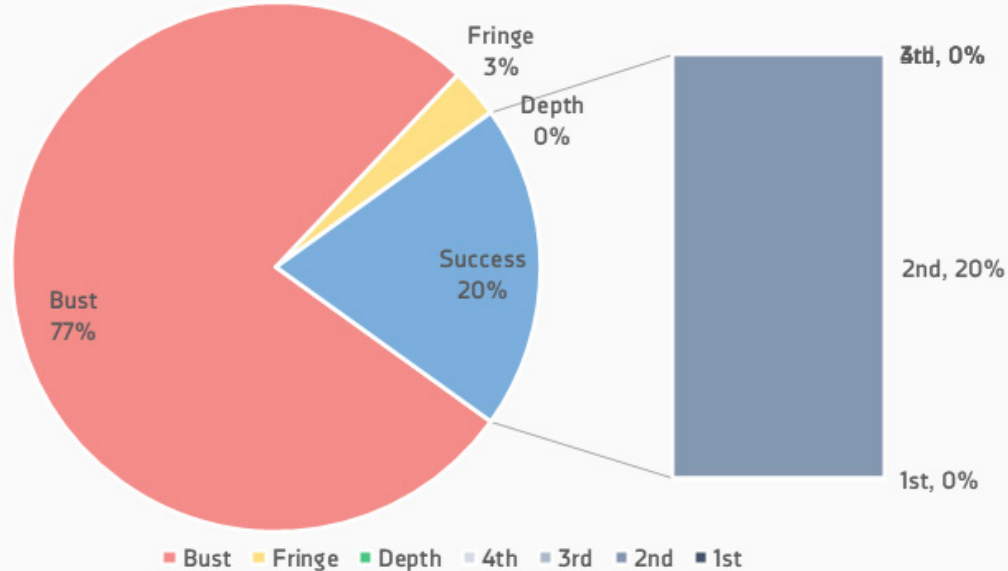
1 Maxim Shalunov YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 92%	2 Ignat Zemchenko YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 91%
3 Pavel Buchnevich YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 89%	4 Stanislav Alshevsky YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 87%
5 Daniil Apalkov YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 86%	6 Alexander Barabanov YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 86%
7 Nikita Gusev YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 86%	

defensively...At times. What fascinates me is the playmaking, the deceptive passing and his movement to create lanes on the powerplay. One time, he picked up a retrieval on the wall, spotted his teammate rushed the net, and made a deceptive, saucer pass right on that teammate's stick. Instant decision to



## Viktor Neuchev 2021-22 MHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



pass there and to deceive, an indication of a pretty high-speed processor of the game. The handling skill is at least a 6 for me. I like how passes really pop out of his stickhandling, so quick it's hard to guess where they're headed. I saw some puck protection abilities that are severely limited by the lack of outside edge use and ankle flexion.

**David St-Louis:** February 22nd, 2022

Ladiya vs. Avto - MHL

Impressive, impressive viewing. If this was the only game I've ever watched of Neuchev, I would think he is a top-20 pick. A lot of playmaking elements: attracting defenders to buy time for teammates, one-on-one manipulation, pre-scanning for his next play before he gets the puck, using teammates for give-and-goes in transition. Some great collective play that I hadn't seen before from him. His shot is deadly, too: can fire it in-stride, to an extent, or off a mohawk and pick corners. He seems mechanically above-average. He can dangle through defenders, too, but he felt adaptable in this game, like dangling wasn't his only play but one of other choices, which helped him sell his move as it was deceptive, as he was looking elsewhere, faking a pass, inside the maneuver. A lot of impressive, almost high-end element here. Things I didn't expect. The lack of awareness shows up still from time to time.

**Cam Robinson:** February 2nd, 2022

Avto vs. Loko 76 - MHL

Pretty nice showing from Neuchev in this one. He was the master of the release point change throughout, with the vast

majority of his scoring chances coming from even-strength play. He showed a lot of deception, but was making most of his handles from a glide. Took some hard lines on the forecheck and was effective at times. It's clear that he has a ton of confidence in his hands and his release as they seem to both factor in on every puck touch in the offensive end. He set up a nice goal with a delay move, deception, lane change, and quick dish. Another off of a netfront battle and rebound. And finished one for himself. It was eventful but not entirely translatable. He'll need to learn how to handle in-flight and keep the puck closer inside and on out wide in an arc in order to have much hope of his moves working as he moves up. But the size, the shot, and aggressiveness aren't bad.

**David St-Louis:** January 27th, 2022

Avto vs. Tyumenskiy Legion - MHL

Neuchev has some crazy flashes of playmaking. His ability to catch the puck and instantly one-touch deceive on reception is singular. He can also hold a fake for more than a second and still hit his teammate who moved to a new location. The processing ranks high. The awareness is inconsistent and the anticipation, too. I'm still inclined to give him above-average grades in hockey sense and passing. His play efficiency is pretty low overall, but that's the same thing for most MHL forwards. He could be a top-50 guy on our board and deserve it. It's more likely that consensus and the risk that he carries has him a bit lower.

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## "While there is a significant chance that Neuchev's playstyle won't carry over to the NHL, his combination of fast processing ability, manipulative playmaking, handling and shooting skills, and his larger stature will interest many teams."

**David St-Louis:** January 13th, 2022

Automobilist vs. Severstal - KHL

5 minutes, but good 5 minutes. Neuchev showed he wasn't afraid of the competition. He engaged KHLers physically every time he could, tried to protect the puck from them. His attempts mostly failed but the moments he chose to do it were the right ones. He looked to make controlled plays, scanned for pressure, made smooth board breakouts from the wing, and moved the puck quickly. Honestly, he could play at this level more regularly.

**Dylan Griffing:** December 14th, 2021

Tolpar Ufa vs. Avto Yekaterinburg - MHL

Neuchev likes to shoot. He's a very individualistic player, wanting to be the main focus of every play. As soon as he gets possession in the offensive zone, it's head down and shoot. He had thirteen shot attempts in this game. Even outside of the zone, he doesn't make simple plays very often. It's like he's playing in front of an arena full of scouts - before he makes the pass, he has to do a spin and just about turn the puck over, then he'll do it. Picked his spots defensively, engaging and creating turnovers, but he turned the puck over twice for each turnover he created.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 11th, 2021

Gornyak-UGMK vs. HK Ryazan - VHL

Not a good outing for Neuchev. Doesn't look ready at all to be playing in the VHL. Was completely uninvolved for most of the game and most of the plays he did make were negative. He had one nice neutral zone takeaway and a dangerous shot on goal, but outside of that, not great. Really struggled

controlling the puck under pressure. Passing was messy and rushed, most of his breakout attempts were trying to jam the puck out of the zone unsuccessfully. He was beat out on every race for a loose puck and his aggressive style in the MHL clearly isn't working against tougher men.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 7th, 2021

Avto Yekaterinburg vs. Ladya Togliatti - MHL

Viktor Neuchev is a very angry player and it really makes him stand out in the MHL. Aggressive forechecking with no regard for his own life, throwing himself into opponent players or, literally, the boards. He was effective in his puck battles, using his physicality to hold off one or even two opponents while still being able to control the puck and move it away from the boards. A rare forechecking player in the league, he uses that aggression and anger to fly down the ice to engage as quickly as possible. Good deception on his retrievals, as well. He brings that aggressive style with the puck on his stick, as well. Elusive stickhandling and smooth skating allow him to create space, but he also has an impressive small-area game because of his strength and hand-eye. He shoots the puck a lot, though. A lot, lot. He was getting a handful of good looks, to his credit, but there were times where he was just shooting for the sake of it. Positively, he is a creative playmaker when he chooses to pass. He created three dangerous chances and a goal with his vision, including looking off a shot to make the pass when the space came. If he can do more of that, clean up his defensive positioning, and try to do less on his own, there's a really intriguing player here.





76  
Rank

4.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

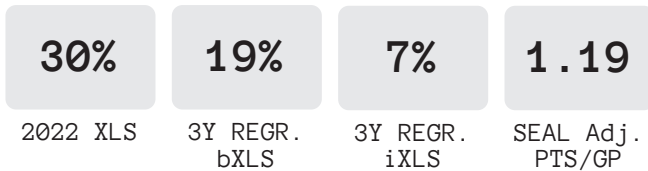
5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# MATYÁŠ ŠAPOVALIV

F | SAGINAW SPIRIT

HEIGHT 6' 4" D.O.B. FEB. 12, 2004  
WEIGHT 190 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	18	34	52
WJC-18	6	1	2	3

## Scouting Report

Matyáš Šapoivaliv has just about everything it takes to be a surefire bet to play NHL minutes at some point in his career in at least a bottom-of-the-lineup capacity. Everything but an adequate skating stride.

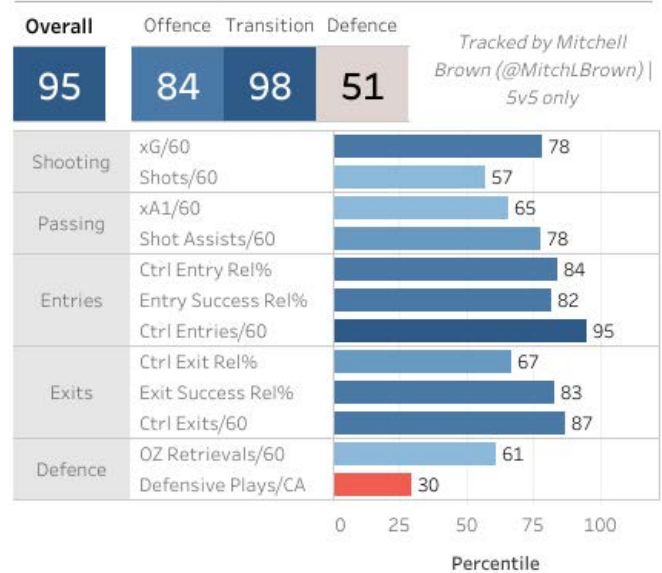
In the offensive zone, Šapoivaliv mostly plays the role of a facilitator. Fully aware of his skill set, the Czech centre often opts to slow the game down to a pace at which he's comfortable, holding the puck and letting lanes develop before striking with surgical precision as a passer. A technically skilled playmaker, Šapoivaliv consistently found ways to get the puck under sticks and through bodies.

"The Czech forward has adapted surprisingly well overseas, where he's put up very strong numbers for the Spirit," Elite Prospects Czechia/Slovakia regional scout Marek Novotný wrote in a profile of Šapoivaliv on EP Rinkside ahead of the U18s. "Šapoivaliv is the driving force of his offensive line. His size is noticeable, he has great range...more than anything, Šapoivaliv is a playmaker with a knack for generating offence at the net-front."

Were one to nitpick, they might point out the fact that the Saginaw Spirit pivot's patience often gave way to low-pace decision-making. Other than that, not many holes to point to in his game as a distributor.

You'll never confuse Šapoivaliv for a dual-threat scorer, but his understanding of how best to reposition himself out of passes and a solid give-and-go game offer some hope as a goal-scorer at the NHL level. That, and the fact that his 6-foot-3 frame will almost certainly convince some coach

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 137.9



to try type-casting him as a power forward, a role he may acquit himself in admirably given his ability to ward off checks and protect the puck.

As the season progressed, we even observed the emergence of a retrieval game from Šapoivaliv. While his teammates Jiří Kulich and Eduard Šalé grabbed most of the attention with their high-flying offence at the U18s, it was the hard work of Šapoivaliv to recover loose pucks and provide a net-front screen that made much of their success possible.

"But at the tournament, we also saw the forward play a harder game, the kind that he will likely have to play in the NHL," Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis remarked, shining a spotlight on Šapoivaliv's performance at the

tournament. "He was used net-front on the power play, and he protected the puck along the boards, too,

"When Šapovaliv develops, these are plays that he will be able to execute better than the majority of other plays; his size, if he learns to use it well, will give him more anchoring power in physical engagements, and his range, the abilities to thread the puck around sticks and to steal it from opponents."

The path to at least a depth role in the NHL is relatively straightforward here. Šapovaliv will need to continue to hone that retrieval game, add another gear or two as a skater, and leverage his high-end reads and work rate at both ends of the ice to develop into a bottom-six checking centre. Without considerable growth as a skater, though, he's likely doomed to a Quad-A career.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Michael Latta YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 95%	2 Rob Mignardi YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 95%	3 Miguel Delisle YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 95%	4 Steven Shipley YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 95%	5 Chris Thorburn YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 95%
6 Taylor Beck YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 95%	7 Scott Laughton YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 94%	8 Jamie McGinn YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 94%	9 John Mitchell YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 94%	10 A.J. Jenks YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 94%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 1st, 2022

Finland vs. Czechia - U18s

A bit of an uneventful game from Šapovaliv, but we still got some signs of his playmaking and improving skating ability. Šapovaliv has some good skating habits even if he doesn't have any access to his outside edges -- or at least he can't use them to shake opponents. He leads with his upper-body and the puck inside turns, which reduces their radius. He has decent flexion...Maybe his stride gets close to NHL caliber, but I'm not super hopeful. He is still finding pockets of space well, especially to support scoring plays. He knows where to look to find teammates with passes, where the support is and his passing plays can be quick. Lots of qualities, but a project of a pick. The size is mostly a disadvantage in his game right now, not an advantage, except for the range of his puck control, which does favour his playmaking game.

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

Canada vs. Czechia - U18s

Much better small-area plays in this one from Šapovaliv, passes from the walls, more elusive skating cuts. It's clear that he will have to change his identity to make the NHL, however, as right now he's much more that "elusive playmaker" than the net-front, defensive, forechecking player he will have to become to earn a role in the top-league. He did spend a lot of time around the net on the powerplay, screening effectively, moving into space to give passing options, but I don't see the aggressiveness and the comfort level there. Šapovaliv gets the off-puck game in general; he supports well. A future bottom-six, bottom-line player for me.

**J.D. Burke:** April 26th, 2022 - Canada vs. Czechia - U18s

Another really strong performance from Šapovaliv, who's

been the unsung hero for the Czechs through the preliminary round. The way that he protects the puck in space and along the boards is just so advanced for a player this age. It's like he has the puck on a string and there's very little the opposition can do to strip him of it. That he's a deceptive and dextrous puckhandler only makes him that much more of a problem for opposing defences during sustained offensive zone sequences. Then there's the delay game that he's added to his repertoire at this tournament... very good stuff. Made a great play to disrupt a Canadian breakout attempt on one of the Czech goals in this contest. Really smart forechecker who forces a lot of turnovers in spite of a pretty heavy set of boots. This tournament is doing wonders for his stock, in my estimation. Could be sold on him as a late first-round pick.

**Marek Novotný:** April 24th, 2022

Czechia vs. USA - U18s

Šapovaliv plays in the shadow of Kulich and Šalé in terms of numbers. But game-wise, his contribution is huge. His puck protection is just fantastic and the way he moves in all four directions is good enough offensively and defensively. Šapovaliv has a sort of special element to his game - you know that every time he's on the ice his line can produce a lot of interesting chances. He just drags the offensive line, but it's a lot based on his great range, puck protection and situational awareness. He was again fantastic on faceoffs, winning 15 of 24 faceoffs (63%). His presence in front of the net hasn't been as frequent, as he's been moving around the wing quite a bit during the power play, trying to find teammates with the cross-ice pass. He just wants the puck on his stick, he wants to pass the puck on scoring opportunities. If he doesn't have the puck, he regains possession right away.

**Marek Novotný:** April 23rd, 2022

Czechia vs. Germany - U18s

Šapovaliv played a pretty good game. He won 12/22 faceoffs, which is 52 percent. And even though he only had one shot on goal, he was very useful in the offensive zone. He constantly applied pressure on the opponent, tried to move in front of and around the crease, and was very active with his stick. Several times he regained possession of the puck, finished checks and tried to be quite creative. His puck control was great. He had one great shift in particular where he showed his puck control and vision first, which allowed him to find his teammate with an accurate pass. Then he tried to surprise the goalie with a sneaky shot from behind the net and when the opponent got the puck right after, Šapovaliv stole it from them in a matter of seconds. Then, with one-handed puck protection, he manoeuvred along the boards and hit the brakes hard, cut to the middle and there he made a couple of nice dekes around the opponent to then send his teammate into a great scoring opportunity.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Czechia vs Germany - U18s

Matyas Sapovaliv is a bit awkward on the ice. He has some good ideas, but the execution lags behind. He alternates between losing the puck in tight spaces, failing manipulation attempts, and showing some quite elusive and dangle abilities. He goes net-front and is involved defensively. His rotation game is still strong and he has the stick work defensively; he cuts passing lanes and intercepts the puck. The speed, the kicking feet and lack of depth in his stride, limits his ability to reach those lanes, both offensively and defensively.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 16th, 2022

Saginaw Spirit vs. London Knights - OHL

Sapovaliv scored a nice goal in this one, receiving the pass at the faceoff dot and waiting out the goalie a bit before wiring the puck into the net on the powerplay. But I felt he was just a bit passive for large stretches of this game. He did make one nice read in front of his goalie, intercepting a pass that would've likely turned into a goal had it reached the open London Knight on the doorstep. The skating is kind of a mess, though it's not unexpected given his size. But it prevents him from getting to space in time and also keep up with players when defending in-zone. It also makes him a bit of a liability on the penalty kill, because he can't keep up with the quick passes and gets drawn out of position easily. I don't know that I was all that impressed in this particular viewing, but hey, it's only one game.

**David St-Louis:** April 3rd, 2022

Saginaw Spirit vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Sapovaliv could be a 4.5 skater in the NHL with a bit of optimism, as the stride mechanics are decent for a player his size. I liked his defensive engagement, stick in lane; he could be a PKer in the NHL with a bit of training and if he adds the necessary mobility to forecheck. Sapovaliv flashes above-average grade handling skills, but it's really his sense that impresses me: He knows his next play, makes possession-retaining move, rotates to the right places, supports teammates (effective off-puck game)...I see him more as a 4th-liner in the NHL, but he's an interesting development project. He could turn into more with better puck protection mechanics (which passes through improving his skating still).

**David St-Louis:** March 26th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

A really smart game from Sapovaliv. I liked the patterns in his game. He anticipates pockets of space, the arrival of teammates in certain areas, knows how to create better offensive conditions for himself and others (uses give-and-goes and delays), is patient, holds on to pucks to let lanes develop, adapts his speed to create layers on offence, multiple pass options...The hockey sense seems quite high and defensively, too, at least in the way he rotates, above his man, above the puck, stick in lane. The skills seem average, maybe below-average, but maybe at his size, it is just behind the curve and it will improve a bit more than we expect for the average prospect.

**David St-Louis:** March 18th, 2022

Saginaw Spirit vs. London Knights - OHL

I don't see much skill there...maybe the passing is above-average, but besides that, everything is limited technically. But I recognize hockey sense, in his habits, his clean rotations, and his off-puck sense. Sapovaliv anticipates lanes; he slows down and accelerates (as much as he can) to attack them as they form. He's a great complementary piece on a line and, with some shooting improvement, he could turn into a scoring threat. Right now, I only see a fourth-line checker in the NHL, provided he improves his skating.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 26th, 2022

Erie Otters vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Šapovaliv isn't scoring much, which echoes the larger trend of his game: the execution needs work. In a way, it seems like he's building an identity. He has many elements: the delays in transition to outwait pressure before accelerating to take on the organized defence, the deceptive passes to create

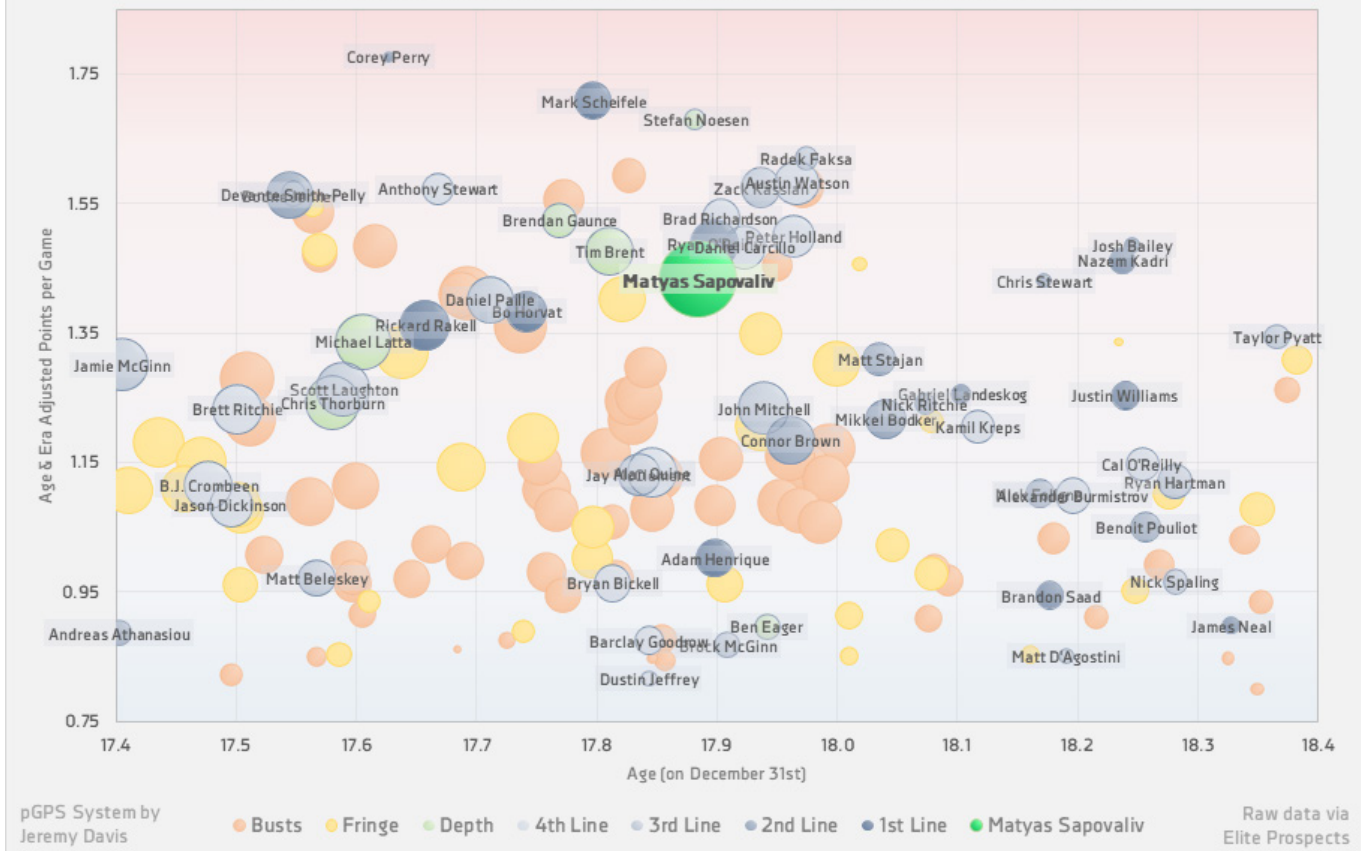


## Matyas Sapovaliv 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 153 || Base XLS: 30% || Impact XLS: 10% || XPR: 36 || Drafted Pct: 86%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



inside-lane plays, the off-puck instincts and timing around the slot to get open for passes, and the handling skill. But he struggles to link them together. His game becomes, “this is the rush shift,” and “this is the off-puck movement shift.” That’s a concern, but given how notable these different elements are, he’s worth investing in. Adaptation will be required. His skating needs further work (more ankle dorsiflexion won’t just help the stride, it could help him become a much better puck protector along the boards). If he develops a stronger offensive identity, perhaps ones that combine handling skill and off-puck instincts with give-and-goes and short-range playmaking, he could become an effective 3C. He’d be fine a mid-second, but it sounds like teams are a bit higher on him.

**Marek Novotny:** February 18th, 2022

Saginaw Spirit vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

It was a difficult game for Šapovaliv and the whole Saginaw team. His line was mostly defending and they had a lot of work with that. Šapovaliv showed good vision and passing ability in tight areas. There were a couple of zone entries and some solid puck protection along the boards. He was also active on the rushes, but lost the puck a couple of times.

**Marek Novotny:** February 10th, 2022

Windsor Spitfires vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

This was for sure the worst game by Šapovaliv based on the games I have seen so far. He looked tired and without any interest, which improved towards the end of the third period. Šapovaliv made an impact in what he is good at - keeping the puck alive in the offensive zone, used his active stick, pokechecked players and made himself dangerous with that net-front presence. The Czech winger was part of both special units, but it wasn’t close to his previous performances. There was again no dynamic element in his game, which hurts his overall value. Deceptive move on the other hand is an interesting offensive detail in his game.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 9th, 2022

London Knights vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

More of the same from Sapovaliv in this game. He earned an assist with a cross-slot bullet on the 5-on-3. The breakouts and patience really stand out, as he casually lets pressure fly by and then advances the puck up the middle. Not much handling skill or deception in this game, but he moved the puck effectively. Give-and-go style that blends well with his creative teammates on Saginaw, but has a particularly strong dynamic with D-Mintyukov. With the way that he plays, I

doubt he's a true play-driver, but more a secondary offensive piece who provides the proper defensive and transition framework to allow more creative, decisive wingers to thrive. Or maybe he just needs more creative wingers to allow his playmaking to pop. Not sure. Either way, his game would benefit from more aggressiveness with the puck in the OZ. He'd be a fine pick in the second round.

**Marek Novotny:** February 6th, 2022

Errie Otters vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Šapovaliv with another strong performance. He was strong on the puck, played his responsible two-way game and was extremely good on the faceoffs. Šapovaliv made a couple of really nice and smart passes. There were moments where I thought he would lose puck possession, but he still managed to find a passing lane and send the puck to his teammate in very tough situations. He put himself a lot in the middle with some give-and-goes and was again very dangerous offensively. The Czech forward was part of both special units and was very valuable at both ends of the ice. I finally saw some physicality in his game, which I am expecting every game from him.

**Marek Novotny:** February 5th, 2022

Errie Otters vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

I really liked him in this game. He gave his team a lot of offence as he is able to protect the puck really well with that size and reach and overall was just hard to knock off the puck. Šapovaliv was used on both special teams and did well in both situations. He is obviously used for screening goalies and seems good in that area. The Czech forward has some solid ability of finding passing lanes and can find them also under pressure in tight areas. He will give teams a lot of time in the offensive zone because of his ability to keep the puck alive. I wish he was more dynamic and aggressive. That would extremely benefit his game and his value.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 30th, 2022

Saginaw Spirit vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Šapovaliv is solid. He's particularly effective at taking pucks from the boards and passing to the inside lane. His timing on these feeds is usually perfect. Sometimes, he steps inside first while looking off his target before passing. Others, he speeds up the process to hit the open teammate before defensive coverage picks them up. Lots of foresight in his game; he clearly understands how and when to pass, when to carry, and when to delay. He's mostly a short-range

playmaker who has some minor mobility issues. The odd high-skill pass he tries usually fails, but consistent about bringing pucks to the inside and has some off-puck ability around the slot to get a chance or two every game. Skilled, but perhaps a bit too simple to hold down a scoring role in the NHL. Still, I appreciate his game and he'd make a fine pick in the second round.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 5th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Šapovaliv's game looked considerably different. In transition, he delayed, relying on his hands to outwait pressure before taking on the entire team solo. Would've benefitted from making the early pass after beating the first player. Remains a slick forechecker with defensive value, but he's much more willing to take pucks to the inside lane immediately after recovering possession. Consistently changes the point of attack in transition. A bit mechanically limited (as a skater especially), but he anticipates when defenders will close distance, finishes his off-puck routes, and understands how and when to move the puck for maximize impact. Additional strength will give him extra quickness and stability, but I'm not sure that alone will help him translate to the NHL. I think the first-round buzz is warranted, but I see him more as a mid-chance bet to become a third-liner. Perhaps in the 30s or early 40s.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

I appreciate Šapovaliv's game. He generally moves the puck at the right times, disrupts lots of entry attempts, and has enough individual skill to create when given a bit of space. Not the most mechanically sound handler, but he uses his reach to bait sticks and moves his top hand closer to his body to handle in-tight. Lacks some control over his shot because he can't generate downforce through his lower-body. Forced a pass into the slot, or at least didn't pick up on the back pressure threat. He's not a dynamic player, but I see some potential as a secondary creator on a third line. He's a draft pick.

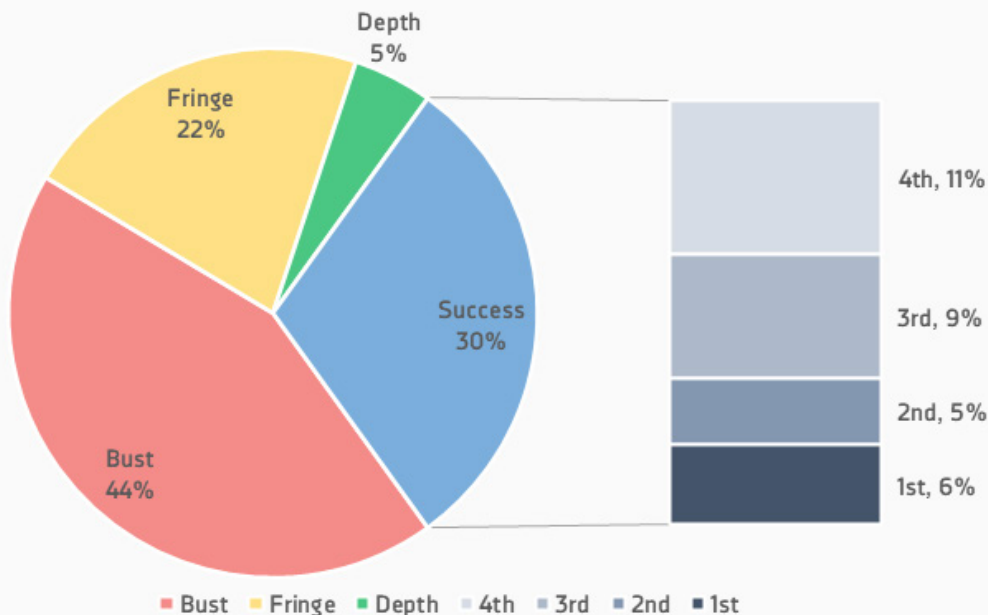
**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Simple, but in a good way. Šapovaliv makes the most of his touches. He pre-scans, establishes body positioning, and moves the puck without having to move his feet when possible. One- and two-touch passes are a common part of his game, and when he's given a bit of room, he draws in pressure and passes through it. He's also a strong read-and-

## Matyas Sapovaliv 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



react player, occasionally beating defenders with handling but mostly through picking a positive possession play just before his space runs out. Delays and deceives at the right times. Consistently a threat off-puck, and I like how he leverages his off-puck movement into both playmaking and shooting. Disruptive on the forecheck through well-timed step ups (as the F3) and anticipating passes, grabbing a few steals for his effort. Skating's the biggest issue here. Lacks flexion and his chest collapses towards the ice. His stride's shockingly quiet despite the unstable base, but he doesn't complete many extensions. He could be a mid-to-late second-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 19th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

Sapovaliv's lumbering, but seems to know it. He cut inside into an ocean of space, and instead of driving inside, he passed to the point. Interesting decision, but it's clear he recognizes his limitations. There are so many impressive offensive details to his game: the give-and-goes, the pace of decision-making, the deception, and the off-puck movement and positioning. He consistently places himself in the middle of the action, preferring to act as a connector between his teammates. Changed his release point inside the pass set up a couple of times to connect. Defensively, he's mostly a play-supporter with some length. He can disrupt plays and contain attacks but he rarely gets steals. Struggles along the boards with his skating limitations. I think he's a draft pick.

**J.D. Burke:** November 19th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

Not really much of note from this contest. Šapovaliv's refusal to scan off-the-puck limits really bothered me in this contest, particularly in the defensive zone. He wound up missing so many easy controlled breakout opportunities just because he was so unwaveringly puck-focused. Some interesting shows of dexterity as a shooter and a passer in this contest, including one crafty behind the back dish in the neutral zone, and a release point change against the grain in traffic for an impressive shot. Tried to work the give-and-go a few times in this game but didn't really connect often. Don't like the skating. Too high of a stride, and too lumbering and clumsy. It didn't take much to knock him off of the puck. Looked like a mid-round pick at best.

**Marek Novotny:** November 6th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Sapovaliv is an interesting case to watch. There are glimpses of really great/NHL level/ plays but on the other hand there are still things restricting his game from being admired fully. In this game Sapovaliv used his length to his advantage many times followed by nice dangles or passes. His frame helped him many times from stick checking. Overall his puck protection is really good. What's typical for his game I would say is his non stop urge to send cross-ice passes on the PP. He hustled back after a bad pass leading opponent team for a breakaway, but he gained the possession back, sent the puck to the offensive zone and his team scored a goal from this action. Sapovaliv is more of a playmaker than

"The path to at least a depth role in the NHL is relatively straightforward here. Šapovaliv will need to continue to hone that retrieval game, add another gear or two as a skater, and leverage his high-end reads and work rate at both ends of the ice to develop into a bottom-six checking centre."

a goal scorer, he loves to have a puck on his stick so he can make difference. He had some issues under pressure and his defensive game wasn't anything special as well, but he can be used with his reach in that way.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Sapovaliv made several NHL reads in this game, mostly as a passer. Even when he's in shooting positioning, he identifies a better positioned teammate. In transition, he overcomes skating and handling limitations with give-and-goes and cross-ice passes. The timing on these plays was particularly good, waiting for the defenders to converge on him before kicking the puck out to his teammate or passing through pressure to the inside lane. The actual passing skills have some holes. He didn't adapt the release point of his passes which caused some accuracy issues. There's also some low-pace issues. But I also came away impressed with his off-puck game. Timing isn't always there, but he occupies the right areas and stays active to consistently be an option. Big goal totals probably aren't in his future, but I think he has enough skills to become a draft pick.

**Marek Novotny:** August 6th, 2021

Czech Republic U18 vs. USA U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Matyas Sapovaliv was one the Czech's first line and was definitely one of the better players on the ice. The Czech forward has a good frame and he definitely can utilize that fully. What I liked the most is how he used his reach to steal pucks or how he thinks when he was on the power play. Although not all of them were completed, Sapovaliv is still looking to complete cross-ice passes when his team

has a man advantage. He was active, brought energy to his linemates and totally destroyed an American player with a big hit. Sapovaliv on the other hand had some issues with his balance and made some silly decisions with the puck on his stick.

**J.D. Burke:** August 6th, 2021

Czech Republic U18 vs. USA U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

You know, he's not the fleetest of foot, and maybe not even the most skilled player to catch my eye at this tournament, but Sapovaliv's really made a fan of me. He works his tail off, backchecking, forechecking, supporting the puck, etc. He makes smart, well conceived passing plays, especially east-west; Sapovaliv should've picked up an assist on a cross-ice feed to set his linemate up with a yawning cage, but they couldn't connect on the pass. Looks the part of a highly intelligent two-way centre with some legitimate playmaking chops, one that bears consideration in the mid-rounds of the draft.

**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

Czech Rep. U18 vs. Finland U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Liked a lot of what I saw from Sapovaliv in this contest, playing on the Czech's top line between Dominik Rymon and Jiri Kulich. He's a stiff, upright skater, a tad bit clumsy over distance, but he's surprisingly explosive through his first two steps. Closed quickly on defenders on the forecheck. Made a great stickcheck on the track to strip the defender of the puck and then immediately set his teammate up at the net-front for a 10-bell scoring chance. Loved his off-the-puck pace and his ability to find soft-ice in this contest. Interesting player who struck me as a potential late-round bet.



77  
Rank

4  
Skating

6  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

4.5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# JANI NYMAN

LW | ILVES

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. JUL. 30, 2004  
WEIGHT 216 SHOOTS LEFT

50%	23%	12%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
Liiga	10	0	1	1
Mestis	34	18	17	35
WJC-18	6	2	2	4

## Scouting Report

Few players in this draft boast as strong a statistical profile as Finnish winger Jani Nyman, whether it's a full draft year spent in a European professional league, his 6-foot-3 build, or his July birthday. All of this put together augurs exceptionally well for his prospects of playing somewhere in an NHL lineup at the height of his career.

Perhaps most impressive is that Nyman didn't just feature in a bit role for KOOVEE in the Finnish men's second-tier Mestis league either -- he was the offensive engine of that team, leading them in points and finishing first in U18 scoring across the entire league. You couple that with strong results in international play bookending both ends of his season, and his year looks even better.

The tape is pretty solid, too. Nyman is a credible dual-threat scorer, even if he's definitely more comfortable as a finisher -- equal parts power in his release and cunning with his off-puck movement to create shooting opportunities.

"[Nyman's] got good enough off-puck instincts to [create a high-volume of attempts], taking some interesting routes and getting a good chance from the slot after a cycle," Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen wrote in a December game report. "He had a couple of redirections from the slot area, too. On the power play, he was trigger-happy from the right half-wall, and his outside leg wrister and one-timer are both solid threats."

You'll also be pleasantly surprised by just how strong Nyman's small-area game is for a player of his size. He's not a form-perfect handler by any stretch of the imagination, but that hasn't stopped him from artfully manoeuvring his way out of tight quarters or pulling off some highly-skilled dangles in space to this point in his career.

The catch, of course, and this is common with players his size at his age, is that Nyman's skating isn't even close to an NHL average projection. It's the one part of his game -- more so than any other -- that could keep him from ascending to the sport's highest level of competition.

"I'd have a lot more time for Nyman as a prospect if his skating and his pace both rated a fair bit higher," EP Rinkside Editor-in-Chief J.D. Burke wrote in a game report from the U18s. "Just a grim skating stride mechanically."

The problem with Nyman's projection right now is that it's caught between a loose collection of somewhat advanced skills that he struggles to sequence together and some potentially fatal flaws that could limit him from ever doing so. A team that can harness the former component and mitigate the latter will make out like a bandit with this player, and that's why you're likely to hear his name called far earlier than his place on the Elite Prospects 2022 NHL Draft ranking. There's plenty of risk here, though, and that's why we're relatively cool on the Finnish winger.

1	Jesse Joensuu YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 89%	2	Sean Bergenheim YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 89%	3	Mikko Koivu YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 88%	4	Lauri Tukonen YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY: 84%	5	Miikka Salomaki YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 75%
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## Game Reports

**Lassi Alanen:** April 23th - May 1st, 2022 - U18s

Nyman's tournament had an upward trajectory, starting slow and picking up things a bit after the group stage. It's not like we learned much new about him, though. He's still a below-average skater projection-wise with a stride lacking ankle flexion and hips tilted. Not that effective in transition, being in the lower third in his team in terms of exit and entry volume. Shot volume was really high, but most of them were not scoring chances, just quick shots off the rush after passing the offensive zone blue line. Nyman did flash some intriguing playmaking ability a few times, especially from behind the net, which I haven't seen too much in his league play this season. Also showcased above-average skill in tight. Shot is still a big weapon, too. Does lack balance and strength in puck battles, which hurts his projection a bit. A third-rounder in my books.

**J.D. Burke:** April 27th, 2022

Finland vs. Canada - U18s

I'd have a lot more time for Nyman as a prospect if his skating and his pace both rated a fair bit higher. Just a grim skating stride mechanically, with little-if-any bend in the ankles, and an ugly tilt at the hips. Could've made more with his puck touches by pre-scanning for passing options on retrievals or pass receptions. Really faded into the background offensively, as evidenced by his doughnut in the points column in a game where his team scored six goals. Looking more like a third- or fourth-round pick than a second-rounder.

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - WJ18

The tournament so far hasn't made me a fan of Nyman at all. I haven't seen much of him so far, but he looks like just an open-ice rusher, who creates through speed but can't really figure out anything else. His passes haven't been on point. They lack deception. But it's hard to judge players only in this context. I will do my homework.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Finland vs. Switzerland - U18s

Nyman lacks strength. He loses battles. And I'm not sure how good he is at getting pucks. His body orientation was

lacklustre at times this game, in the sense that he wasn't facing teammates or his next play, which slowed down the reception-action sequence for him. He did score from a well-placed shot, but I didn't see anything worthy of a draft pick in this particular performance. The skill might be above-average. Some good technical elements.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

KooVee vs JHT - Mestis

I don't really see an NHL player in Nyman. He can somewhat protect pucks, but the combination of the slower pace of play and his lack of awareness of defenders and the lower skill level...It's not promising. He did score a highlight-reel worthy goal in this game by attacking the zone, cutting toward the middle and firing to beat the goalie, but he got surprised by defenders constantly in other situations. He really needs his options and opposition in front of him and open ice to thrive.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 23rd, 2022

KOOVEE vs. Kiekko-Espoo - Mestis

Nyman was held pointless in this one, logging a ton of ice time on the power play and at even-strength. He had his chances on the PP and also one high-quality look at 5v5, taking advantage of a horrendous pass by Kiekko-Espoo's defenceman that landed right on Nyman's stick as he was alone in the net-front. It was a pretty typical Nyman showing that he didn't really do much aside from those few moments. He fled the DZ early a few times in anticipation of the breakout, failed to take the extra stride to prevent a scoring chance and failed most of his transition attempts. Skating stride is still an issue and it shows especially in quick turns and pivots. Puck-watched a fair bit in the DZ, needs to scan more.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 18th, 2022

KOOVEE vs. RoKi - Mestis

Another game with huge minutes Nyman, consisting of close to 10 minutes on the power play on the right flank. Pretty much consistent with most of my viewings of him in Mestis this season. He was having decent success in transition, notably making one really nice one-touch pass to the middle for a partial breakaway. Most of his offensive contributions were rush shots, though, and KOOVEE had

also designed their OZ faceoff schemes to try to give him shooting opportunities. Despite the lofty point totals, I'm still not seeing him dominating games. He can definitely shoot really well and hard and has above-average handling skills, but he's not able to maximise them just yet.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 26th, 2022

Sport vs. Ilves - Liiga

Nyman was called up to play with Ilves after they had a small outbreak and were missing some of their regular forwards. He also played on one of the power play units, being positioned on the right half wall. Nyman's overall effort level seemed higher than usual, probably due to playing in Liiga again. He had some shot attempts on the power play, but his line couldn't get much offence going at 5-on-5. Nyman's feet and hands seem to work in sync instead of being separated when he was rushing the puck. As has been the case this season, he was also frequently knocked off balance. The lack of ankle flexion is pretty evident in his stride and likely contributed to this. Needs to scan more to make a greater impact in the DZ.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 4th, 2021

KOOVEE vs. JoKP - Mestis

Nyman found his way to the scoresheet twice. He scored from a rebound after rushing to the net to bat in a loose puck from his backhand. Later on, his teammate stole the puck on the forecheck and Nyman got a bit lucky with his pass attempt floating to the slot despite it partly failing and the second linemate was able to hammer it in. Nyman continues to be a pretty puzzling player to evaluate. His skating projects as below NHL average with his current form and lack of quickness, but it could also improve when he gets more used to his frame. He's also not a solo creator at 5v5, often trying to handle his way through traffic unsuccessfully. His execution was also lacking in this one. He had a 2v1 opportunity where he took out the sliding defender with a beautiful toe drag but then just failed the pass to his linemate who was literally one meter away from him. I have some questions about what he's going to be at the next level.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 1st, 2021

Hermes vs. KOOVEE - Mestis

Nyman is going to log a ton of shot attempts at this level. He's got good enough off-puck instincts to do so, taking some interesting routes and getting a good chance from the slot after a cycle. He had a couple of redirections from the slot area, too. On the power play, he was trigger happy from the right half wall and his outside leg wrister and

one-timer are both solid threats. I thought that his skating posture looks pretty decent (knee bend, ankle flexion) early in shifts (breaks down later on), but he's not very explosive and he's got major balance issues as of now, which makes him reliant on his handling when he's trying to create off the rush and transport the puck. The question is how much of those issues are going to get better over time as he adjusts to his new frame.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 27th, 2021

KOOVEE vs. IPK - Mestis

Not a good performance from Nyman in this one. He basically lacked effectiveness in any area of the game. First shift started things on a poor foot, as Nyman lost his balance in the defensive zone and tried to slam the puck towards the neutral zone along the boards but was intercepted at the point and then lacked defensive effort to take out a player in the net-front, leading to a tip-in goal for the opposition. Nyman lost his balance multiple times in puck battles, telling of his high posture. He just shouldn't be knocked off that easily at 6-foot-3 and 210 pounds. There were five uncontrolled exits at 5-on-5, with Nyman often opting to dump the puck out even before surveying for better options. He lacked separation speed or notable puck protection skills, which is a poor combination with his balance issues. Too much of his game relies on his hands and ability to beat players 1-on-1 with them, and when it didn't work, it almost always resulted in a turnover. I have to see improvements to consider him a top-64 pick, even if his production has been promising.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 12th, 2021

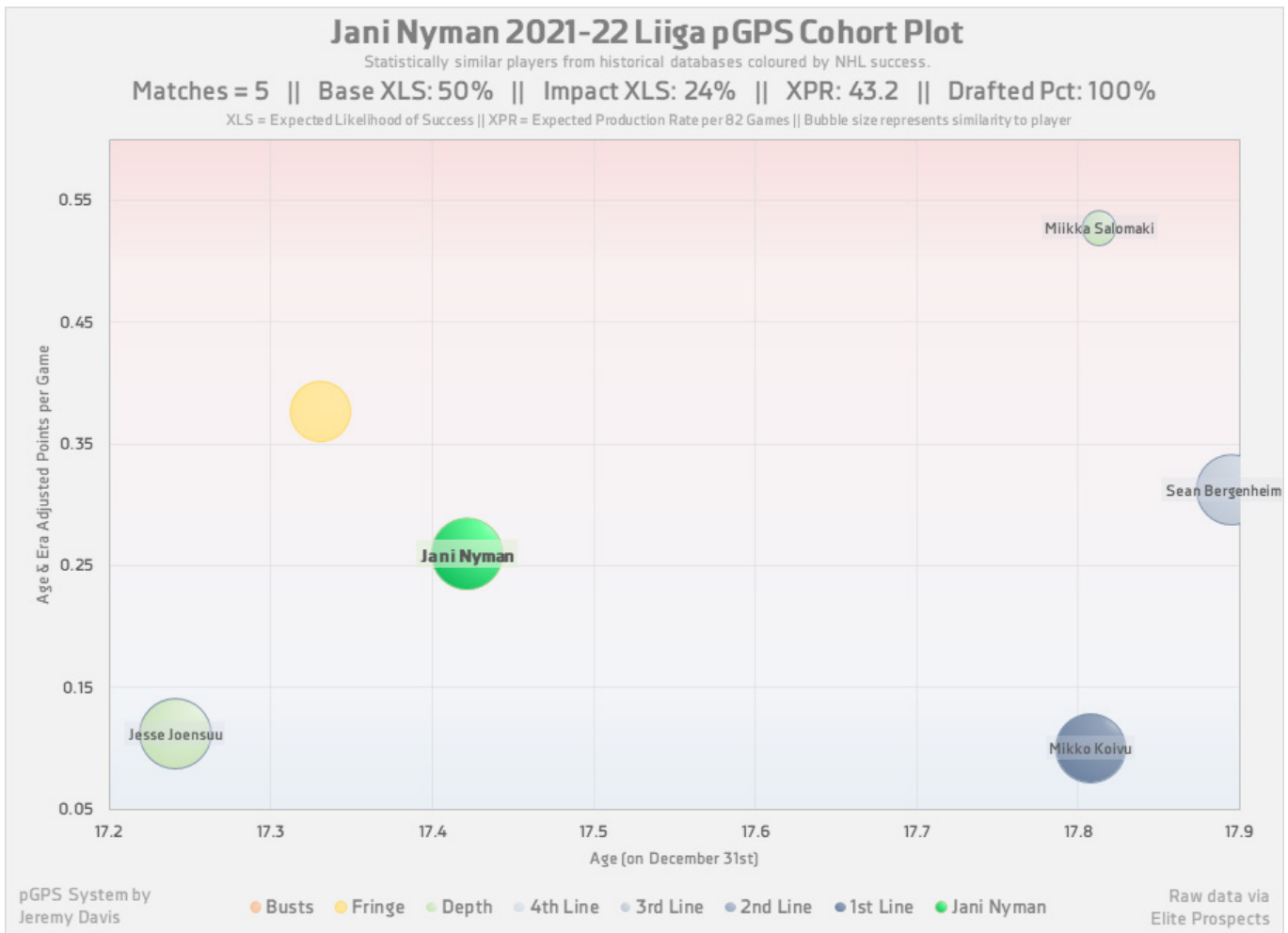
U18 Five Nations, Switzerland

I have to say that I wasn't a huge fan of Nyman at this tournament. He skated on the second line and second power play unit and added five points in four games, being the second-best producer on the team. That being said, I don't think that he was driving play that well at 5-on-5 and I thought that Topi Rönni was doing most of the work. Nyman had some excellent flashes showcasing his large handling radius, pulling some impressive 1-on-1 moves, but too often his possessions led to turnovers instead of chances. His shot is impressive, there's no getting around that. He's able to pick corners effortlessly and he incorporates some advanced stuff too, like curl-and-drag wristers. As a skater, he probably grades 4.5 on our scale. Doesn't bring much value defensively.

**David St-Louis:** October 31st, 2021

TPS vs Ilves - SM-sarja U20

Nyman has some value in tight spaces, capabilities to



protect the puck, but the skating is really worrisome: no ankle flexion at all, which isn't rare for a player his size who might still lack physical maturity and flexibility. He has some passing skills; he tried to use the spin-pass multiple times in this game, but it only worked once. His defensive involvement was decent; he was active on the ice on the power play. He scored by finding a loose puck in the slot. Nothing in his game makes me excited about his NHL potential.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 16th, 2021

Ässät vs. Ilves - Liiga

Nyman managed to get a primary assist in his first career Liiga game, playing just over 10 minutes on the fourth line, all ice time at 5-on-5. Ilves started a counter-attack after a turnover, which turned into pretty much a 2-on-1 where Nyman received the pass in the slot and managed to get a decent shot off and the goalie ended up dropping the puck behind him and it was easy for the third forward to shove it in from the goal line. Not a whole lot of notable moments otherwise. Nyman's skating form looked pretty heavy. His ankle flexion was fine, but his hips stayed high all the time and his upper-body movement was rather inefficient, ie. a lot of time spent skating with both hands on the stick. Nyman has grown into a big winger at 6-foot-3 and over 210 pounds,

but it's clear that he has a lot of work to get stronger as he was losing a lot of battles due to lack of strength and balance issues. Kept his game really simple with the puck, a lot of dump and chase. Fumbled some easy pucks, too. But it was his debut, so I can't give him too much flack.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 29th, 2021

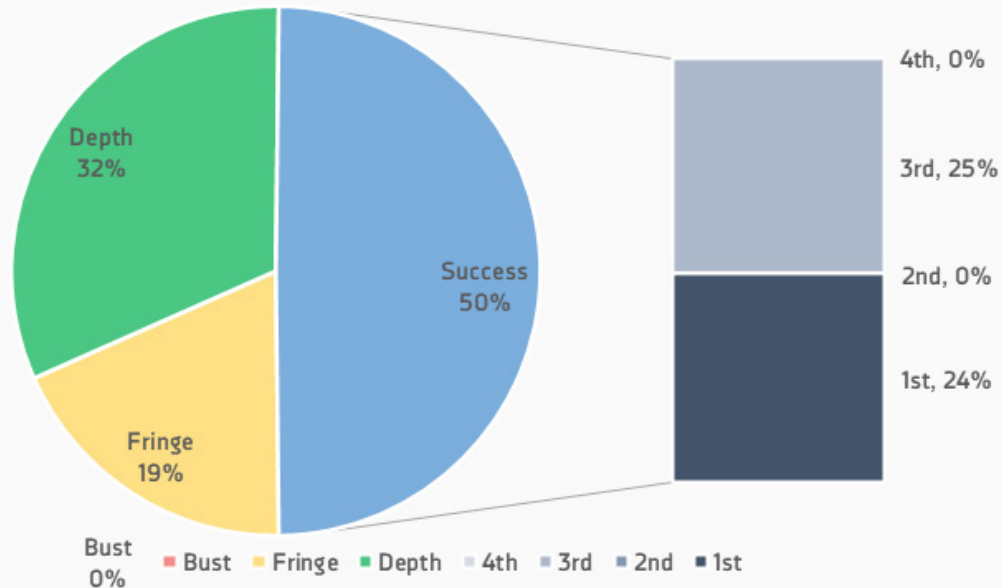
Ilves vs. Lukko - U20 SM-sarja

Nyman skated on Ilves' top line and got some shifts on the power play, though the game was very one-sided in the favour of Lukko. Nyman wasn't much of a factor in this one, to be honest. He was playing a lot in the defensive zone, which isn't his strong suit. He has a habit of puck-watching too much and he's not taking the extra strides to actually close in on defenders on the point. When he got the puck in the defensive zone, his go-to play was just to dump the puck out without control. There was a lack of pre-scanning his options before the puck came to him, which was a big factor in this. When he tried to circle in the deep on the breakout, the results weren't much better and he wasn't getting the puck a whole lot anyway. In conclusion, his off-puck routes weren't very good in the defensive zone or neutral zone. Numbers back this up: he recorded zero controlled exits or entries in the entire game at 5-on-5. He flashed some skill in



## Jani Nyman 2021-22 Liiga pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



the offensive zone, having good reach to deke around some defenders to get his shot open. But the puck touches in the offensive zone were very limited as well and he was the third-most involved player in his line. Skating looked average for this level, lacking ankle flexion and depth.

**Lassi Alanen:** August 14th, 2020

Tappara vs. Ilves - U20 SM-sarja

Nyman was playing on Ilves' second line in their 2-7 preseason loss against Tappara. Ilves were struggling a lot as a team and it did affect Nyman's game as well. Still, he flashed excellent offensive skill in a couple of spots and easily could have had a couple of points in the game. Nyman is a strong skater with decent mechanics and good/very good speed and acceleration. He's a dual-threat winger, but showcased his playmaking skills more in this game. He made a couple of high-end passes from the corners to the slot. Defensively, he's still raw but intercepted a few plays

with his quickness. I'd expect Nyman to have a strong first season at the U20 level.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 2nd, 2019

Ilves vs. JYP - U16 SM-sarja

Nyman scored two breakaway goals and added an assist in Ilves' 7-6 loss against JYP in the U16 league. The 14-year-old left-handed winger was playing on the second line and was positioned on the point as a playmaker on the power play. Nyman got off to a bit of a slow start but looked better as the game progressed. He is a good skater with quick acceleration and edgework. Nyman showed good hockey sense by supporting his linemates. He flashes excellent stick-handling ability on both of his breakaways and also ringed the post with a dangerous wrist shot in the third period. Overall he was one of Ilves' most dynamic forwards on the ice and his production this season has been really good for a player his age. P

**“[Nyman] is a pretty good skater when he gets going, but I wish he was more physical for a player with his size. I also think that he’s just about average skill level with the puck... I think he could be a really effective third or fourth line winger, but I don’t see him any higher than that.”**

*Eastern Conference executive, May 2022*



78  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

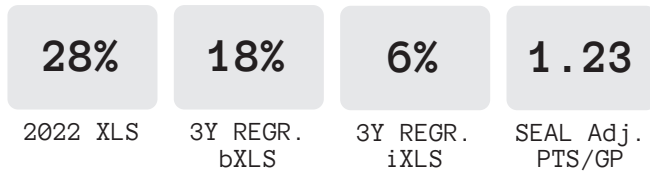
4.5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

# MATTHEW POITRAS

C | GUELPH STORM

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAR. 10, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	21	29	50

## Scouting Report

At Elite Prospects, we grade players based on six categories: skating, handling, passing, shooting, physicality, and hockey sense. But those grades don't express the full talent of players, just part of it. A good example of someone whose game escapes the grasp of our grading system is Matthew Poitras.

Poitras is one of the most energetic players in the draft, especially on the forecheck. His intensity and pace is rarely found in draft-eligible players, and because of this, they will make him an attractive draft target.

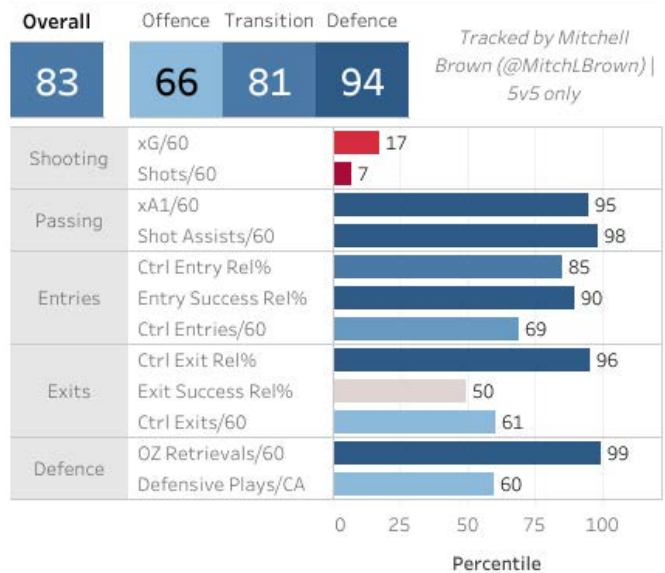
"This was the best backchecking performance I've seen from Poitras, successfully turning his knack for steals on the forecheck into impactful puck pursuit in the other two zones. As usual, a terror on the forecheck, too," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a December game report.

Poitras's motor on the forecheck and his ability to bounce from opponent to opponent quickly will force even NHL opposition to rush out their plays on breakouts, creating turnovers and good scoring chances for Poitras's team.

To earn a consistent role in the top league, however, Poitras will have to develop his playmaking ability, the deception, creativity, and timing of his passes. Right now, his main scoring tool is his high pace of play, but this advantage won't be sufficient for him to score against better opponents.

"There's playmaking upside to his game -- he's a great puckhandler, delays at the right moments, maintains control

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 109.0



at his top speeds," Elite Prospects OHL scout Lauren Kelly wrote in a March 4th, 2022 report. "He also shows signs of manipulation and deception with finding open spaces and working in traffic. He anticipates his linemates well (...) The problem is that these things don't happen often enough, and his attention to detail in his own zone is still lacking."

If Poitras continues to improve his defensive game, he could fill a fourth-line checking role in the NHL. His ability to rise in the lineup will depend on how far he can push his playmaking skills.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Michael Latta YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 96%	2 Miguel Delisle YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 96%	3 Daniel Sisca YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 96%	4 Jamie McGinn YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 96%	5 Chris Thorburn YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 96%
6 Artur Gavrus YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 95%	7 Lucas Lessio YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 95%	8 Blaine Down YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 95%	9 Corey Locke YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 95%	10 Scott Laughton YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 95%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 28th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds - OHL

I see more flashes of skill from Poitras, like deception, especially on the powerplay, but overall, he is still the same very straightforward player. His decisions always seem rushed and he throws pucks to teammates without much control quite often, sensing pressure and not knowing how to solve it. He misses clear better plays... There are hockey sense doubts here. Quite many. The motor and the board and net-front work remains interesting, but those facets are also not supported by a lot of skill, just some desperate energy -- which, when present at kind of level, can turn into a skill.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 10th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

Poitras' passing and retrieval combination led to a pair of chances. He pre-scans, establishes body positioning, escapes out the back door, and then looks inside for teammates. Doesn't just make the most direct play; he's selective and generally balances risk and reward well. Wins positioning by getting low, using heel-to-heel steps to change the point of contact, and changing pace on incoming pressure. Connected with a look-off pass into the slot, showing that he was passing to the trailer and instead went to the net. Stationary play, but it's that type of deceptiveness that will be required for Poitras to play this game in the NHL. Makes simple, effective plays in transition that play to his strengths. There's a lot of developmental runway here, largely focused on adding new skills atop the projectable base. He'd be a fine second-rounder. The highly variable playmaking skills are concerning, but I'm becoming a believer.

**David St-Louis:** March 18th, 2022

London Knight vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Poitras's plays are really simple. He moves the puck around, without much deception, on the powerplay, and he rushes the net at five-on-five. He's at his best away from the puck, it seems, as he can drive forward and push back defenders to create room for his teammates. I don't see much skill or creativity in his game, but he plays a pro-game, to an extent,

the kind that will probably net him an AHL role, but I'm not sure he ever becomes an impact NHL player, a top-9 player -- the chances seem slim.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 16th, 2022

London Knight vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

The pluses in Poitras' game remain his playmaking flashes and retrieval skills. There was a bit more shooting ability in this game, both mechanical and mental. He shot off the pass and found space around the slot when possible -- nothing advanced, but shooting could be a projectable skill for him. The playmaking ideas are there, mostly in the form of a delay to the trailer, but little in terms of execution. Passes on the heels of his target. Stride lacks hip engagement. Not a game that suggests a top-64 pick, but his combination of passing mindset and retrievals could make him an effective checker down the line.

**David St-Louis:** March 11th, 2022

Sarnia Sting vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

I can't remember what I liked in my first viewings. The speed? I don't know. Poitras's hockey sense looks quite average. He can connect evident plays, shoot at the right time on the powerplay, pass around. The plays just look incredibly vanilla, no other way to describe them. He tunnel visions on certain plays. There was one sequence where he was in the middle of the slot, open shooting lane or almost, and since he already decided he was passing to the point, that's what he did when he received the puck. It could have netted him a goal. I see a 4th-liner, a winger who learns to use his tools to check.

**Lauren Kelly:** March 4th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Poitras is going to be a really difficult projection, even by the end of the season. There's playmaking upside to his game -- he's a great puckhandler, delays at the right moments, maintains control at his top speeds. Also shows signs of manipulation and deception with finding open spaces and working in traffic. He anticipates his linemates well,

evidenced by his goal where he read off Zhilkin's play and got himself open - he bobbed the pass reception but still managed to bang it into the goal. The problem is that these things don't happen often enough, and his attention to detail in his own zone is still lacking - whether it's careless passes that get deflected away or picked off, or just kind of roaming in his own end and missing obvious coverage assignments. He shows highly skilled qualities but the execution was just not there in this one, and I wonder if it's because this is still an adjustment season for him or if that's all there is to his game, ideas but poor execution. He's probably a second-rounder at most right now, but I'm not sure about future projection yet.

**David St-Louis:** February 27th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

Poitras has tools and pace. Already a good base for a projection. He skates a bit hunched over, but is capable of engaging both feet and hands off the rush. And he does everything at speed. On the powerplay, he's both a shooter and a playmaker, capable of leveraging one ability to open the other. He stole a few pucks that he turned into offence and linked plays together. I have some hockey sense doubts (doesn't look better than average), but I'll keep watching.

**David St-Louis:** February 18th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

Poitras is an easy projection to the NHL. He will be able to play the same type of pacey, forechecking, puck-stealing game in the top league, too, especially because he has the speed and the effort to support it. I don't see anything advanced in his game, no real manipulation, but he can pass the puck quickly, as he IDs teammates quickly. Overall, probably a top-40 pick in this draft. He could become an even better playmaker if he learned to downshift sometimes and adds more deception. He had one really great sequence where he anticipated a pass of the opposition, stole it, delayed for support, and passed to a trailing teammate.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2021

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

Poitras' definitely has some NHL-calibre playmaking components. He delays for the trailer, generally thinks a pass ahead in transition instead of just making the most obvious play, and he'll make defenders reach and lose their feet with his handling. His game breaks down a bit with the OZ established, even though he's one of the best forecheckers in the OHL. He had some difficulty getting open off-puck, but his playmaking devolves into passes to point shots and

risk-averse board play. The latter's particularly interesting because he's a sturdy puck battler and does a solid job keeping pressure on his back. Too many blind plays, too. Better defensive performance than I've seen previously, getting a steal while cutting off the top and showing much better proactivity in his DZ positioning. There's an argument for him in the second round, but I'm concerned that he's just a playmaking specialist without the high-level playmaking ability to play that way in the NHL.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 21st, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Poitras was just flat-out confusing to watch in this one. There was absolutely no engagement, intensity, or intention to his play in the first period and he looked absolutely gassed coming back to his own end despite not exerting much energy to get into the offensive zone. There were several occasions where he just put his head down to skate back like he was being bag-skated and not watching what was going on in front of him - including when play turned the other way. I don't think fatigue can be used as an excuse in this case - Guelph's last game was more than two days before this one. Is he injured or battling something? I didn't see any of the forechecking prowess or skilled playmaking that he's known for and he barely made any impact at all. He was not the dynamic offensive zone player he normally is. He took a tripping penalty after overskating the puck and taking an opposing player down. I wouldn't draft him based on this viewing.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

This was the best backchecking performance I've seen from Poitras, successfully turning his knack for steals on the forecheck into impactful puck pursuit in the other two zones. As usual, a terror on the forecheck, too. He started off slowly offensively in this game: losing pucks, misses his teammates, and struggles to get the puck back because of poor off-puck positioning. As Guelph got back in this game, his impact increased significantly. A skilled player in both OZP and the rush, he found teammates with a variety of deliveries. Beat defenders into lanes on the backhand, or handles around their stick to create the opening. He's not much of a scoring threat. But Poitras' combination of puck retrieval and playmaking skill is rare. I think he's an easy second rounder.

**David St-Louis:** November 11th, 2021

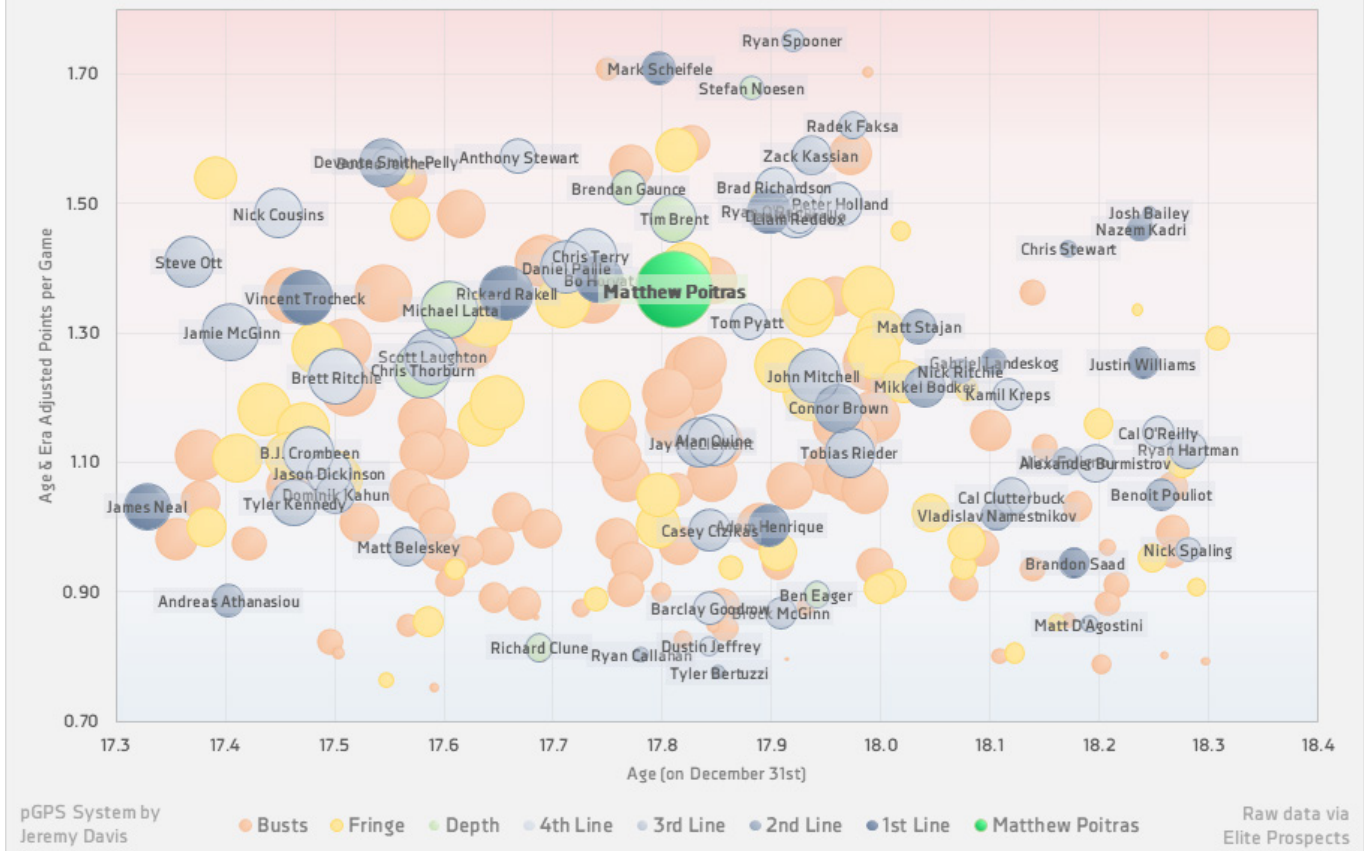
Guelph Storm vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

## Matthew Poitras 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 218 || Base XLS: 28% || Impact XLS: 9% || XPR: 36 || Drafted Pct: 73%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



All I saw from Poitras in this game was the energy, the forechecking, the reckless battling on the boards, and his motor. He creates turnovers that he tries to convert into offence. He has some sense of when a play is closed or open, and looks for another window, another passing lane to use when a defender stands in the way. His decision-making can be a bit slow at times, but it's not a consistent issue. The tools are interesting, but I see more of a 4th-liner than a top-6 forward.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 5th, 2021

Soo Greyhounds vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Poitras had one assist in this game, in the third period, where he fed the puck down low to a teammate on the doorstep. He also could've scored, as he slipped through both defensemen to get sprung on the breakaway. Other than that, though, I was a bit puzzled by this viewing. Poitras would put in the work down low in the offensive zone, hunting for pucks on the forecheck and engaging in battles, and was a good net-front presence on the power play. But when it came to his defensive play, it was like he became a different player. He would stop and start multiple times on the backcheck, was caught puck-watching and leaving players open. He also tried a spin pass in the top of the OZ after entering that was

picked off immediately, and then his skate back towards his own end was pretty slow. In fact, the only time Poitras seemed to play with any urgency at all was when he was in on the forecheck - if a teammate was the one entering the zone with possession of the puck, he didn't seem to skate with much pace or intention. He played on both special teams and threw one notable hit, but I'm left wondering if his torrid offensive production is masking some of the larger issues with his game - I'm still not convinced he's an A-ranked prospect.

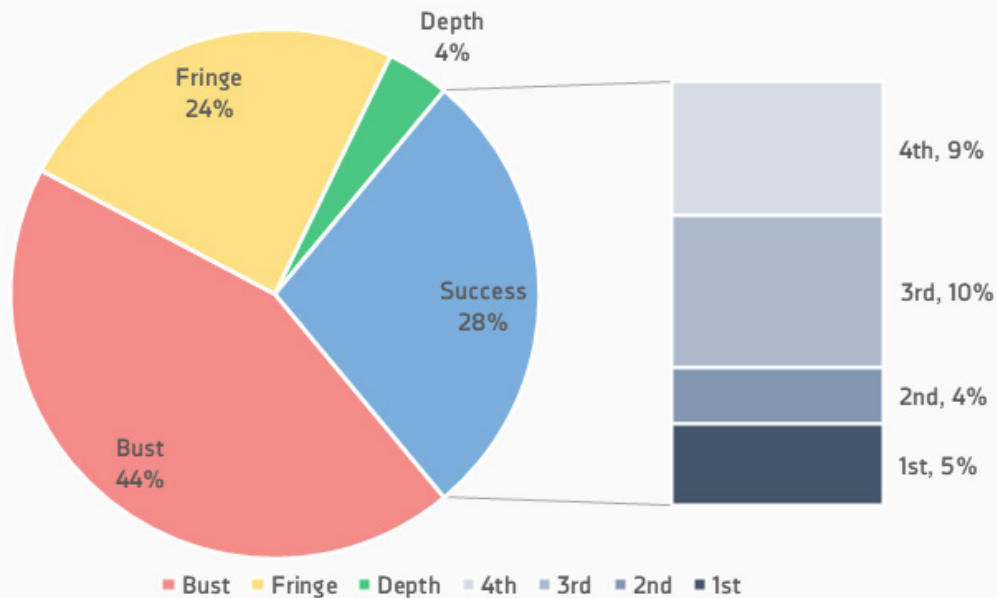
**J.D. Burke:** November 6th, 2021

Soo Greyhounds vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Not really sure I could glean much from Poitras' performance in this hockey game. By my rough count, I'm not sure he had a single sustained puck touch until about the five-minute mark of the second period. In spite of that, I found myself pretty impressed by Poitras' stick on the forecheck. Just such a great sense of timing and leverage there. And that's about it for positives. Poitras was more involved as the game wore on, but didn't make much happen. Failed to get a single shot out of a 3-on-1 and a partial breakaway. Didn't seem particularly concerned with playing the full sheet either.

## Matthew Poitras 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Guelph Storm vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

On the forecheck, Poitras is awesome. He disrupts the puck carrier constantly, forces poor decisions, and knows how to turn loose pucks into offence. If he can't win the footrace, he grabs the defender's stick early and drives them into the boards, before turning his back to theirs. Clever little way to win possession from a disadvantaged position. Offensively, he's a passer. He spots teammates on the other side of defenders, works small-area passing lanes, and makes the extra pass to turn a scoring chance into a tap-in (as he did for his assist). Moderately effective as an off-puck skater, finding space when he's not running into the puck carrier. Defensively, he couldn't be bothered. He's turnover-prone in transition, getting funneled to the perimeter and throwing away possession. I don't see a ton of individual skills here, and the pass connection issues persisted. Maybe a second-rounder? The passing skill's almost top-six-calibre, but nothing else is even remotely close at this stage.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 28th, 2021

Guelph Storm vs. Windsor Spitfires - OHL

Lots of passing skill and some advanced ideas shown by Poitras in this game. He saw his teammate arriving into space, adjusted the puck positioning accordingly, and hook passes back towards them. Linked dekes and changes of pace into passes. More than comfortable on the backhand, and seemed to weaponize it. Used the threat of the shot to pass. The issue? Only one of his many attempts actually connected. One of the missed plays was a poor decision, but

the majority of them were just terribly inaccurate. He was hot on the forecheck in this game, grabbing loose pucks, winning races, and intercepting passes. Virtually zero impact in the defensive end except when getting above the play on the backcheck. Plays with pace, but his stride lacks hip engagement, causing him to collapse his torso towards the ice. He sinks deeper into his stance with the puck, but still lacks flexion. If the passing skill isn't just a one-off and he starts connecting, he's a possible top-nine forward, if not better. If it is, he's probably just a high-pace checker.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 8th, 2021

Kitchener Rangers vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

My early impression of Poitras was that he needed to backcheck more. He was reduced to a perimeter player in the first period, although that wasn't too surprising considering this game was his first in the OHL. After he scored his first goal in the second period - intercepting a pass up the middle to force a turnover, before walking in and ripping the puck top shelf - Poitras became a different player. He was blocking shots, backchecking like a fiend, and driving to the net, which is how he scored his second of the game (banging in the rebound). His confidence level seemed to skyrocket, and Poitras seemed to settle in. He played a lot more in the third period, likely due to his offensive production. In fact he actually stole the puck on a backcheck while penalty killing, and also picked off a pass behind the net and fed a wide-open teammate in the slot. It was great to see him grow into a new player as the game went on.



79  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# BEAU JELSMA

LW | BARRIE COLTS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. APR. 28, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT

27%	17%	6%	1.21
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	27	20	47

## Scouting Report

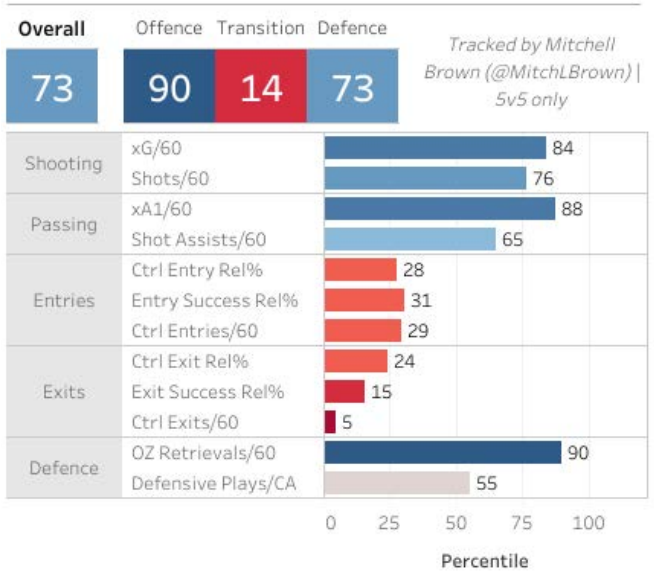
Most teams are faced with two choices on the second day of the draft. They can chase upside with deeply flawed prospects or go after lower-skilled players that project to fill a specific role lower in an NHL lineup. For a team looking at the latter, Beau Jelsma is an ideal bet.

He offers speed, pace, quickness, defensive ability, and energy – a ton of energy. He’s one of the most talented puck retrievers in the draft, an underrated role that could earn him minutes on a skill line in the NHL.

Jelsa can extend the offensive possession of his team by jumping on the opposition to stop them from breaking out and on loose pucks to shift them to a teammate in a better position. He can work the front of the net, provide a screen, and a rebounding presence, and initiate clever passing plays off the rush.

“Jelsma’s speed was something to behold, especially as the Colts were behind for most of the game,” Elite Prospects OHL regional scout Lauren Kelly wrote in an October report. “He was constantly zipping around the ice and putting pressure on the defense, coming back to help his defensemen out, and getting involved in battles.”

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 121.3



The flashes of playmaking skill and pin-point releases also suggest that there is more offensive potential in Jelsma’s game than the numbers suggest. Maybe with time, his physical and passing skills turn into a legitimate playmaking game, allowing him to access higher roles in the lineup.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022  
Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL  
Seems like Jelsma figured out how to best use his pace and skill. Instead of sprinting down the boards, he cut inside and

tried to push through the defence. If no seam opened, he’d cut back. He even cleared the zone, reset, then attacked to create a scoring chance. Grabbed an assist after delaying just after gaining the zone, handling around pressure, then passing to

the trailer. The usual stuff still applied: defence, anticipation, playmaking from the boards. He's very inside-driven and tries to attack the net constantly. He'd benefit from trying to bring the puck across the goaltender instead of jamming the puck into the pads. He's certainly just a third-line or fourth-line at the next level, but if this nuanced approach to offence is real, he could get closer to the former.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Jelsma's a checker at the next level. An effective one? Most likely. He's a puck retrieval machine and a subtly brilliant defender. Where most players sprint towards the point, he angles to push players into the boards and prevent the shot. In the offensive zone, he turns steals into offence and gets open in the slot. With the puck, he's a bit limited. He plays too fast - he just sprints from one defender to the next. He offloads possession too early. Doesn't have a delay game or much puck patience. If he adds those, his pace and flashes of handling, shooting, and playmaking could elevate him to a third-line role. Either way, he's more of an early-third candidate.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2022

London Knights vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Not much in terms of NHL upside shown in this game. Jelsma mostly just sprinted from the one puck carrier to the next, getting the odd steal in the process. Scored the overtime winner, had a couple of looks at 5-on-5, but there was nothing advanced about these plays. The beginnings of the delay game I saw earlier in the season haven't appeared much in the second-half. He could become a useful energy player down the line, but his skating will have to improve to there. Ankle flexion is just about there along with a high stride frequency, but his hips sit too high and he kicks his feet wildly. Better mechanics will tap into his natural quickness. Could be a fine third rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Jelsma's pace and playmaking usually shine. This game was no different. He tried a couple of passes through the slot instead of forcing the wraparound - one connected for a point-blank chance. Consistently establishes body positioning. Gets inside defenders and spins away at the perfect moment. Took more of a short-range and off-puck skating role in transition. Overskates pockets of space, but he always finishes his routes to back off defenders and

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 John Hecimovic YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 96%	2 Jay McClement YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 96%
3 Sergei Tolchinsky YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 96%	4 Jarrod Maidens YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 96%
5 Lucas Lessio YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 95%	6 Cory Stillman YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 95%
7 Scott Kosmachuk YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 95%	8 Jamie McGinn YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 95%
9 Colt King YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 95%	10 A.J. Jenks YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 95%

create space behind. Game isn't particularly nuanced, but he's a solid bet to play a fourth-line role in the NHL. Expanding the flashes of deception and delay game could get him a place on the third line.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 6th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Jelsma's a relatively easy player to project to the pros. He plays faster than his feet allow sometimes, but that he's so confident on the inside, so aware of body positioning, and so naturally quick, ensures he'll carve out a role somehow. A number of scoring chances and a pair of goals. Off-the-pass wristers, net drives, outside leg wristers in transition, and slot cuts before firing were some of his weapons. His shot's probably an NHL average projection or a bit above it. The passing is a bit more interesting, and likely determines his ultimate upside. If he learns to slow down, delay, hit the trailer, and adjust puck positioning to pass pucks through defenders, he could be a third-liner. Without it, he's probably more a Quad-A player. To be fair, he's a capable down-low playmaker who makes slick backhand passes to the inside, even with a defender on him. The defence and puck pursuit are major plusses that could help him, too. I think he'd be a fine third rounder. Lots of a great details, but the potential to get Will Bitten'd is high.



**Lauren Kelly:** February 24th, 2022  
 Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Good off-puck performance from Jelsma in this one. Provided the screen on the third goal to help fool the goalie, stole pucks in the neutral zone and forced turnovers. Came back in support, didn't necessarily make the dynamic plays that he's shown in previous viewings but his decisions were what the play required of him. Quiet as far as the offence went, but he plays well with pace and was solid in his own end in this one. Probably a second or third rounder. There's lots of upside here.

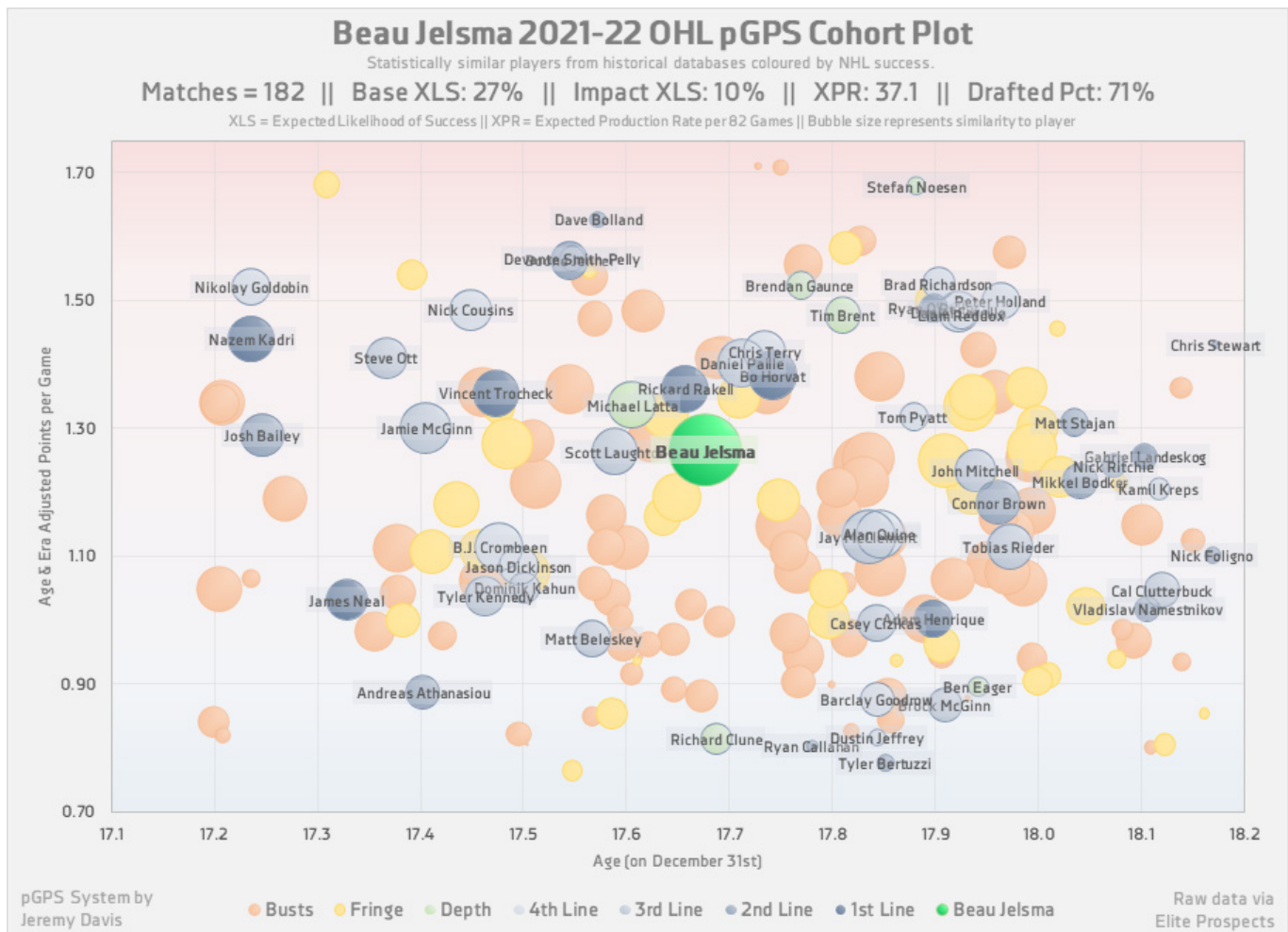
**Lauren Kelly:** February 3rd, 2022  
 Kingston Frontenacs vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

With Barrie missing several key forwards due to injuries and suspensions, Jelsma played on the top line this one and was one of the best Barrie players on the ice. He had some great flashes of offensive vision in this one, after making good reads in his own end to pick off passes and turn play up the ice. Played with high pace and intensity in the offensive zone. I'd like to see a little more consistency in the defensive zone from him - sometimes

he's engaged and pressuring puck carriers, but he can get caught puck watching too. He scored Barrie's second goal by outbattling a defender much taller than him and banging the puck in on the doorstep while falling, and he could've had a couple more goals in this one too. Height and strength are probably going to be turnoffs for teams at the draft, but I think he's a mid-round pick.

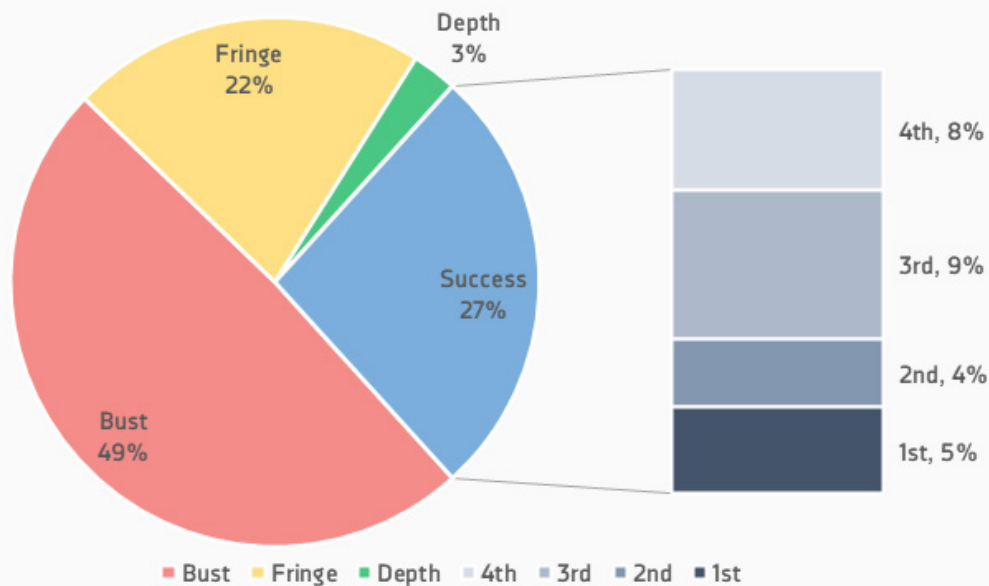
**Mitchell Brown:** January 20th, 2021  
 Owen Sound Attack vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Jelsma's a draft pick, for sure. He plays fast, but it doesn't seem like he's already maxed out that area of his game. Lots of defensive details: heel pushes to angle out attacks when making up space, taking the extra stride to steal possession and establish body positioning, and direct speed on the forecheck to pressure the puck carrier. Offensively, he has flashes of top-nine skill: delaying for the trailer, passing through pressure, peeling pucks off the boards and bringing them to the middle, and off-puck timing. He scored by sprinting to the net front, gaining positioning, then using his skate to redirect the pass. More deception during the set up of his passes



## Beau Jelsma 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



will take his playmaking to the next level, but his pace allows him to access lanes many players can't. Could be a solid late-second or early-third.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Jelsma played 8 minutes in this game and was effective for most of them. He zips around the ice, bouncing from one check to the next. Much better than my previous viewing in puck battles: he established positioning on the puck, prepared space, and slipped out the backdoor. Wasn't involved in transition beyond a few chips, but it seems like he's trying to play a simple game. Give him an opportunity and he creates, as he did with a convincing shot that became a pass for a deflection opportunity. Lost his check on a goal against by over-backchecking. He looks like a draft pick, for sure.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

Jelsma needs to play more. He's extremely effective in limited minutes. He plays fast, gets inside, and shows skill as both a passer and shooter. Assesses defensive pressure and reacts accordingly -- it never seems like he's creating unneeded risk for limited reward. Pace is the name of his game, but his stride can't keep up. The ankle dorsiflexion is there, but the hips don't sink into his movements, his feet kick upwards, and he finishes his strides too soon. The crossovers feature some hopping, but generate speed and he integrates them appropriate-

ly. Mohawk usage. Had a great set up cross-slot for a one-timer in a strong dynamic set up -- hands in front, weight over his stick ready to shoot or pass without notice. He lacks deception, or even much thought behind his plays, taking low-percentage shots instead of manipulating the defender to set up a teammate. Still, there's a lot here. He seems like a draft pick, even if he doesn't start scoring this year.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 29th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Jelsma's speed was something to behold, especially as the Colts were behind for most of the game. He was constantly zipping around the ice and putting pressure on the defense, coming back to help his defensemen out, and getting involved in battles. His tenacity paid off with the tying goal in the third period, which was a turned over puck that found him right in the slot that he fired top shelf. He showcased a ridiculous release on that goal. While the Colts as a whole got better as the game went on, Jelsma was one of the few that was consistently engaged and relentless in his pursuit of the puck all game long.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 28th, 2021


Sudbury Wolves vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Jelsma has zero physical game right now, even though he tries. He doesn't know how to establish body positioning, how to escape pressure, or how to engage in battles. When he's first on the puck, he backpressure

simply runs through him without any resistance. Really struggles to get his space. But it doesn't deter him. He attacks the inside with regularity, in varying ways: faking the outside dash then delaying, cutting across the front, or passing to an open teammate and relocating to the inside. Some small-area playmaker skills, hitting the trailer or teammates on the same side of the ice. Hands-in-front, distance-between-feet, chest-up wrister that brought a surprise amount of pop. Moves quickly, but the stride lacks major refinement at this stage. He definitely looks like a draft pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 7th, 2021

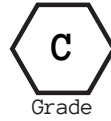
Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

I came away from this viewing with a positive impression of Jelsma overall. He wasn't really involved in the offense much at all, but I really liked how he played in the defensive zone. He was constantly moving and keeping an eye on opposing players as they moved around, and he uses his stick well to try and disrupt passes. For a smaller player, Jelsma isn't afraid or hesitant to engage in board battles; in fact, he can almost be like a dog with a bone when it comes to trying to get the puck back. His determination is relentless in those situations, and most of the time he's successful. He's a great skater, with nice acceleration and smooth edges. Jelsma does need to work on faceoffs if he wants to continue to play centre at further levels of hockey, and I'd like to see him get a little more involved in the offense as he gets more comfortable to the OHL. 

**"The flashes of playmaking skill and pin-point releases also suggest that there is more offensive potential in Jelsma's game than the numbers suggest. Maybe with time, his physical and passing skills turn into a legitimate playmaking game, allowing him to access higher roles in the lineup."**

**"He's very inside-driven and tries to attack the net constantly. He'd benefit from trying to bring the puck across the goaltender instead of jamming the puck into the pads. He's certainly just a third-line or fourth-line at the next level, but if this nuanced approach to offence is real, he could get closer to the former."**

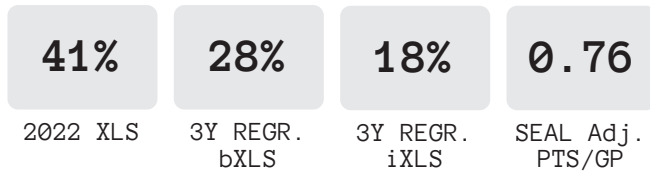
*Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown*



# HUDSON THORNTON

D | PRINCE GEORGE COUGARS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. NOV. 4, 2003  
WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	65	14	31	45

## Scouting Report

It may come as a surprise, but Hudson Thornton was the most prolific goalscorer among first-time draft-eligible WHL defencemen with his 14 tallies in 65 contests. In fact, he landed third behind Kevin Korchinski and Denton Mateychuk in overall points on the season for blueliners.

Thrust into a top-pairing role for an extremely young Prince George Cougars team, Thornton was presented with an immense amount of opportunity. A primary contributor on both special teams, a matchup option, and an offensive driver, there wasn't a scenario where the Winnipeg-born defender wasn't one of the most competitive players on the ice.

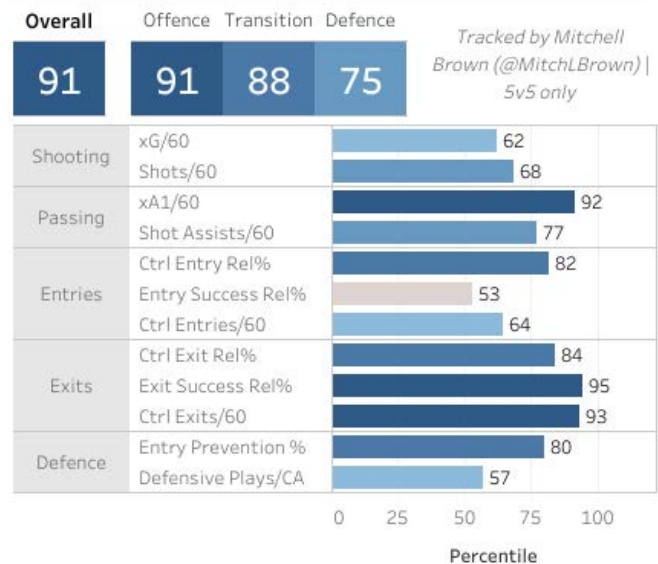
A brilliant proactive activator from the blue-line, weak side shooting opportunities were Thornton's bread and butter this season. Sense-driven give-and-go sequences, two-touch wristers blended with precise placements, and crossice layered passes allowed him to cook in the offensive zone -- especially with the man-advantage. Added patience on the line even helped expand his game even further as the season progressed.

Able to mirror footwork, lock down secondary threats, and clog lanes through his proactive play reading, Thornton saw praise across various game reports this season,

"Defensively, he's solid. He eliminates threats, gets inside positioning, and kills tons of plays off the rush. Even when he concedes the zone, he keeps plays to the perimeter. Tight gap off-puck." Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown commented in an April report.

Thornton's hyper-aggression in his own end was one of

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 139.0



his hallmarks across various viewings. While helpful in some situations, fatigue and overuse led to some less than desirable sequences,

"He can become very uncontrolled at times; especially when there are systematic breakdowns; he becomes hyper aggressive, over-extends, momentum easily manipulated," Elite Prospects crossover scout Daniel Gee remarked in a 2022 report.

The struggle with Thornton's overall projection is that many members of the scouting team felt that Thornton consistently plays below his actual skill level.

"Too often, he settles for low-percentage plays on break-outs. He missed opportunities to use the middle, delay, or

pass cross-ice." Brown noted.

Missed exit routes, cut-backs into pressure, and limited manipulation on retrievals plagued his ability to transport the puck efficiently. He essentially leaves you wanting more.

## Game Reports

**Daniel Gee:** April 9th, 2022

Victoria Royals vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Strong defending off the rush in this game for Thornton. Very aggressive on his own blue-line, sealing off the centre lane before Royal attackers could adjust their rush patterns. Gap was a major reason why he was effective in this one, blending stickwork to deflect pass attempts and receptions -- proactive. He can become very uncontrolled at times; especially when there are systematic breakdowns; he becomes hyper aggressive, over-extends, momentum easily manipulated. He had a second period shift where he conceded a high-danger chance while trying to recover on a quick 2-on-1. Cobatted a pretty nasty cut-back in the third. Thornton's play in his own zone was very typical to other viewings; struggles to seal off the end-boards despite his best efforts. He made a wonderful stop late in the game, reading a cross-ice pass and getting his stick in the lane. Was very aggressive at some points, chasing man-on-man coverage opportunities.

Thornton's main area of growth this season is in the offensive zone. Much more patient on-puck in this viewing. In the third he executed a stutter step in pressure off the line and got the shot through -- he was panicked, but it worked. Thornton continued to be a really strong activation threat off-puck. In the first he drifted down and was able to get a sharp angle shot off. Later in the shift he worked the puck off the left-hand point and placed a shot glove side -- great chance that included a lateral cut plus patience. On a powerplay in the second after sending a low placed shot from the point, he crashed a rebound and created a bunch of chaos. Overall really impactful. Easy player to bump for others when it comes to our final board -- production is nice considering QoT. Solid B prospect that might drift into the third round in our final rankings.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Thornton has some defensive ability with flashes of puck skills and offence. He's best when he's activating and using his tools to manipulate defenders. Both of those are rare. And when he tries, he doesn't maximize his impact. Too often, he settles for low-percentage plays on breakouts. He missed opportunities to use the middle, delay, or pass cross-ice. Those are team-wide trends on Prince George, but without more confidence in his skills, he won't make the NHL. Defensively,

If Thornton can learn to play up to his ability, he could be found-gold for a team. If he remains stagnant, a bottom-pairing projection isn't out of the question for the slightly undersized defender.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Travis Hamonic YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 94%	2 Mark Pysyk YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 93%
3 Brent Seabrook YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY 93%	4 Nick Schultz YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 93%
5 Kevin Harris YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 92%	6 Mike Green YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY 92%
7 Ryan Pulock YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 92%	8 Mirco Muller YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 91%
9 Dalton Thrower YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 91%	10 Gerard Dicaire YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 91%

he often gives attackers too much space, but shows play-killing instincts deeper in the zone. Nothing too advanced but he mirrors footwork and gets inside positioning. He didn't look like a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 16th, 2022

Prince George Cougars vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Thornton's frustrating. He's clearly skilled enough to be a play-driver. In this game alone, he connected with a long-range pass for a breakaway after reading the forechecker's feet and cutting away. He anticipates rush activation opportunities, sprinting into the play from defensive zone coverage before his forwards even react. And he starts give-and-go sequences and clearly understands how to develop offence in the offensive end. But he just doesn't too often. He makes simple plays, throws the puck away, and defers too early. Defensively, he's solid. He eliminates threats, gets inside positioning, and kills tons of plays off the rush. Even when he concedes the zone, he keeps plays to the perimeter. Tight gap off-puck. I don't know what to make of him. The flashes are second-round but the inconsistency is more third-round.

**Daniel Gee:** February 11th, 2022

Vancouver Giants vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Thornton was more aggressive in this viewing, akin to some

of his performances early in the season. This aggression was present in all three zones, particularly in transition. Whether he was forcing a hard-to-breakthrough gap, adjusting with his footwork, or taking hard neutral zone swings at puck carriers, Thornton was a play killer in this one. Never really ever caught with poor body position, Thornton also made a few inside-lane protection swings, killing slot cuts and ticky rush patterns presented by some of the Giants' forwards. This aggression burnt him in sustained pressure; while he always is involved below the goal line, the sequences after lost puck battles cause the most problems for Thornton. With low-to-high plays, he usually attaches to secondary threat shutdowns (tying up tip threats and boxing out net front attackers). Any other centering plays to the circles or slot, handcuffs Thornton to some extent. On multiple shifts he was clearly behind the play as the pass released -- could be an absence of scanning out of the battles. The habits in the defensive zone have remained consistent; he relies on his edges and feet to help contain attackers on the perimeter. He micro-scans and gets into passing and shooting lanes proactively. Not strong enough to really be a real physical presence -- should change as he develops.

As other colleagues have mentioned in past reports, Thornton really fails to use his clear ability to escape with pucks out of retrievals, always defaulting to messier but more simple D-to-D passes or uncontrolled board ups. He had one great retrieval through; in the third, Thornton scanned while he grabbed the puck, wheeled around his net, carried the puck end-to-end using a combination of weight shifts and picked up a tonne of speed through his crossovers. He just managed to get a shot off, stick-side off the right wing. If only he did that more. In sustained offensive zone pressure, Thornton was doing some great things; one-touch passes, constant downhill activations to add himself as a pass option, cut-backs to release pressure and a lot of board-to-slot puck movement. In the first, he activated downhill and slipped a pass to Ziemmer for a high-danger tip. Was available for a couple other cross crease passes that never came. Picks his activation times well. Thornton also facilitated a couple of keep-ins that required a fair amount of small-area handling and hand-eye. Still looks like a second round talent that will probably slip a fair bit-- maybe at the end of the round. Probably plays too many minutes currently (such a massive taks on the PK and PP). Want him to activate his tools more often; the question is, will he ever?

**Mitchell Brown:** December 17th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

If there's a consistent theme with my Thornton viewings this year, it's that I'm always left wanting more. Not much, but just enough to make me question his upside. He's a strong defender with a number of ways to kill plays: he'll pivot early and surf across, break up plays in face-to-face sequences, outwork players, and time his checks at the point of least resistance. He broke up two plays where the attacker tried to dangle through him, largely because he closed space quickly, forced the move, and then swiped the puck away just as they thought he was giving them space under his stick. Two activation sequences: (1) working laterally and finding the pass to the teammate on the far post, and (2) reading the feet of the incoming defender, deking around, and then losing the puck. Needs to be more aggressive with the puck. On retrievals, it seems like he's content to make the simple play inside of using his tools to step inside, manipulate, and pass. It often seems like he's playing below his skill level.

**J.D. Burke:** December 18th, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Really not sure what to make of Thornton's play in this game. It was a bit of a mixed bag with some good moments, some not-so-good ones, and a little bit of in between. Some of his best work occurred in the offensive zone. Some offensive blue line activations, some deception as a distributor... all that fun stuff. Foot work defending through the neutral zone was ghastly poor; my mans literally tripped on air at one point as a Giants forward essentially came at him in a straight line. That's going to happen when you're as hyper aggressive as Thornton is between the blue lines though, I guess. Lost containment along the boards on a goal against. Made some panicked plays on defensive zone retrievals.

**Daniel Gee:** December 14th, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Thornton's whole game is built on competitiveness, awareness, and a maximization of his tools. He may not be the best puck handler, skater, shooter, or physical force in the defensive zone, but the sum of all his parts creates an effective player with major scalability.

In this viewing, Thornton remained remarkably consistent when comparing his play to other games previous in the season. His gap control in transition was measured; he snaps onto players like a magnet and pushes aggression at the right times. In the first he made a huge lateral shift from the far-boards to the middle of his blueline to knock the puck off the stick of a slot entering Giant player . The footwork and

control he had was pretty wild. He may have reached more than I would have liked on a couple of perimeter entries. Thornton was once again proactive in his stick placement, working to get it into releases and lanes. Stopped a sure goal in the third deflecting a cross-crease pass away. Early identification of secondary threats paid off; in the first he scanned a driving Giant and stick checked him, eliminating him from the play. One of the first times I have seen him unable to mirror the footwork of an opponent. He was also manipulated on the net-front by a Giant who faked a pass behind the net and took it into the crease and scored. Probably needs to slow it down a bit.

Transitionally, he was able to head-man a couple of rushes; in the first he increased his pace, drove on the right-wing, and fed MacAdams in the slot (who called for it but was instantly checked). Almost worked in a powermove in the second, one arm deflecting the pressure -- play was ultimately offside. A couple of in-motion breakouts in this viewing but generally quiet. He struggled a bit in sustained pressure. He had a really competitive shift at the end of the game with the Giants pushing to cut the lead in half.

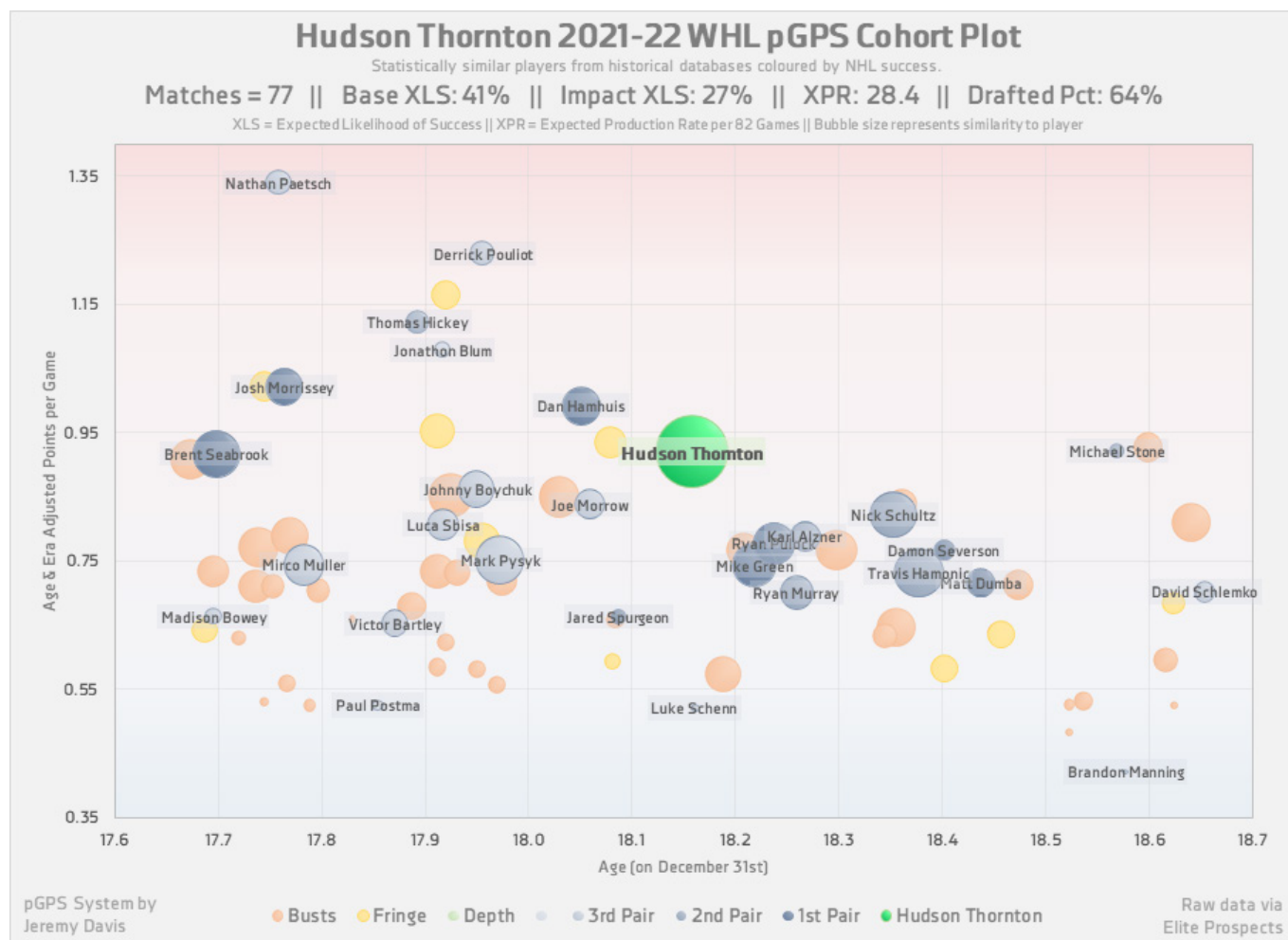
This was a really impactful game in the offensive zone; it

has me questioning if we underrate him a bit. In the first he scored a wild goal. After two great activations down to the top of the right-hand circle, a centering pass from the near corner deflected off a teammate and into Thornton's vicinity. In one motion he sniped a shot stick-side -- impossible to save. Wicked release on the shot. Habits wise he was constantly one-touching pucks, sometimes on the backhand. On a late powerplay he sent a low bullet of a shot while activating downhill -- he had half the net but directed it five-hole for whatever reason. He's undoubtedly a second-rounder, probably even a first-round talent based on my viewings.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 19th, 2021

Tri-City Americans vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Thornton was arguably the best player in this game, highlighted by his rush defence, DZC, and shooting. He lacks some consistency in just about every dimension of game, whether that's activation, closing space in the NZ, or breakouts. Still, the flashes are exciting. He'll disrupt tricky rushes before diffusing them deeper in his zone without over-extending. When he activates, he fully commits, using his knees-over-toes, hips-tilted-back stride to launch himself



up the ice and get a scoring chance. He had fired off a classic in-stride wrister another transitioning directly from his strides to his outside leg and firing for his goal. Both shots require plenty of refinement, but that he's changing the rhythm of his releases and able to transition his weight quickly matters most at this stage. Lacks deception on the breakout, although he looks cross-lane for options. Establishes positioning and pre-scans on retrievals but still has difficulty connecting with the subsequent pass. He's definitely a draft pick, perhaps as high as an early second.

**Daniel Gee:** November 10th, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

This was a typical Hudson Thornton game, for the most part. He stopped plays, was uber-competitive in his own zone, and pushed pace on practically every shift. The Cougars were hemmed in their defensive zone for most of the game and Thornton, who was on the first pairing, took the majority of the leg work -- especially on the penalty kill. More mistake prone than I have seen him in past viewings, breaking more rather than bending on some sequences.

Thornton's transitional defending was a mixed bag in this game. The good side of Thornton is when he mirrors footwork, maintains his gap, and stops play. In the first he gapped up well, poking a puck in the high slot, chasing the retrieval to the corner and containing until support came. Later he beat out an attacker on a broken play one-on-one, getting his tick in the release of their shot as they tried to manipulate and shoot around him. Thornton also threw a cataclysmic hit on the near boards after a lane clog in the second and rejected a rush on the blue line in the third. Static feet burnt him on another sequence, conceding the inside lane to Hall, who snipped a powerplay goal top shelf on Brennan. A bit passive on a couple of blue-line entries, activating late on the rush attempts. As mentioned, he was essentially in his own zone for 70% of this game. Thornton pushed the same translatable habits I have seen before; scanning and mental mapping, mobile activations to clog lanes, and a tonne of battles within the crease. He had some great battles with Sourdif -- one one shift he swung into a pass lane on the right-hand circle, stretching out to poke a puck away from Sourdif who was constantly trying to feather pucks in the crease to create chaos. The most concerning play was when Thornton was essentially pushed to the outside on scrum -- lack of strength was an issue there.

A factor in the transition, Thornton joined multiple rushes and facilitated a couple of carry-ins. Had a questionable shot attempt attacking up the middle that was deflected away (had support on the wings). Turned aside on a power move

up the right-wing on another play -- more appreciative of the attempt than anything. On a powerplay in the second, Thornton executed a board bank into space, cross crease that led to a high danger chance. He's a downhill shooter who activates on the weak side. One stutter-step manipulation play on the left point allowed him to move down the boards and fire off a slow placed laser just wide. Looks like a second-round guy (middle-to-bottom pairing projection) -- he's a max effort type of player.

**Cam Robinson:** October 30th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Thornton has decent feet and can manipulate at the top of the zone to set up plays or get shots through, but it's inconsistent and lacking creativity and perhaps confidence. I do like his lateral mobility and generally, four-way mobility on the back peddle. The skating posture is a bit hunched over.

Defensively, he showed smart footwork mirroring and squelshed plays before they could get started through the NZ. In-zone, he's structurally pretty sound in his positioning and doesn't chase. He can make interesting decisions to jump start the offense that didn't always work, but I'll take that need for refinement over a less desirable trait of safety first at the junior level. He's a leader on this team as a d-eligible. I like that.

Thornton continues to intrigue me as a player who could see their game pop over the next 18 months

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Thornton's offensive impact comes and goes -- that's my biggest issue. It's not that he doesn't want to be involved. He activates at the right times, calls for the puck, and proactively fills space. And once he gets the puck, he's such a strong lateral mover and fast-paced decision-maker that he creates openings. But he gives up on activation sequences, makes safe plays, and generally seems a bit rushed in his decision-making with the puck. It's visible on the breakout, where he throws pucks into space but his intended target's nowhere near. Defensively, he's a solid above-average projection. Not significantly so, but his defensive skating is mostly quiet for this level, and he kills a ton of plays. If he gets backed up, he makes up the distance while angling the play to the perimeter. If not, he kills the puck early and starts it back up the ice. Quite physical. Lots of shoulder-checking and general awareness. Some decision-making issues but he'll tighten it up given his skating, motor, and habits. Given his age, I need to see more assertiveness and consistency with the puck. For now, he's more of a second-rounder.



**Daniel Gee:** October 27th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

Remains one of the more interesting and projectable defenders in the WHL. Thornton was a force once again on both sides of the puck and was straight-up the best Cougar in this game.

So much of Thornton's game is in motion, combining edge based activations, while blending hard, pin-point outlet passes. In this game in particular, Thornton was deep in his bag in terms of skating skill, pushing four-way mobility and quick transporting all game. I'm talking mohawk to round his own net quicker, exploding out of the maneuver to escape pressure, and generally being a deceptive pivot utilizer to shake off attackers. Breakouts were clean in this game, gets his feet moving and facilitates momentum-based attacks. In the first, Thornton shoulder peaked on a retrieval, facilitating the D-to-D ring, and then activated on the rush, taking a shot high in the slot (arm unlocked release, weight-transfer & downforce), creating a rebound and a primary assist. Habits in transition are strong -- he even had some hip-pocket puck protection on one controlled entry that ended up into a perimeter play.

He was a beast in sustained pressure again. Continued his overall habit of working pucks from the perimeter in the middle while blending some handling. He patterns into shooting from the top of the point, looking for rebounds off the boards or net-front but he generally gets the puck through as he opens up lanes with his lateral movement. Actively held up on a one timer to float a more tipable puck on one play in the first. Thornton had a couple dangerous weak-side activations, working into an open cross-ice lane but didn't get the pass -- visibly frustrated by it. Heeled multiple one-time shots, one in the second as he activated downhill, the other on a powerplay in the second -- scans the traffic but had timing issues. Thornton was a bit inefficient passing in sustained pressure; he's working into dangerous areas and is middle oriented with his attempts, he had multiple attempts rejected as the puck got lost in layers.

Thornton had a couple of standout transitional sequences. In the first he was hesitant on a lane clog, but prevented a pass to the crease, forcing the attacker to hit a trailer -- Thornton instantly snapped off to the secondary crease threat and tied up their stick -- insane processing. Showed general patterns from other games in terms of limiting perimeter shots with his stick work -- multiple sticks in release stops. Weakest play was on a Schuurman activation where Thornton bit hard on a weight-shift while on a powerplay, allowing the inside lane. He sometimes gets caught in poor-body positions transitionally, opting to leverage his forward stride instead

of a pivot -- on one sequence he was able to contort his upper body enough to make a wild pokecheck while facing the opposite direction -- this habit will be exploited hard in Pro. Felt that Thornton's defensive mental and physical pace in sustained scenarios was high-end. He is so proactive in clogging lanes, exploding back and forth proactively. On one penalty kill in the second, he blocked a Schuurman shot, contained a drive and roughed up the attacker, and finally jumped into another lane to get the clear. Stand out sequence. Pretty clear that Thornton should go high in this draft.

**Cam Robinson:** October 22nd, 2020

Prince George Cougars vs Victoria Royals - WHL

The defining quality with Thornton is he has some really nice feet. He pivots fluidly and well in all three zones, has his head up and can make straightforward outlets on a regular basis. Stood up and protected the line well with oncoming rushes. He snapped a 100 foot bomb of an outlet in the middle frame that was very nice. He owns some good mechanics on the one-timer and was used at the top of the umbrella in a 5-on-3 situation. On the PK, he's smartly positioned and held his ground in 1v1 battles at the netfront and jumped on weaknesses. He turned into the boards on a hit and sold it as if he were hurt but popped up when the call was made. Not a great look but got the PP at least. Skating is structurally pretty sound - smooth extension and recovery. Could use a bit more ankle flexion for the toe snap.

**Daniel Gee:** October 18th, 2021

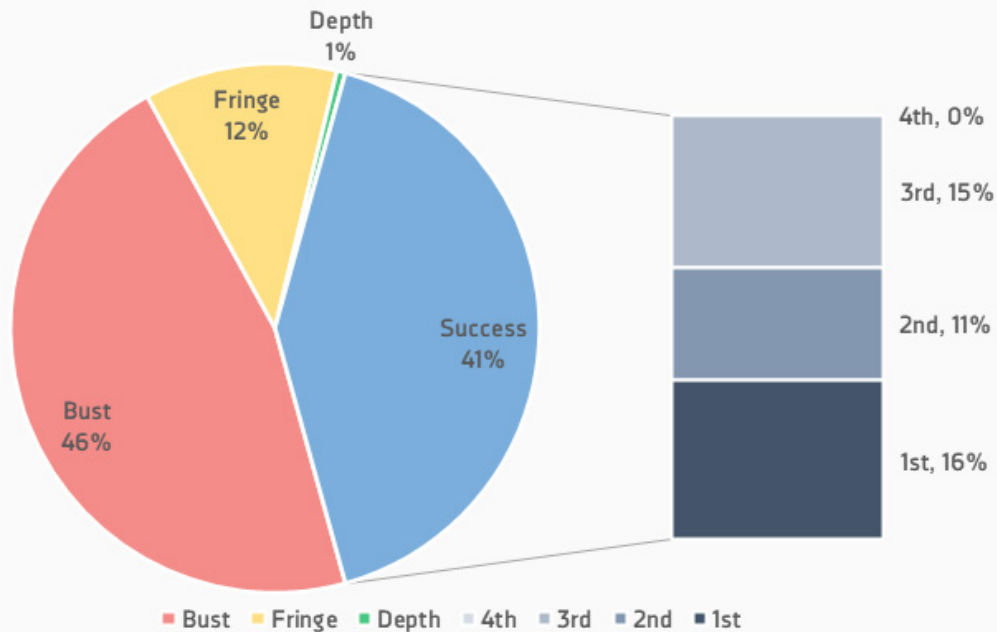
Victoria Royals vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Thornton played a very rushed game against Victoria, struggling more than what I have seen over the past month. He was much more mistake prone leading to some nuclear plays, but he was impactful as ever.

Thornton faced a ton of shorthand and sustained pressure minutes in this game. Still showing projectable habits; shoulder peaks on retrievals, establish body positioning down low, escapability, quick processing, active and probing stick checkers clogging lanes, and stick-in release stops. Puck battles were always seemingly focused in his corner and he won the vast majority of them, regaining possession. Transitional stops were still a highlight of his game. Multiple angle offs limited Victoria's Schuurman from doing damage on the inside. Was beat on one manipulation play in the neutral zone, biting hard and giving up the inside lane. Actions out of retrievals were the issue tonight. Lacked scanning habits and rushed breakout passes. The most egregious error came in the first; After rejecting a rush down the RW, Thornton threw the puck directly into the slot trying to hit a breaking

## Hudson Thornton 2021-22 WHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



out Cougars forward -- the pass was intercepted leading to a high danger break for Victoria. He had another outlet picked off, struggling to get in motion while passing. It led to full breakdown and collapse that had Kmec and Thronton collapsed deep to their net, resulting in a goal against.

Offensively, Thornton was pretty strong. Other than the execution errors on outlets, he had a wonderful three-line carry, showing some projectable large-ice maneuverability, blending a shot in the high slot -- individualistic but good to see him leveraging his tools. Thornton also had a couple of standout offensive zone shifts. Takes purposeful shots aimed to create rebounds. Strong weight-transfer mechanics on a one-timer in the first. If this was the only game you have seen of Thronton you would probably think he's pretty volatile as a player.

**Daniel Gee:** October 17th, 2021

Victoria Royals vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Another day, another monster game for Hudson Thornton, who was one of the more dynamic players on the ice for both Prince George and Victoria.

Thornton's a gamer in every sense of the word. Defensively, he was uber involved, impactful, and executed multiple stops. While defending the transition, Thornton was once again a stout protector of the inside lane. Even in scenarios where he picked up driving threats late, he fought hard to maintain a consistent gap, probe with his stick, and limit shots by disrupting his opponents releases. Aggressive on the blueline within measure, he activated perfectly on a sequence in the second to reject an inside move that his partner was beat on.

Supporting habits are immense, and I don't think he allowed any dotted-line activations on Victoria strong-side activations. In sustained scenarios, he was bombarded early with constant penalty kill shifts. On a 5-on-3, he clogged lanes extremely well, jumping around proactively as Victoria tried to collapse Prince George's formation. He made a wonderful read on Schuurman cross-ice pass, tying up a tip threat in front as the puck flew through the crease. In general Thronton was proactive, constantly dropping to a knee to block lanes, and again deflected numerous shots high with his great stick work. As shift lengths expanded, processing issues do appear -- he becomes very fixated on puck carriers, losing proactiveness; it can lead to some high-danger chances against.

Thornton had a command of his game offensively. He was always in motion, activating constantly off the left-point. On one shift he actually jumped off the bench onto a loose puck, shot on the perimeter and ultimately ended up taking the puck into the crease creating a tonne of chaos. He attempted multiple sharp angle shots, creating massive rebounds. Thornton's distribution was also impressive. With 4 minutes left to play, and some sustained cycling, Thornton made a perfect pass to Kmec from the near boards, which resulted in a shot and a Heidt GWG. He was executing one touches, give-and-go activations, and generally pushing a lot of stress on Victoria's defenders. Even in transitional sequences, he was leading rushes, making in-motion passes, and setting up drop-off passing plays. Ended the game with two assists.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 8th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs. Vancouver Giants - WHL

Really strong start to the game but faded as it wore on. Still, Thornton has my attention. He stands out for his activation. He joins the rush like crazy on a very passive team. He's rarely just standing on the point, preferring to activate down the weak side, step in as close to the net as he reasonably can, and tries to manipulate defenders to create lanes. His feel for the puck needs some work, but he understands how to combine weight shifts, eye deception, and shot fakes to freeze defenders and go the other way. In one sequence, he used that activation to set up a chance with a backhand pass into the slot. As the game wore on, he activated less. He also became more turnover-prone, shoulder-checked less on retrievals, and grew more passive in his DZ coverage. Steady footwork while defending the rush, angles attackers wide, and was only beat on a high-level dot lane-crossing rush. Not a big deal. He's quite physical, drives play up and away from his net, and has legit defensive timing ability. Powerful skater but lacks some depth. Puck skills are probably closer to average than above it, but he's an intelligent player who wants to be in the middle of the play. Looked like a top-two rounds pick in this game, if not a late-first.

**Cam Robison:** October 2nd, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

A standout showing from the 17 year old. He looks every bit the part of a top-60 draft pick with his intelligent reads and anticipation. Defensively, he was stout in this one. His gap was tight and he used his stick well to disrupt the rush attempts. What really stood out was his footwork. He was balanced and comfortable in mirroring the oncoming forwards attack routes and was quick to expose a weakness and take the puck away. When set up inzone in the defensive end, he was constantly tracking the play and watching his six. He recognizes threats building quickly and gets his body and stick into lanes to mitigate them.

His shorthanded goal in the second period was the full meal deal. He extinguished the rush and forced the forward to bank around the boards; he popped into the slot, tied up a stick, cleared it out of the homeplate area, then jumped on it and forced it to the flank. He jumped into the rush and turned it into a 3-on-1. His stride was on full display and he opened his hips and showed his flexibility to stay onside and keep his eyes on the puck. The finish was fine too.

Its early in the year, but this kid could have the juice to be a top round pick.

**Daniel Gee:** October 2nd, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Damn, Thornton was good in this game -- easily the best defender on the Cougars this game. His skill and ability to impose himself on a given game have undoubtedly grown over the offseason.

The translatable habits were plentiful and impactful all night for Thornton, who checked numerous boxes that indicate he will have success at higher levels. While defending transitional attacks, Thornton's lateral mobility translated into great gap control, making him practically unbeatable for Kamloops attackers. His feet become incredibly steady as attackers draw near, he timed stick checking activations perfectly, stepped up aggressively to eliminate room on the side boards, and constantly mirrored footwork to keep attacks to the outside. Even when defending on the weak side of attacks, Thornton was impactful. In the first, after numerous headchecks, he shifted to defend the slot, dropping to a knee to stop a cross-ice pass. A similar play occurred in the third, after missing a pokecheck he reacted extremely fast to clog the lane, again blocking the lateral facilitation.

Probably his best sequence of the game was born out of great defending. While penalty killing, an early scan allowed Thornton to deflect a pass, unable to clear the puck completely. He shifted to the slot, reading the danger to clog the high-danger Kamloops chance and speared the puck forward to start a break. Thornton joined the 3-on-2 rush, drifting to the left-wing, deflecting a puck in the net. These scanning into blocking plays were patterned throughout this game. His sustained defending, in general, was also impressive. Always activating to fill soft areas of coverages, covering lanes, and scanning. He had a pretty major defensive breakdown late in the game -- defending the net front, he got caught puck watching behind the goal line, not activating on an open crease threat --ended up being the GWG, but it was honestly his only mistake of the game.

On top of the shorthanded rush goal Thornton had in the second, he had a couple of assists. One was born from a breakout that Heidt eventually redirected, and the other was a point pass to Hooker who scored off the right-hand circle. His transitional passing is great; hard, accurate, proper selection, backhand facilitations, board-banks -- good stuff. Sustained habits are even better -- constantly drags pucks to the middle of the dotted lines, incorporates a handling blend to freeze defenders, and has an NHL average shot that constantly is facilitated through open seams. He has catch-and-release skill, scans and activates into pinch plays, attempts to drag and shoot around defenders. Love the habits. Above-average sense with average tools.

**Daniel Gee:** April 10th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Vancouver Giants - WHL

Hudson Thornton had an interesting game, flashing some translatable and non-translatable habits defensively against the Vancouver Giants.

Under sustained defensive zone pressure, Thornton profiles as a proactive lane clogger, who has the ability to rotate off of threats and re-focus his attention on other secondary off-puck opponents. Identification of high-danger threats was excellent in this game for Thornton -- multiple times, both in the first and third period, he was able to rotate off of transnational threats, getting his stick into the release, mitigating a couple of hashmark shots. Where Thornton is less proficient is defending on the transition. While he is willing to activate aggressively on his own blueline, Thornton rarely angles or guides attackers to the end boards. He heavily relies on backchecking pressure to do that work, while he defends the centre lane at all costs. This creates too many controlled entries and allows better attackers more leeway in creating off the perimeter. Some habits are good; Thornton rarely is beat through manipulation, keeping his feet mobile, but steady when facing on-puck attackers. His stick work, particularly his ability to intercept and knock pucks off of defenders is also fairly developed. Thornton can also mirror foot work pretty well, further preventing manipulation drives to the interior.

There is some projectability concern with Thornton's retrievals. In general, Thornton's skating limits him in one-on-one puck retrieval races. In this game, he relied on his goaltender and defensive partner to do heavy lifting on his

end boards. (He collapses at the hips and has a static upper body, but possesses proper knee bend and shin angle -- can't activate an extra gear) As the match progressed, Thornton had more retrieval opportunities and did some interesting things. He attacks the puck at an angle, able to shift his boots rapidly in small-space to execute cut backs, pivots, and deceptive back passes against the grain. There's room to grow and add more skill here, and the habits are there.

Out of his retrievals, and into breakouts, Thornton put together a successful transitional performance. He completed a plethora of two-line breakouts, almost always in the mohawk -- a habit that allows him to scan while delaying (will have to be quicker at higher levels). He constantly activated on the weak side, adding himself into odd-man rushes. He scored a goal, activating up the near boards on a change, attacking into the Giants' zone with built up speed, shooting off the left-hand circle (arms unlocked, snap-release, exploited goaltender aggressiveness and picked the right corner). His controlled entries were limited but his unlocked right arm allowed for some maneuverability. In sustained offensive situations, Thornton again showed positive shooting mechanics -- particularly on one-timed attempts. He can leverage power through a dropped knee and can actually place the puck deftly. He almost scored on a 5-hole one-timer on a powerplay. He had an interesting drag to the middle of the point play in the third, working a give-and-go into another one-time shot. Some questionable pinch plays -- might have been systems. All-in-all, a player who has a strong base to build upon going into his draft year.



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**"If Thornton can learn to play up to his ability, he could be found-gold for a team. If he remains stagnant, a bottom-pairing projection isn't out of the question for the slightly undersized defender."**



81  
Rank

4  
Skating

4.5  
Shooting

6  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

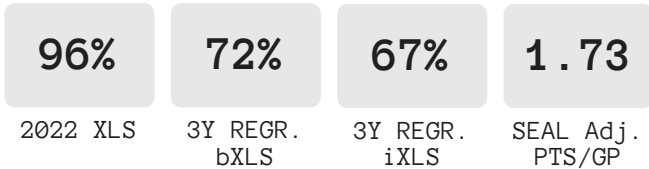
6  
Hockey Sense

4  
Physical

# JORDAN DUMAIS

RW | HALIFAX MOOSEHEADS

HEIGHT 5'9" D.O.B. APR. 15, 2004  
WEIGHT 165 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	68	39	70	109

## Scouting Report

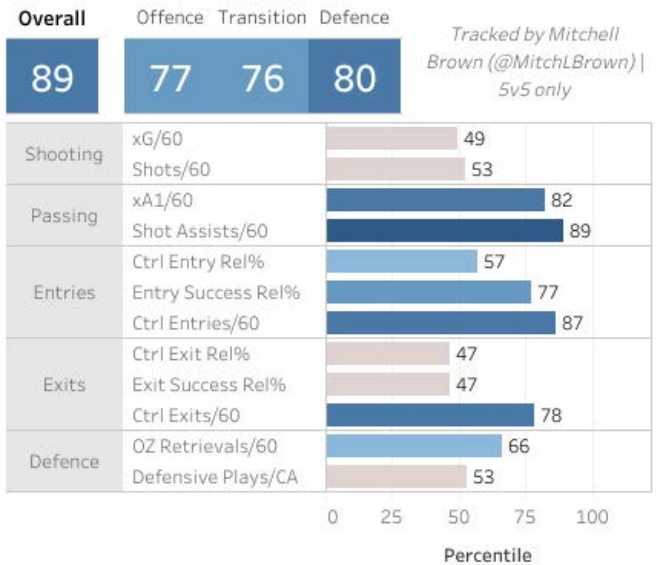
Few players in this draft matched the evaluative conundrum that Jordan Dumais presented to our staff. There was such a stark contrast between his skills projection and the numbers; the tools at his disposal and the 109 points that he amassed in 68 contests.

The one part of his profile that was never in doubt was Dumais' on-ice intelligence. His understanding of the game earned him a high grade for his hockey sense. The Mooseheads winger anticipates the rotations of the puck and the opening of space in the offensive zone like it's second-nature to him. He moves ahead of them and knows his next play before the puck has arrived on his stick. You'll even see the odd flash of manipulative ability to open up gaps in their coverage and passing or shooting lanes.

Unfortunately, Dumais' tools lag far behind his ability to read the game. Many of the physical skills necessary to thrive in the NHL's fast-paced environment simply aren't there. His skating, physicality, and shot all earned below-average grades on our 1-to-9 linear scale. The skating stride, in particular, represents a significant obstacle to a clear NHL projection.

"The hockey sense is still above-average for me, maybe a 6, maybe a 6.5; he understands the playmaking game and anticipates how plays will unfold, but he has developed so many patterns that won't translate to the NHL," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in an April game report.

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 132.4



"I'm not sure what to think of him still and we're at the end of the season. The production and sense will get him on our board but I will have a hard time arguing him over others."

The draft analytics that we often rely on as part of our analysis rate Dumais exceptionally well – the second-best three-year regressed pGPS in the class, and among the best single-year outputs for last season – but we remain skeptical. There just aren't many 5-foot-9 wingers with significant mobility issues that manage to carve out long, productive NHL careers.

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

Halifax Mooseheads vs. Mocton Wildcats- QMJHL

I mostly saw the flaws in this performance, the lack of physical skills, separation ability, physical engagement, and the occasion low-percentage play. Dumais is severely limited as an NHL prospect. The hockey sense is still above-average for me, maybe a 6, maybe a 6.5; he understands the play-making game and anticipates how plays will unfold, but he has developed so many patterns that won't translate to the NHL...I'm not sure what to think of him still and we're at the end of the season. The production and sense will get him on our board but I will have a hard time arguing him over others.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Baie-Comeau Drakkar vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Dumais had five points in this game, but it was a largely inefficient performance. The more consistent issue was his playmaking. He tried many advanced plays, showing an understanding of space, play creation, and awareness of options behind defenders. But he didn't deceive (except in one sequence). He turned his feet, body, and eyes towards the recipient, waited, and then passed into a now-closed lane.

In transition, he's either an inefficient playmaker or straight-line puck carrier who loses just as many races as he wins. Needs to cutback to find the trailer more often. Game looks like one built for junior success, but not NHL success. Question is where the off-puck intelligence and playmaking will allow him to develop new patterns as he gets stronger and faster.

### Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Pierre-Marc Bouchard<br/>YEAR: 2002<br/>SIMILARITY: 90%</p> | <p>2 Jonathan Drouin<br/>YEAR: 2013<br/>SIMILARITY: 89%</p>    |
| <p>3 Nathan MacKinnon<br/>YEAR: 2013<br/>SIMILARITY: 86%</p>     | <p>4 Jonathan Huberdeau<br/>YEAR: 2011<br/>SIMILARITY: 83%</p> |
| <p>5 Claude Giroux<br/>YEAR: 2006<br/>SIMILARITY: 75%</p>        | <p>6 Francois Bouchard<br/>YEAR: 2006<br/>SIMILARITY: 73%</p>  |
| <p>7 Ales Hemsky<br/>YEAR: 2001<br/>SIMILARITY: 70%</p>          |  |

**David St-Louis:** March 18th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Dumais is a very deceptive passer, who sees plays ahead of time. The hockey sense still grades above-average, but there a ton of non-projectable patterns in his game, like his tendency to throw pucks on net from the periphery. They are caused by his lack of elusiveness; he can't escape pressure to create. Plays have to be there for him. The defensive engagement is poor, but the defensive skills are there, to an extent, the scanning and the interceptions. It's just that Dumais isn't always interested in coming down low. Overall, I see him as a forward you slot between 64-96 and pick because of the



© UPSTATE - William Rondeau

## Jordan Dumais 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 7 || Base XLS: 96% || Impact XLS: 96% || XPR: 69.3 || Drafted Pct: 100%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



intelligence and the passing skills and hope that he wants to re-work parts of his game, especially his skating.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 10th, 2022

Sherbrooke Phoenix vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

The more I watch Dumais, the more I see this season as the perfect storm. I just haven't seen a ton of skill from him. He dekes people (sometimes), makes crafty passes under pressure (sometimes), and finds space in the slot for scoring chances (sometimes). He's clearly an intelligent player, shown by the way he supports the play, finds opportunities to cut inside, and changes lanes with his attacks frequently. But he still runs himself into defenders with no ability to escape, he doesn't consistently manipulate defenders, and he's not making perfectly timed reads into space. Not sure what to make of him.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Moncton Wildcats vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Dumais looks like the classic junior scorer, trying outrance defenders along the boards, relying too heavily on his handling skill, and an ability to make plays off the boards. But there are moments where he looks like a projectable scorer. He'll delay, wait for the trailer, then pass. Under heavy pres-

sure, he'll find teammates on the other side of the defender. And he consistently gets open in all three zones. He's not just identifying space, he timing moves into it, scanning before getting the puck, and adjusting his route and speed constantly. Dumais has the skills to play in the NHL with skating as a weakness. More consistent deception will help. But the key will upping the frequency of projectable plays while cutting down on the reliance on junior patterns (that already hamper his game a bit).

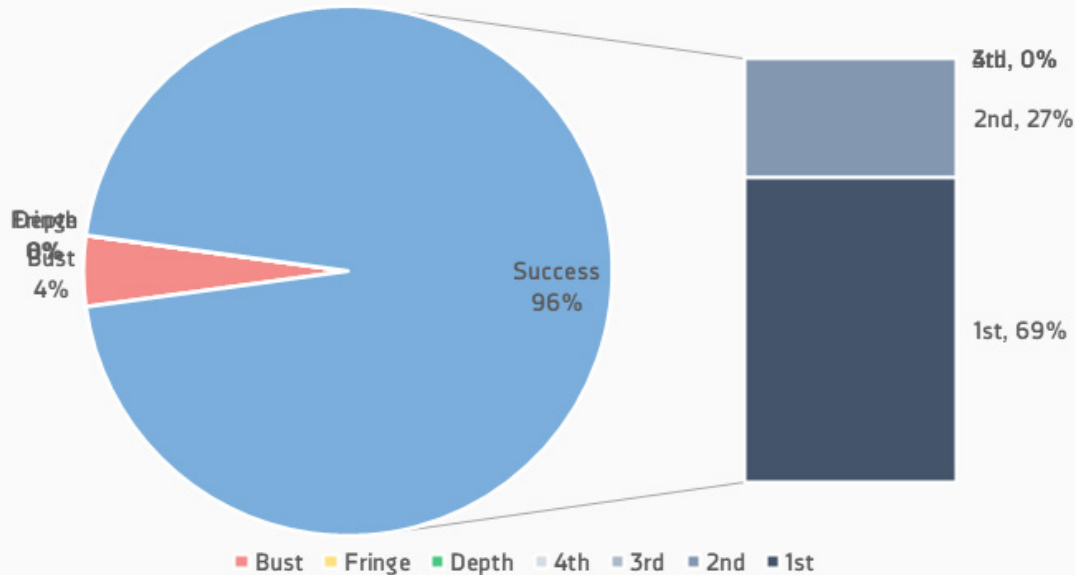
**David St-Louis:** February 22nd, 2022

Charlottetown Islanders vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Dumais is smart. He moves ahead of the play, builds possession sequences, is patient when needed, fast when needed (in his puck movement), scans for next play, anticipates, reads through multiple options, doesn't force passes...The passing and handling are his best tools, the skating is below-average, and I'm not sure he's much of a shooter. He really needs to add speed to his game if he wants to become an NHLer, but the hockey sense will keep me watching. The Mark Stone comparison fits, but Stone is way more manipulative and even better defensively and, well, not 5'9". We'll see.

## Jordan Dumais 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**David St-Louis:** February 21st, 2022

Moncton Wildcats vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Dumais hangs around the net. I'd like to see him drive there based on the flow of the play. It's the way he will score in the pros, because his shot is....not great. Bad mechanics, bad release point, can't fire in movement...Dumais makes an impact in transition through his passing -- fast and clean breakouts from the wall because of his awareness and positioning. He tries to engage physically, but is too light to really win those engagements. He's also an above-average defensive player at this level. He moves ahead of the play on backchecks, steals pucks from behind... Again, limited skill, but the hockey sense is interesting.

**David St-Louis:** February 15th, 2022

Moncton Wildcats vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

A very quiet performance from Dumais apart from setting up the game-winner. His skill still look below-average (in projection), a long stick that allows him to make some plays defensively but just limit his handling offensively. He's hyper reliant on teammates to create advantages for him, even dumping the puck in corners when under pressure to force teammates to race for it instead of trying himself to manipulate that pressure. His passing is his best ability. And maybe his positioning. He's above-average in terms of understanding of the game at this level, but I don't really like most of his projection.

**David St-Louis:** February 8th, 2022

Rimouski Oceanic vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

The skating is a giant limiter of Dumais's game, especially in possession. Stance totally upright, like he's falling forward with each, straight-to-the-back pushes. It's a 4 skating. A mechanically flawed stride that doesn't have a high rate either. The puck stealing is still there and he manages to turn those steals into offence. He supports plays and passes effectively and cleverly in tight spaces...Not sure if it's enough.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2021

Moncton Wildcats vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Dumais reminds me of Mark Stone. It's strictly a style comparison as the effectiveness is far from the same. He manipulates defenders with movements and passes, moves puck into space, builds possession, steals puck with stick lifts... He understands the game at a higher level than all of his teammates, especially in his off-puck movements. He uses the blind spots of defenders. He plans first touches (dangles instantly or passes instantly). His skating projects as below average (4-4.5) and his handling is impaired by his long stick. Not sure the hockey sense will be enough to make him a legitimate prospect, but that quality plus his high-end production makes him hard to fully ignore.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 9th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Dumais led this game in shot contributions at 5-on-5, but I'm not sure a single play was notable. It was all simple plays: mid-range shots and easy passes to teammates who stepped



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# The one part of his profile that was never in doubt was Dumais' on-ice intelligence. His understanding of the game earned him a high grade for his hockey sense. The Mooseheads winger anticipates the rotations of the puck and the opening of space in the offensive zone like it's second-nature to him.

into space. He wasn't manufacturing runways with pace and deception. Just an effective link on his line. Gave up on a couple plays on the backcheck. Mostly just plants his feet and waits in the defensive end for opportunity to sprint at a shooter. Skating's average, at best. Lacks ankle flexion and hip engagement. Strides are short and crossovers has limited push off. Didn't exactly look like a draft pick in this game.

**Cam Robinson:** December 9th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Fairly pedestrian showing from Dumais in this one. He was lackadaisical on the backcheck and off puck in the DZ, but came to life when he had some space to transport it and make plays in transition. He's creative with the puck and has a knack for soft passes and touches. Had a secondary helper but nothing noteworthy. His shot was weak when he used it and the slow buildup made for easy blocks.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 5th, 2021

Halifax Mooseheads vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Dumais kept skating into pressure and losing the puck because he was so dependent on his hands. It worked in one sequence, but resulted in a bunch of missed opportunities and turnovers. Doesn't handle in motion or set up his moves on an angle. He's best when making quick touches and getting open off-puck.

His best sequence was a retrieval that he immediately spun into the slot for a chance. Involved defensively in the game, albeit not consistently. Pressure on the backcheck and anticipating passes on the forecheck drove most of his value, although he supported down low when necessary. The skating lacks ankle flexion, counteracted by a collapse at the

hip. Didn't see many NHL qualities in this outing.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 21st, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Dumais is a quiet player. He's content to move the puck early and hunt for space. It often never comes back. But when it does, he shows a ton of interesting elements. In this game, he dangled across the front of defenders, before starting give-and-gos. His best play was a forehand-backhand move to access a tiny passing lane between two defenders for a chance. All of these best reads come immediately after receiving the puck, where he combines intelligent off-puck positioning. Lots of short support reads. The tools are the big concern. Always on his heels when skating, and prefers to be in the glide to make plays. Need to watch more.

**David St-Louis:** April 2nd, 2021

Halifax Mooseheads vs. Cape Breton Eagles - QMJHL

A good playmaking game from Dumais who is growing on me. He can look through options, find the best one, and his off-puck game was on point, too, cutting to the slot and inside space at the right time to become an option. He also crashed the net when necessary. His tool look average, apart from his passing ability. That will have him fall.

**David St-Louis:** March 14th, 2021

Halifax Mooseheads vs. Charlottetown Islanders - QMJHL

Dumais didn't do a whole lot this game. He played on the top-line but was barely involved in the play. He lacks creativity, but can somewhat hold on to the puck under pressure and connect plays. He ran the right systemic routes. Nothing exciting to show.



82  
Rank

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

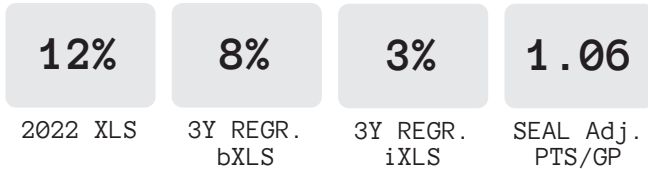
5.5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

# OWEN VAN STEENSEL

LW | NORTH BAY BATTALION

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. AUG. 4, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	66	10	24	34

## Scouting Report

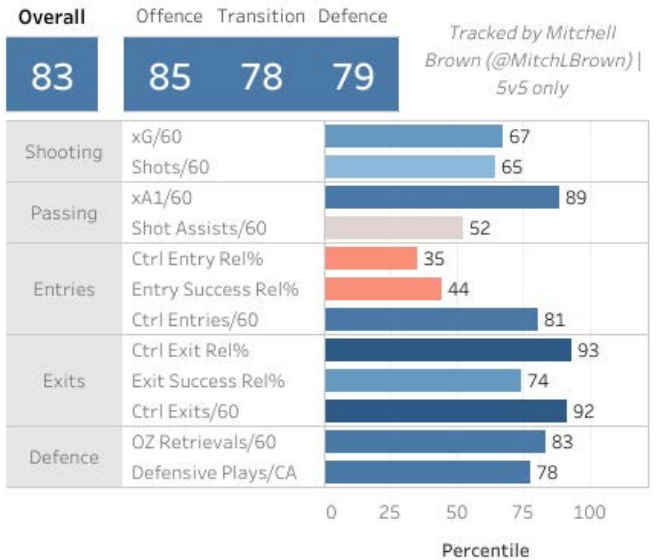
Through the first 34 games, Owen Van Steensel recorded just six points, but he wasn't off to a slow start. He was creating chances, bringing defensive value, and even showing high-end flashes of skill. Eventually, he was rewarded with points, and now he looks like a potential late-round steal.

The base of Van Steensel's game is his off-puck play. "He stole pucks on the forecheck, ripped away possession on the backcheck, eliminated threats down low, sprinted to cut off the top without overcommitting, and intercepted passes," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote. "Consistently open in the slot, often positioning himself between defenders and moving his feet to stay a passing option."

From there, the flashes of skill take over. Van Steensel uses a near-complete arsenal of passes - backhand, slip, and saucer - to access teammates in high-value areas. An adaptable attacker, he's capable of turning a scoring chance into a tap-in with a tricky pass through a defender. And he's a projectable NHL shooter despite mechanical quirks, turning tricky passes into powerful curl-and-drag wristers in one motion.

While Van Steensel makes plenty of small-area passes to push play forward, he's not an impactful transition puck-carrier. "He's not changing directions or making defenders move their feet - he passes right into them," Brown wrote in

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 111.6



a late-season game report. These simplistic rush patterns were the direct cause of many of Van Steensel's worst performances of the season.

Van Steensel's too skilled and too intelligent to not start finding the back of the net soon. However, to improve his NHL odds, he'll need to continue to develop his mechanical base, while diversifying his rush patterns. A cutback and delay game in transition will help. If he makes it, he could become a third or fourth liner.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Hunter Tremblay YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 98%	2 Josh Sterk YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 97%	3 Greg Jacina YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 97%	4 Daniel Borges YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 97%	5 Peter Holland YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 97%
6 Kris Newbury YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 97%	7 Justin Taylor YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 96%	8 Sam Povorozniouk YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 96%	9 Matt Caria YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 96%	10 John Vigilante YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 96%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 25th, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

A generic checking performance from Van Steensel. The odd clever play, but he mostly forcing dump-ins and getting smushed along the boards. He's not changing directions or making defenders move their feet - he plays right into them. Still, he makes slick passes in transition to the inside and once he's in the middle, he draws defenders towards him before kicking the puck out the flanks. I didn't see anything that would suggest a draft pick in this game alone, but my thoughts on him are well-established. Potential fourth-liner with a bit of upward mobility because he rip it and has flashes of 6-to-6.5 passing.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 17th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

Van Steensel showed beginnings of a delay game tonight, and it was the best his transition game looked. He stopped after gaining the zone, pressed the middle, and tried for the trailer. Many skills on display, from a deceptive cross-slot pass to one of the best saucer passes I've seen for a goal. Hit a pass through a defender from behind the net without breaking stride. Off-puck game remains impressive. He supports, anticipates, and eliminates options. In the offensive zone, he's always getting open between checks. Times his movements into space. Highly adaptable. When one plays closes, he already knows his next option and executes. The flashes of skill are just flashes. It's hard to project just how high the skill level actually is as a result. But there's no doubt he's an above-average thinker. Likely a bottom-six guy but could play a third-line effective if the tools improve.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Van Steensel didn't accomplish much for lengthy stretches of this game. The mechanics are average, at best. And he gets stuck in straight-line rushes, only exacerbating his limitations. Sometimes, he's too eager to pull the trigger in transition. Delaying or cutting back would benefit his game. But there aren't many OHLers who make the passes he does.

He grabbed an assist by kicking a puck to himself and passing out of a point-blank chance for a tap-in. Another saw him look off his target before zipping the puck under the defender's stick. In the offensive end, he's very adaptable - never locked into one play. Shot remains a weapon, complemented with off-puck instincts. And he's a solid, proactive defender who manages space and energy effectively. He's definitely a pick. If he makes it, it's probably as a skilled fourth liner. But there's a bit more upside, too.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

This wasn't a particularly flashy game from Van Steensel, but his work away from the puck continued to stand out. Good work down low on the forecheck, active stick in the defensive zone, good positioning. I want to see him possess the puck more often, because he didn't have it enough in this one. Left a lot to be desired offensively in this one.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Van Steensel was back on the top line and I saw flashes of what could be higher offensive potential when given more of an opportunity, than I'd previously seen before. He was mostly focused on simple, short passes in the offensive zone in this game, but he could've had more than the one assist he did register. His pursuit of pucks on the forecheck and positioning in his own end remained solid - he had a good OZ steal in the slot while killing a penalty but was tackled to the ice in an effort to stop him. His defensive play should make him a mid-late round draft pick, but I don't know if his offensive skills are strong enough.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 25th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

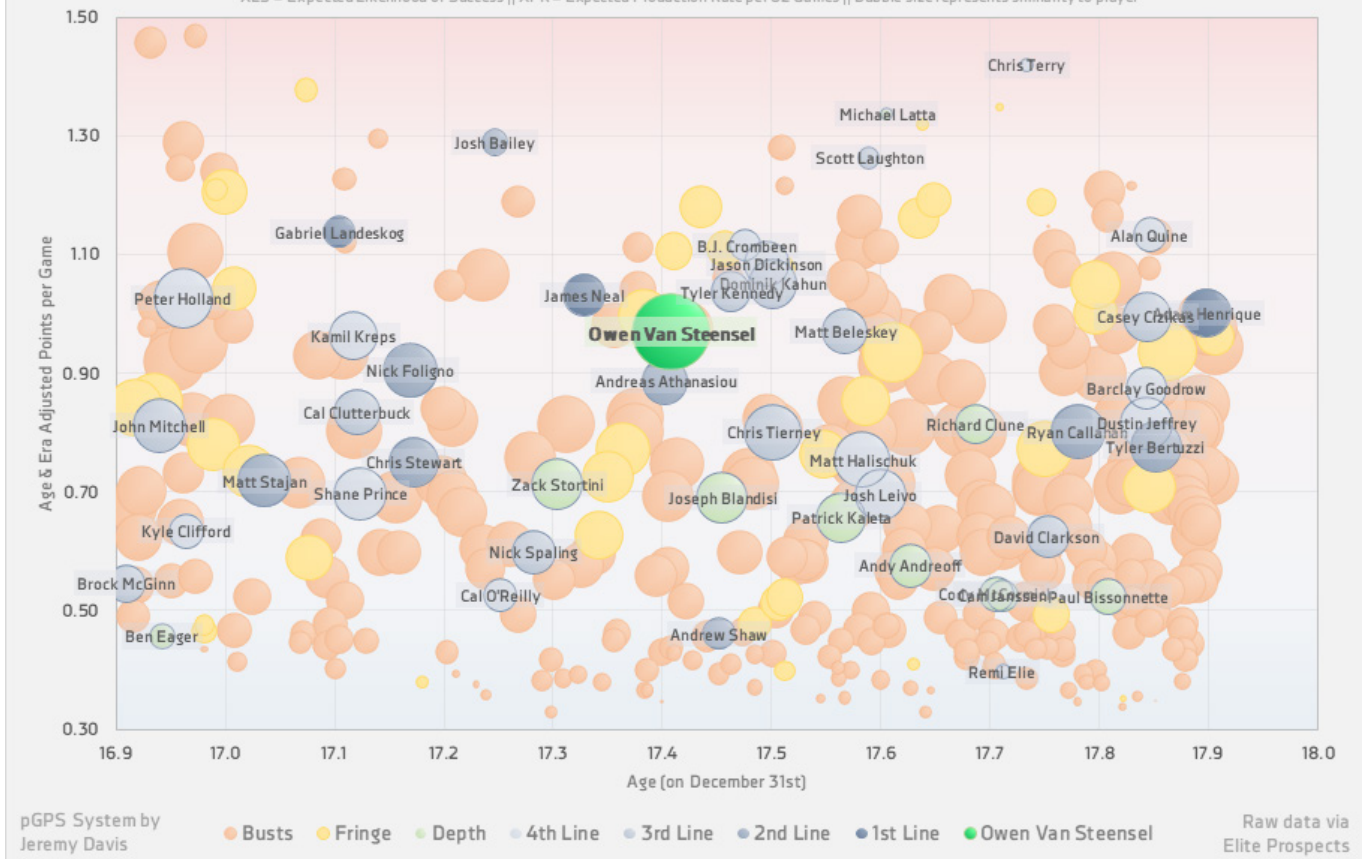
The best draft-eligible in this game by a decent margin. Definitely a lot of NHL potential on display. For one, he was everywhere defensively. He stole pucks on the forecheck, ripped away possession on the backcheck, eliminated threats down low, sprinted to cut off the top without overcommitting,

## Owen Van Steensel 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 358 || Base XLS: 12% || Impact XLS: 4% || XPR: 34.4 || Drafted Pct: 35%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



and intercepted passes. Consistently open in the slot, often positioning himself between defenders and moving his feet to stay a passing option. Scored off a rebound, but had several other looks that probably should've resulted in at least one more goal. Attacked the middle, both by getting inside early and using body positioning to get around defenders. Lots of handling skill on display in this one, but that top hand stays locked in place and he leans on his heels. Still, he's coordinated and creative – that counts for a lot. He won't be able to create offence individually at the NHL level, but already understands how to play off his teammates, get open, initiate give-and-gos, and defend. Doesn't score, but I don't see that as a fault of his own. Definitely a draft pick based on this game, but as an end-of-board type.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Van Steensel filled in for Petrov on the top line this game, but it was one of the quieter viewings I've had of him. He set up Coe for a 2-on-1 scoring chance, and had another look earlier in the game after anticipating a play to the inside. He's too simple with the puck at times – straight lines, no deception, no individual skill or give-and-gos, lacks patience on breakouts. But then he takes a puck off the boards and

passes cross-ice for a clean entry. Consistently gets open in all three zones. He finishes his routes and constantly adjusts to ensure he's an option. But I don't see a ton of high-level off-puck stuff from him. He's a solid forechecker and defensive player, and I've seen more playmaking skill from him. He's also not scoring. Unclear if he has NHL skills.

**Lauren Kelly:** December 17th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Van Steensel was pretty laid back in this game. He got himself to the open areas of the ice, but fanned on a ton of shots in the slot. He worked hard in board battles, but didn't get into the forecheck too often and he just wasn't all that noticeable for most of the game. He made simple plays with the puck but didn't really impact possession one way or another. He made good reads on the penalty kill to turn play over and had some nifty stickhandling in the defensive zone to get out of trouble, but those were really his only notable shifts.

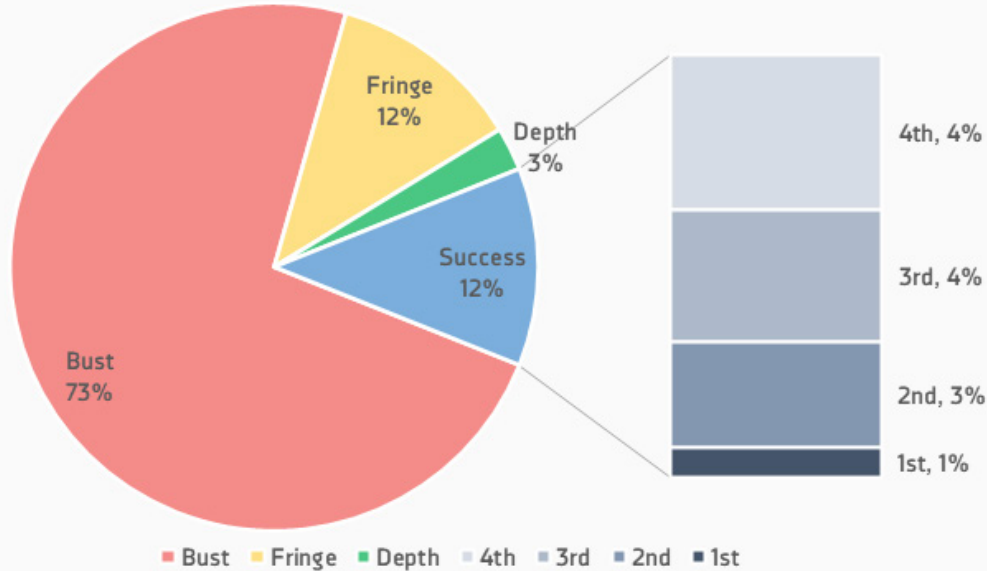
**Mitchell Brown:** November 14th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Van Steensel might've been the best player in this game. He certainly created the most offence at 5-on-5. Required a

## Owen Van Steensel 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



bit of space to set up his shot, but it was a projectable release at moments: hands in front, distance between feet, powering through shot. It's not the most power, but it could get to NHL average. He found space between checks, using engagements around the net to create a bit of space. Work as a playmaker was even better, spotting teammates around a defender and executing quickly. Pesky on the forecheck, combining energy and anticipation to create pucks and steals. I question the hands and skating. He's very basic -- straight line attacks, all strides, and he can't separate. Fails to complete most of his strides with a toe snap and there's a significant heel kick. Ankle flexion is lacking, and he doesn't engage his hips at all. I think he's intelligent enough, but I'm not sure the skills are quite good enough to become a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 23rd, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

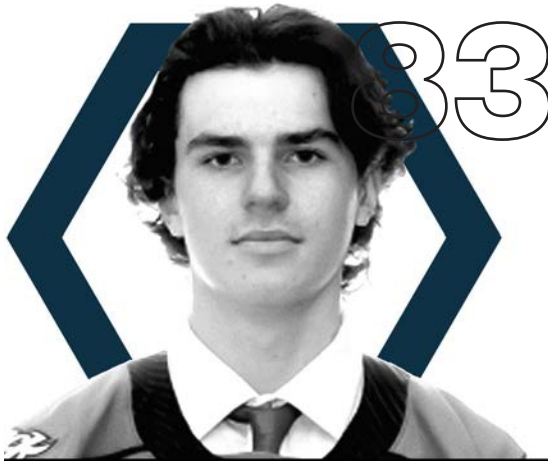
Van Steensel was among the game's best players. The playmaking really popped. He hit a high-end backhand pass around a defender and through another for a teammate lurking on the other side of the slot. Showed small-area passing skill, transition passing skills, and general adaptability

and vision. There was real foresight to his game, completed by unrelenting pressure on the backcheck. Seriously, Van Steensel was disrupting more opposing rushes in the NZ than some of his blueliners. Skating lacks ankle flexion and hip engagement with kicking feet. Loses the odd that he should probably win, but I didn't think it was crippling. Really curious to see how he develops this season. The passing and defence combination looks worthy of a pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 7th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

I liked Van Steensel's play in the season opener. He is very defensively aware and responsible, whether it was being the first to come back and support his defensemen, recognizing open players in his own end and moving to cover them, or sliding back to cover a defenseman who's deep in the offensive zone. Van Steensel also reads plays in the offensive zone well, and gets himself to the right areas to make plays - the puck almost seemed to follow him around in this game. He didn't land on the scoresheet, but fired five shots on goal. He wasn't afraid to take the puck to the net and even stickhandled around a couple of Petes defenders to get there.



83  
Rank

4.5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

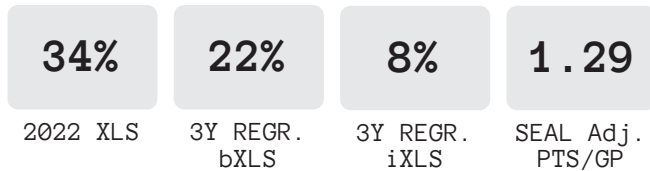
5.5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

# CEDRICK GUINDON

C | OWEN SOUND ATTACK

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. APR. 21, 2004  
WEIGHT 170 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	30	29	59

## Scouting Report

The season started slow for Cedrick Guindon, but once the floodgates burst, he recorded 51 points in 51 games down the stretch. His 59 points and a 0.87 point per game clip both landed third among '04-born OHLers.

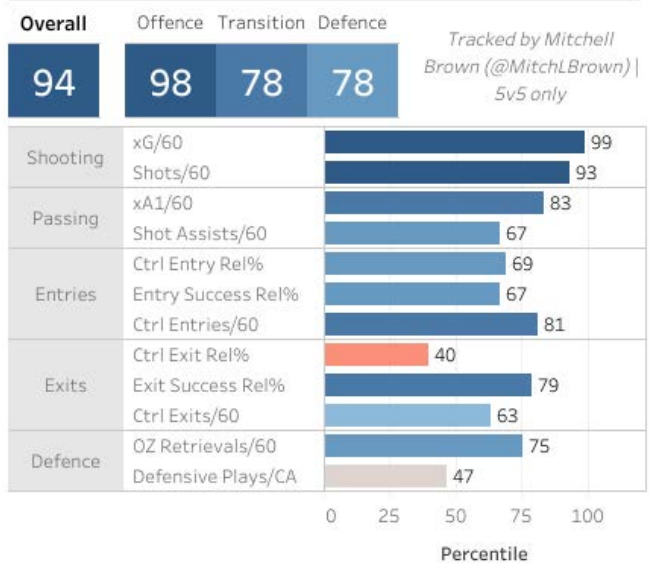
Intelligence, not tools, drives Guindon's game. Without fail, he gets open. In the defensive end, he supports battles and builds speed underneath the puck. In transition, he skates his routes to back off defenders, but also changes his route if a pocket of space emerges. And he offsets any mechanical limitations by playing a give-and-go that emphasizes his off-puck instincts.

From there, Guindon's using his mechanically-sound shot and craftiness to grab the points. "He drives his shooting value through angle changes, off-rhythm releases, and shooting around defenders," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a March game report. "He doesn't settle for low percentage shots, largely because he has weaving rush patterns and alters his speed to increase the distance between himself and the defender."

The intelligence also shines defensively, as OHL scout Lauren Kelly details: "He's a very reliable forechecker, pressuring puck carriers and using his body to pin players up against the boards despite the size disadvantage."

Guindon's playmaking was a point of debate all season long. There are moments where Guindon delays to find

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 126.0



the best play or makes a tricky pass off the boards. But he also tends to force pucks through closed lanes, showing an inability to prolong or create passing lanes. He's not one to use the threat of his shot to pass, either.

The AHL's filled with Guindons - intelligent, skilled prospects without standout tools or manipulation ability. But Guindon's advanced off-puck game and shooting skill gives us optimism that he could carve out a third-line role if he continues along his upward trajectory.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Nikolay Goldobin YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 95%	2 Daniel Garcillo YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 95%	3 Andrew Fritsch YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 95%	4 Zack Torquato YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 95%	5 Petr Kanko YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 95%
6 Alexander Khokhlachev YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 95%	7 Jimmy Lodge YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 95%	8 Aaron Snow YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY: 94%	9 Bo Horvat YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 94%	10 Bryan Cameron YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 94%

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Guindon didn't accomplish much in this game. He hits the brakes in transition to wait for the trailer, and he consistently supports the play. Gets open with timed movements into space. Lacks some adaptability as a passer, forcing pucks through lanes that aren't there. Sometimes, putting the puck on his backhand or pulling it inwards before passing will help access the lane. The shooting mechanics look like an NHL projection, and he has instincts around the slot. But I didn't see the same upside I saw in previous viewings.

**David St-Louis:** April 4th, 2022

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Guindon is another draft eligible player who I feel is rushing every play, playing at a pace faster than his brain can follow. There is some skill there, handling and skating, and he pressures well away from the puck, but he's hard to evaluate because he's not one to hold on to the puck or turn back to find a better offensive looks: He just throws pucks to areas. The size might be a problem at the next level, but I saw some puck protection mechanics. He has been a bit all over the place in the games I saw. I think he's more intelligent away from the puck, timing himself into pockets of space, than with it.

**Lauren Kelly:** March 4th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Guindon has been on a tear lately and he scored four goals in this one. On the first goal, he finished off a pass on the doorstep. The second was a high velocity shot from the top of the circle, and the third was a similar shot but from the point. His fourth was lucky, a weak shot that was deflected in front. He's a very reliable forechecker, pressuring puck carriers and using his body to pin players up against the boards despite the size disadvantage. Delays on the rush and has good hands, but his skating looks a little odd - like he's leaning to avoid pressure but so far that it looks like he might lose balance and fall over. Maybe it was the camera angle, though. I still don't know if he's a certain second rounder, but definitely worth a pick in the mid-rounds.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 2nd, 2022

Kitchener Rangers vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Guindon has a projectable shot, motor, and some details. He's a subtle, but intelligent shooter. The mechanics are solid, but he drives his shooting value through angle changes, off-rhythm releases, and shooting around defenders. He doesn't settle for low percentage shots, largely because he has weaving rush patterns and alters his speed to increase the distance between himself and the defender. Shows some defensive upside through anticipating plays and jumping into the lane. Gets caught on occasion, but his work rate is high and he understands how to manage his speed. The tools are likely average and the playmaking is mostly simple plays. Could be an interesting 60s or 70s candidate.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Guindon showed a bunch of shooting skills. Started the game with a backhand-forehand move (effectively serving as an angle change) and pulled the trigger in-stride. Elevates that elbow. Found space behind defenders for opportunities. He's clearly an NHL shooter, even if the lack of depth through his lower body persists. Everything else is a bit more concerning. He sometimes delays and finds a better option. Others, he manipulates but then traps himself. Mostly, he gets pushed out of the inside and struggles to find a way back in. The playmaking suffers. When he's changing pace and threatening the middle, he looks like a potential first-rounder. He's clearly an intelligent player, but the pace seems to overwhelm him, even though he's the primary puck carrier on his line. Lots of lunging and stationary defensive work, even if he's getting above the puck. Tough projection. I need to watch a lot more.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 10th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Erie Otters - OHL

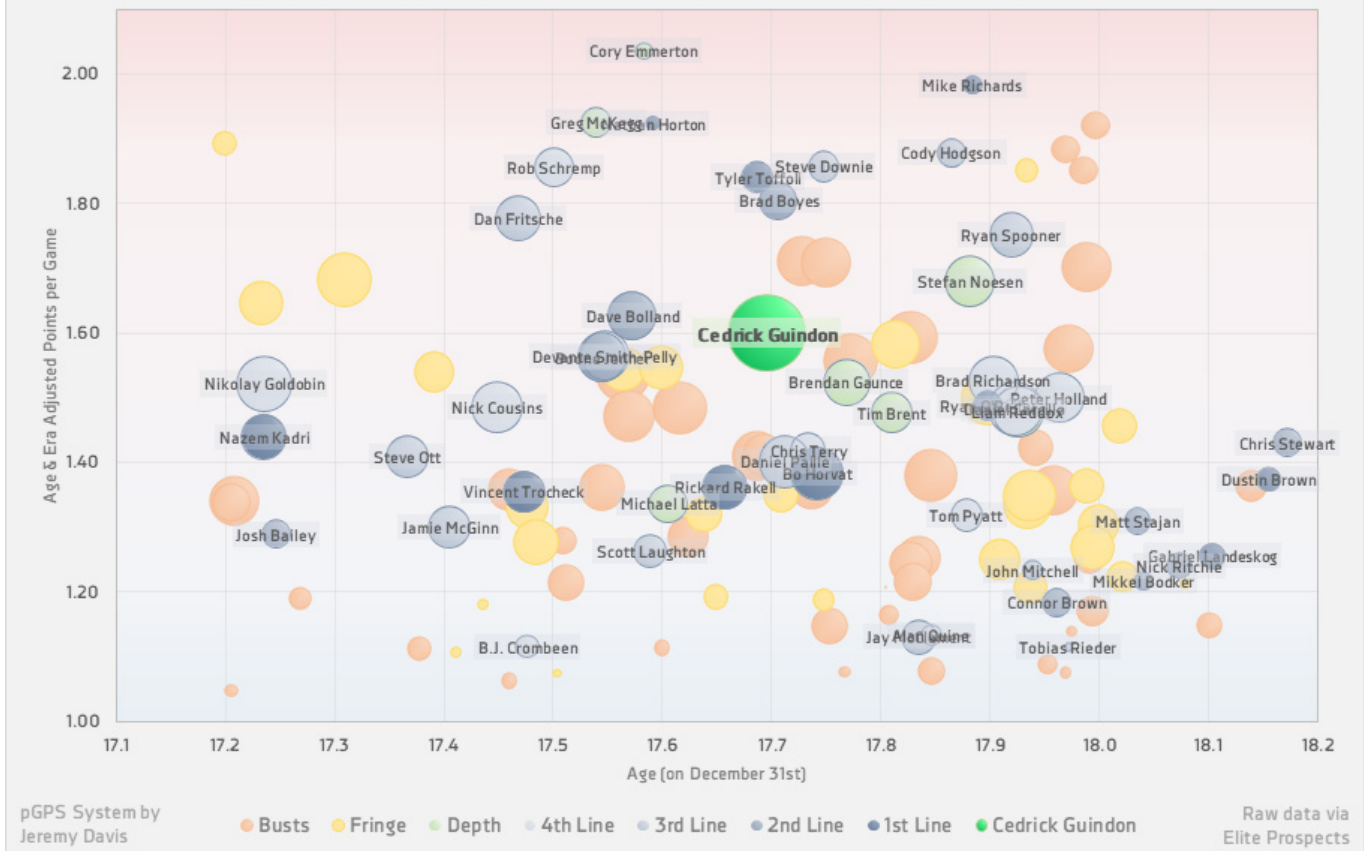
A pair of goals from Guindon in this tough showing for Owen Sound. Both of his goals were wristers of the rush, but in very different ways. The first one, he intercepted a pass, shoulder-checked, then spun a puck into the slot. Got open up the ice, then fired an inside leg wrister off the pass over the goaltender's blocker. For his second, he overpowered a

## Cedrick Guindon 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 122 || Base XLS: 34% || Impact XLS: 13% || XPR: 38.3 || Drafted Pct: 81%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



defender, cut inside, set-up the defender to shot around, then curled the puck as he shifted onto his outside leg, launching the puck past the goaltender's glove. His always sound defensive positioning turned into steals in this game. As usual, made an impact forechecking and on retrievals. He's skilled from those positions, too. He delays, cuts back, or gets the puck inside, but he doesn't force plays either. Hardly an impressive night in transition, apart from the odd clever pass to the inside, exposing some concerns about his skating. Still, he has high crossover use. The tools are average projections, but the intelligence is a grade above it.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 10th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Another two-goal outing for Guindon, but he showed off different ways he can score with his goals. The first one came off him picking off a pass in the offensive zone, the second came off grabbing a loose puck in the neutral zone and overwhelming a defender and firing the puck from the top of the circles. I liked his defensive zone positioning a lot more in this viewing, it was a lot less chaotic and he wasn't out of position nearly as often. Solid on the forecheck and puck retrievals in the OZ, and I'm leaning towards a 6 with

the hockey sense. I still think he's probably a mid-round pick, but there's probably a case to be made for a late second-rounder at most.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 9th, 2022

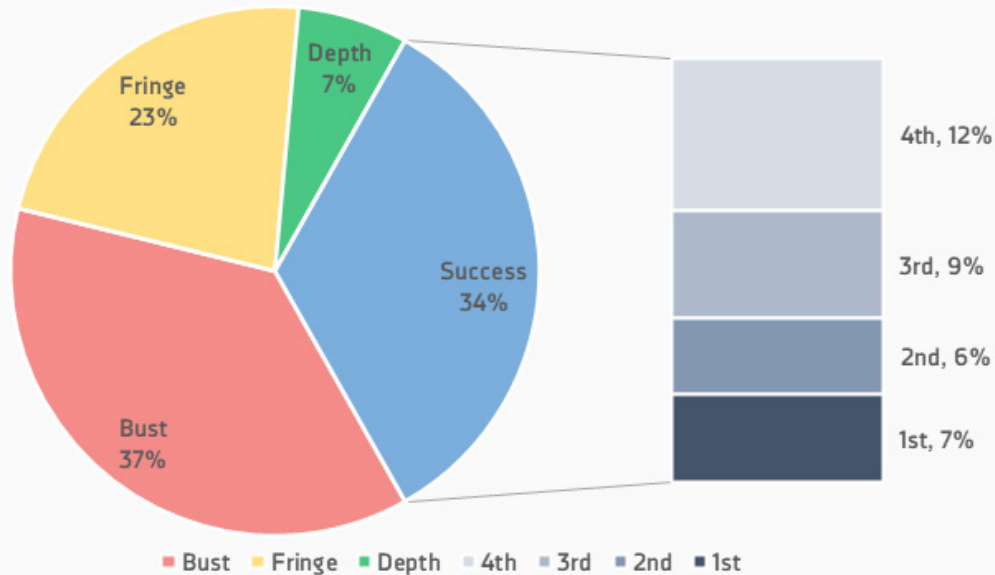
Owen Sound Attack vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Early on I felt Guindon was all over the place in his own end, though I liked his engagement and effort levels. He had a giveaway trying to break the puck out which led to a long shift back in Owen Sound's end and an eventual goal against. I liked his speed and plays with the puck, showing off heads-up clean passes, chipping and chasing the puck into the offensive zone then chasing after it himself, had good hands in tight and played a lot in front of the net. He played well enough in space but he did lose puck possession a couple of times when pressured. Guindon scored twice in this game, the first was a one-timer in the slot and the second where he picked up the puck at the hash marks and fired it past the goalie - there wasn't a lot of flex on the shot and while he got the puck off quickly, there didn't seem to be that much velocity on the release? Seems like a smart player, but I don't know if he's top-64.



## Cedrick Guindon 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Another fantastic showing. Guindon's occasionally let down by his tools, and he's not the most deceptive player, but his intelligence shines every shift. Scored the classic untranslatable net drive goal, sandwiched between two more projectable points. For his second goal, he built speed under the puck, deked to the middle, set up a chance, and then two-touched the rebound into the back of the net. Taking the middle was a consistent theme of this performance. He easily links DZC, off-puck movement, and inside play. Crafty along the along the boards, and then immediately moves to the inside between or behind defenders for the return pass – that led directly to his best set up of the game. Activity level down low consistent presence with a knack for disrupting plays at the right time. The skating's probably an average projection. The shot and handling skill aren't much better, too. But he clearly has a top-nine brain. Perhaps a mid-second.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 20th, 2022


Owen Sound Attack vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Guindon's a bit inefficient, but this was a strong game overall. The bad: forcing bad shots with open teammates, poor timing on his passes into the slot, occasional straight line routes in transition, and inconsistent creativity. The good:

the delay game, the ideas driving his playmaking, the off-puck movement and supporting reads, the defensive engagement and timing, and the willingness to change lanes and attack the middle. Lacks lower body engagement in strides and crossovers, but he's an active skater with an understanding of how to change pace and manipulate. He did it twice in one sequence: delaying in the NZ, handling, baiting the overshoot before changing pace to beat another. Forechecking lead directly to his best pass of the night, a quick pass out of a handle cross-slot. Lots of players turn and shoot or wait; he knew the next play and timed it perfectly. More consistent deception pre-pass will benefit his game greatly. Looked like a late-second, early-third. We'll see how the second-half goes.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Owen Sound's top-two lines just pummeled London all game long, and Guindon was a key part of that. He grabbed a few rebounds and deflections around the net, showing a bit of skill in the traditional net-front role. Follows up his shots and passes quickly to get open and maintain possession. Crafty passing in transition, turning pucks along the boards to teammates building speed up the middle. Didn't see notable puck skills beyond those. Could be an interesting mid-round pick, especially if there's more puck skill here. 



84  
Rank

4  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

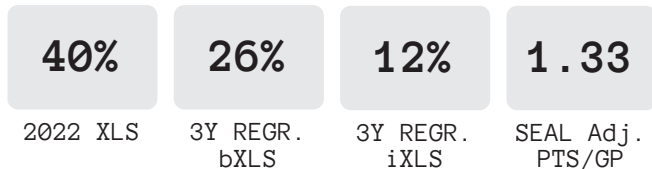
5  
Physical

# LUCA DELBELBELLUZ

C | MISSISSAUGA STEELHEADS

HEIGHT 6'1"  
WEIGHT 179

D.O.B. NOV. 10, 2003  
SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	30	46	76

## Scouting Report

Most goal-scorers are streaky, and Luca Del Bel Belluz is no exception to the rule.

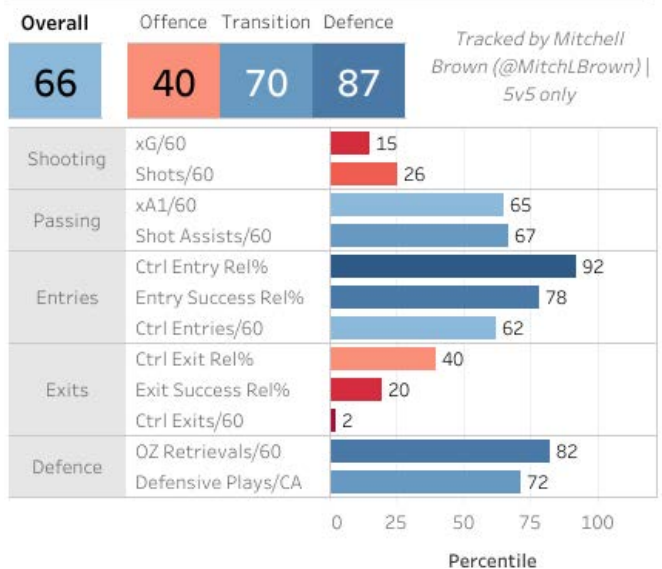
He scored at a torrid pace for most of the season. His 29 markers in the first 53 games positioned himself for a finish inside the top-10 in goal-scoring in the OHL, but then the goals abruptly went away as the calendar turned to March and the games started to become more competitive. Del Bel Belluz only scored twice in his final 25 games of the season, playoffs included.

Despite the long cold streak, Del Bel Belluz's scoring talent is not in doubt for us. We have come to respect his shooting talent, specifically his ability to chain dangles into top-corner bombs from the slot. His release contains both power and precision. He knows how to set it up by attacking pockets of space in high-danger areas.

The issue with Del Bel Belluz's game is one of translatability. His skating and low pace of play, both in terms of movement and speed of decisions, limit his upside. His high-stance striding affects his ability to handle, to spot options, to get to the right spot to create plays, his puck protection... every facet of his game.

"He's clearly an intelligent, creative offensive player," Elite

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 113.2



Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote on April 1st, 2022. "Skating improvement would completely overhaul his game, but (...) few players have overcome skating deficiencies this significant."

Del Bel Belluz has top-six upside, but he will need to work with a talented skating coach to bring out his best at the NHL level.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

DelBelBelluz had one standout play in this game. He at-

tacked the middle, deked around a defender, then cut back when two defenders converged and found the open player. Cutback might be a stretch – it was a turn into a heel-to-

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Freddie Hamilton YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 97%	2 Tom Pyatt YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 97%	3 Tim Brent YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 96%	4 Steven Shipley YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 96%	5 Zack Kassian YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 96%
6 Peter Holland YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 96%	7 Daniel Catenacci YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 96%	8 Martin St-Pierre YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 96%	9 Brendan Gaunce YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 96%	10 Brad Richardson YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 96%

heel pivot. Still a great play, especially because he passed into space to maximize his target's time with the puck in the slot. The skating is messy. He's always on heels. Very limited edges and push-off power. He can't absorb contact or make sharp turns or cuts. This is clearly more than just a strength problem. His anticipation on the forecheck stood out, getting interceptions and dislodging pucks in battles. But he's late to arrive into space, late to identify passing options, and doesn't have the manipulation ability to offset his skating limitations at this level. I know he's scoring, but I still haven't seen anything to suggest a top-100 pick. And I have a pretty good imagination.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 3rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

The goal drought is over! DelBelBelluz picked up the puck in the slot and wired it top shelf for Mississauga's third goal to snap an 11-game goalless drought. But other than that I was not impressed for the rest of this game. He had a turnover breaking the puck out and didn't even cross his own blueline before he lost possession. Lost control of the puck carrying it over the other blueline on another shift. Decent positioning and good stick play shorthanded, and he probably could've scored a couple more goals in this one (was robbed by the goalie early in the first a couple times). His development and long-term projection directly hinges on the team that drafts him, because his skating needs a lot of work and is already holding him back from arriving to space in time and making plays. The skating might not be preventing him from scoring in junior, but it just feels like he's going to struggle more and more to produce as he moves through the next levels of hockey.

**David St-Louis:** April 3rd, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

DelBelBelluz had a really nice sequence where he caught the puck in the slot, took a step to create a firing lane, and launched the puck top-net. His handling skills and his shot are the best part of his game. The rest...I don't know. The skating limits him and the potential of his hands; can't create the speed difference necessary to dangle and the skating recovery is so laborious that it forces his hands to dribble

the puck at the rhythm of his strides. He's late on a few loose puck recovery and about average at reading pockets of space (non preemptive movements and speed adaptation; just movements to the right spots). I don't see a productive NHLer; more of a development project.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

After seven viewings of being confused as to why DelBelBelluz scores so much, I finally had a positive viewing. He demonstrated terrific touch with the puck, deking around defenders with out much issue despite his significant mechanical issues. He times his dekes well and chains together different moves and plays inside his handling skill. He circles back in transition, then attacks downhill with the defence overshooting him. It resulted in a goal, where he looked off his teammate before connecting with the cross-slot pass - a high-skill play. Worked off the boards consistently and with success. In one sequence, he lead a teammate into space with a crafty pass. The issues with his game linger. A lack of depth inhibits his edge control and push off power, which forces the game to run through his handling skill. If he can't beat defenders inside a glide, he has no chance of picking the puck up on the other side. His hands stay close to his body and elbow locked to his side when shooting, limiting his power, release speed, and control over the puck. But he's clearly an intelligent, creative offensive player. Skating improvement with completely overhaul his game. But improving his skating to that level seems insurmountable given how few players have overcome skating deficiencies this significant. Still, I still the top-64 argument now. But not sure I'll be the one making it.

**David St-Louis:** March 25th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

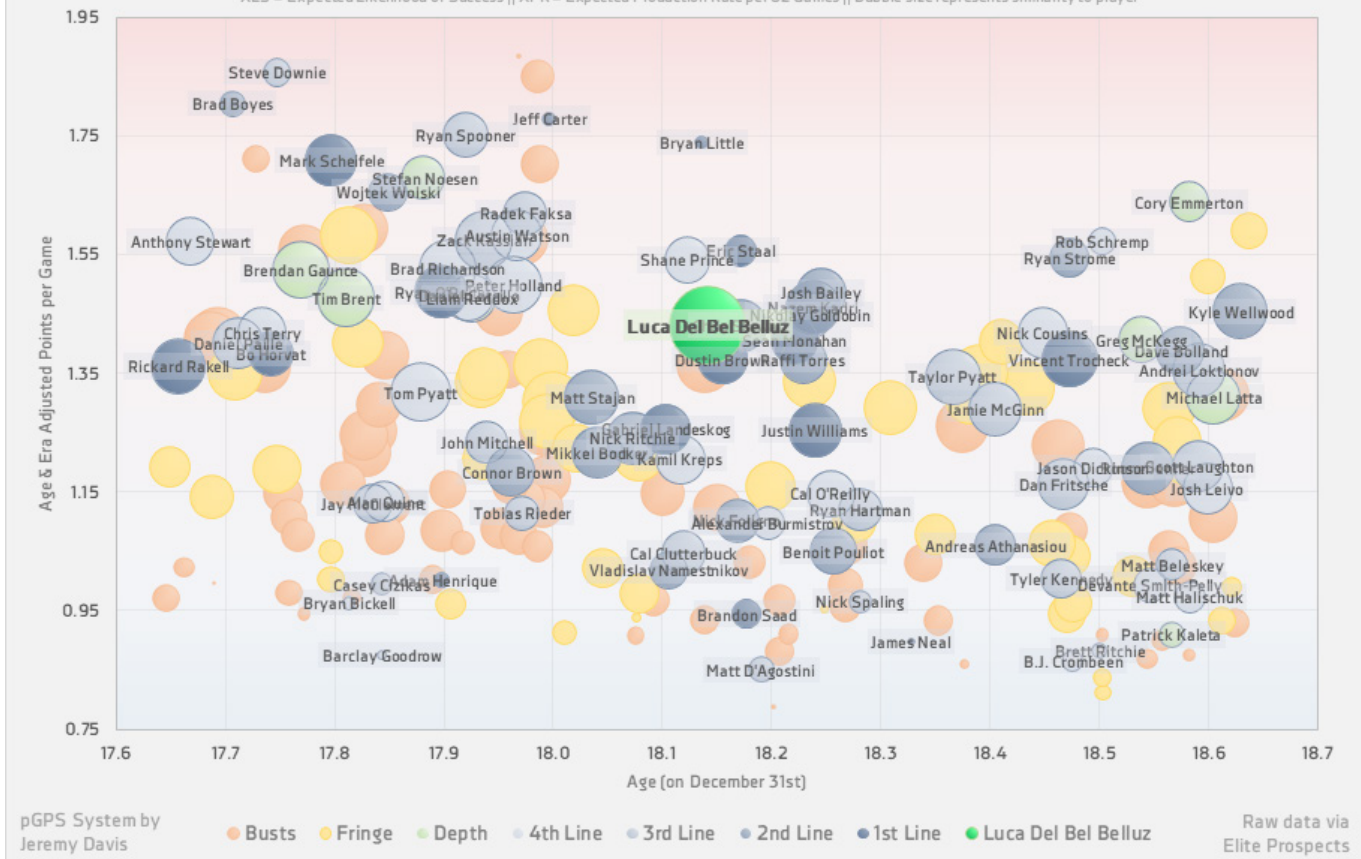
A better game from DelBelBelluz. He showed more his handlings skills -- he dangled through the defence a couple of times, catching the puck around sticks faster than opponents could react and he stole a couple of pucks by cutting them at the hands. He was more defensively engaged and made smarter decisions with the puck. One sequence showed hockey sense. He got the puck in the slot, gave it to

## Luca Del Bel Belluz 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 205 || Base XLS: 40% || Impact XLS: 18% || XPR: 40.2 || Drafted Pct: 83%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



a teammate to receive it back in a better spot, and seeing the shooting lane close on him. DelBelBelluz readjusted his play not once, but twice, hitting a trailing teammate inside space for the best possible play. The skating is still very worrying, but he can pick up a bit of speed with crossovers. He has no edge work.

**David St-Louis:** March 24th, 2022

Peterborough Petes vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

DelBelBelluz's skating is not just a weakness but a serious limiter of his game even at this level. It limits his vision, his support, his puck protection, his shot, his passing range, his escapability, his speed, his agility... Everything. So much so that it's hard to evaluate him properly. With just a slight improvement to his form, his game could really take a couple of extra levels. I have some hockey sense questions, however, so that might not be entirely true. He's late on routes and pockets of space and not just because of speed, because he doesn't necessarily anticipate what comes next. I do really like his playmaking game sometimes, his ability to see multiple options and fake one to open up another. He's a pick, but more of a C prospect for me. He needs intense, focused development work with a team.

**David St-Louis:** February 25th, 2022 - Niagara IceDogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Besides his shot, and a decent ability to find space, DelBelBelluz doesn't have NHL qualities. I watched this game on video and thought he was 6'4" from the way he skated. Turns out, he's 6'1". The skating is significantly below-average, in the OHL, and it projects as a giant hurdle to his NHL development. He has no lateral mobility, no ability to cut back or even turn quickly. Backcheckers catch up to him and it clearly takes him a lot of effort to get up to only decent speed. That skating probably affects everything else in his game, from his decision to his handling. It's one game, but I don't see a pick, or maybe a late-round one if I'm more optimistic.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 24th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

For the first half of the game I had no idea what DelBelBelluz was doing in the offensive zone. A lot of roaming, looked disengaged, reluctant to battle for pucks. Then he stole the puck from the goalie behind the net and got the Steelheads on the board with a wraparound goal halfway through the second. His engagement level in the defensive zone was off and on - one minute he'd be wandering and

looking unsure of what to do or where to go, other times he would be checking and playing the body to separate players from pucks. Had a great feed cross-ice on the tying goal. Felt like this showing was the good and the bad of who he is as a player. Still hesitant to label him a top 50 pick though.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 21st, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

I don't know if I get the DelBelBelluz hype, honestly. The overall production is nothing to scoff at, but it's evident he's struggling right now - and when he's not scoring, the Steelheads aren't winning. His acceleration issues prevent him from catching up with the rush and it also hampers his ability to find space in time and get himself open. He gave the puck away behind his own net that nearly led to a goal. It felt like he was fighting the puck all game long. There was a good sequence where he stickhandled in the OZ before sending a no-look pass to a teammate. Then there was a play where he completely whiffed on the puck on an open net down by the goal line. He would win puck battles and then promptly lose it again seconds later. The skating and the hands were questionable at best in this game and he's not driving offence consistently when it comes to rushing the puck. At this point in the season, he should be building on each game, not fading, and if he's snake-bitten, I wanted to see him make an impact at the other end of the ice and I didn't feel like I saw that either. I question how his tools will translate to future levels and I don't know if he's a centre in the NHL, either.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 12th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

As this game got more and more out of hand, the more I felt DelBelBelluz faded into the background. Don't get me wrong, there were several unnecessary sequences in the second period alone that I'm glad he wasn't apart of, but given how many powerplays the Steelheads did have, I found myself wanting to see him make a statement offensively and it just wasn't there. He did score Mississauga's fourth goal with a quick-release shot that was deflected off a Kingston player. I felt he was trying too hard to force plays though, whether it was attempting passes through way too many players or dangling to enter the offensive zone and losing possession. He did take a holding penalty, but it led to him getting sprung on the breakaway once he was finished serving the penalty - he didn't get much of a dangerous shot off at all, though. He did get boxed out on Kingston's sixth goal, but I'm not exactly sure why he was the only one left defending the front of the net. I'm sure he's going to be a high draft pick, but I still want to see more shift-to-shift consistency from him.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 8th, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

I don't see the link between DelBelBelluz's production and performance. Maybe I'm just catching bad games. Either way, I haven't seen much impact beyond the PP. Skating's the obvious hole, but I've noted improvement in his transition play this season. Less straight-line, less reliant on the perimeter as he's become better at using his hands. Now, given his skating limitations, that probably won't do him much good in the NHL, but it's a start. He still doesn't manipulate pressure or deceive inside his passes or shots. He's a direct player who lacks efficiency. I didn't see a draft pick in this game.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 30th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

DelBelBelluz still needs to work on his skating. His off-puck reads were strong in this game, but there was one instance where he forced a turnover and then lacked the acceleration and power in his first couple of steps to get away alone on a breakaway. He had a couple of strong rushes with the puck and had a team-high seven shots on goal. But this viewing didn't show me anything I didn't already know about him as a player - and I still think he's a second-third round pick at this point.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

DelBelBelluz was pretty quiet early, but he got stronger as the game wore on. His offensive impact was pretty limited in this one, but he still had a couple of dominant shifts where he controlled the puck and circled in the offensive zone. He drew a penalty in the third period to help the Steelheads regain momentum and won a key DZ faceoff in the final minute to help his team win. But I wanted to see more from him in this one, because I know he's capable of it.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 20th, 2022

Oshawa Generals vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

DelBelBelluz scored thirty seconds into the game, showing some nice patience and hands to deke out the goalie on the doorstep after being fed the puck in the slot. I still think a large part of his offensive production is linked to playing with overage linemates and top-line minutes, and I'm not convinced yet that he'd be successful driving a line of his own. Didn't have too many other scoring opportunities in this game aside from one shot off the post, and took a slashing penalty late. His skating actually didn't look as poor in this game as it did in previous viewings, and he got up and down the ice fairly consistently. His stride still lacks power and opposing players are able to close him off entering the offensive zone, but he showed some good off-puck awareness

in this one, finding the right spaces in the offensive zone. I don't think he's a first or second round pick that many public spheres have him ranked as, but I do see NHL upside here.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

DelBelBelluz is money on the PP. Wrister from the circle and a cross-slot look-off pass for an assist within the first six minutes of the game. The added space helps him offset his mechanical limitations. At 5-on-5, he's mostly a checker with some handling skill. He reaches a ton, but at least manages to put himself in positions to challenge - he's disruptive through his willingness to stick to it. A couple of crafty dekes followed by establishing body positioning, but he always leans back on his heels when deking and straightens his legs. Even smaller defenders have no difficulty knocking him off-balance. Drove play to the inside on a couple of occasions, but he forced a pass that wasn't there. I think he's aware of options, but with the puck always centred between his feet, his passes require a wind up. Often times, that's all defenders need to close the lane. If he can clean up the skating and handling mechanics, he has third or fourth-line upside.

**Lauren Kelly:** December 17th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

This was a solid viewing of DelBelBelluz. Led all skaters with seven shots on goal, and probably could've had more given he tapped a few shots wide of the net. He got himself to open areas to create those scoring opportunities for himself, but the execution just wasn't there in this game. There was one shift where he was parked at the side of the net but shot the puck wide instead of into the wide open cage. He made a lot of good OZ reads, but he sort of disappears in his own end. He's always moving, but it's a lot of roving and he's not exactly the most likely player to engage in board battles or come away with the puck. Some instances I felt like he was relying a little too much on linemates James Hardie and Ty Collins to do the bulk of the work at both ends of the ice.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 5th, 2021

Oshawa Generals vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

DelBelBelluz is more skilled than I've previous given him credit for. He looked for cross-ice passes, manipulated a defender's feet to create a lane with his hands, and set up a teammate with a crafty pass into the slot. These were all low-pace, low-pressure plays. Scored with a low-percentage wrister from beyond the goal-line - that's pretty much the extend of his game when pressured and moving. I wonder how much more of his game will be unlocked by improved skating. Still, not sure I see a draft pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 28th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

DelBelBelluz got the Steelheads on the board early, protecting the puck well along the boards before spinning off and firing a shot to score. His skating looks marginally better - it's not great by any means, but it's not impeding him from keeping up with plays and being impactful at the moment. He also had a nice skate to stick pass to himself in the neutral zone as he skated up the middle of the ice, but his shot was stopped. He centres the top line right now, but he's nowhere near as dominant a presence or consistent down the middle as Owen Beck is. He struggled in faceoffs, to create space for himself and his linemates, and a lot of his line's shifts lost the momentum for their team in this game as they struggled to sustain pressure in the offensive zone. His linemates were primarily the ones generating offense - his assist on Hardie's goal was a short drop pass in the offensive zone (Hardie did the rest). Needs to work on his shift-to-shift consistency, he can't be turning invisible for half the game.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 13th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

This was an odd case of DelBelBelluz starting strong and then getting worse the longer the game went on. He demonstrated good puckhandling under pressure before dangling around Shane Wright and passing off on the 1-0 goal. He also protects the puck pretty well considering how bad his skating looks (though it might have also been the result of the Frontenacs skaters backing off way too quickly and letting have too much space). He had a nice cut to the middle of the ice before potting the 2-0 goal. And for such an awkward skating stride that lacks power, he actually was really good at defending Wright early on. He got good body positioning on him and used his stick to tie up Wright's, and basically hung off him for the entire first period. He even picked off Wright in the offensive zone to create another scoring chance. After the first period, though, he sort of fell off the map. He was pretty invisible for the rest of the game, until he was stripped by Lucas Edmonds on the 4-4 goal that sent the game to overtime. He was robbed on the goal line on a late power play and had a nice steal in overtime, and was stopped in the shootout. He looks like a mid-round pick right now, but there are details in his game that he needs to clean up and I'm not confident that his skating will translate to success at the NHL level yet.

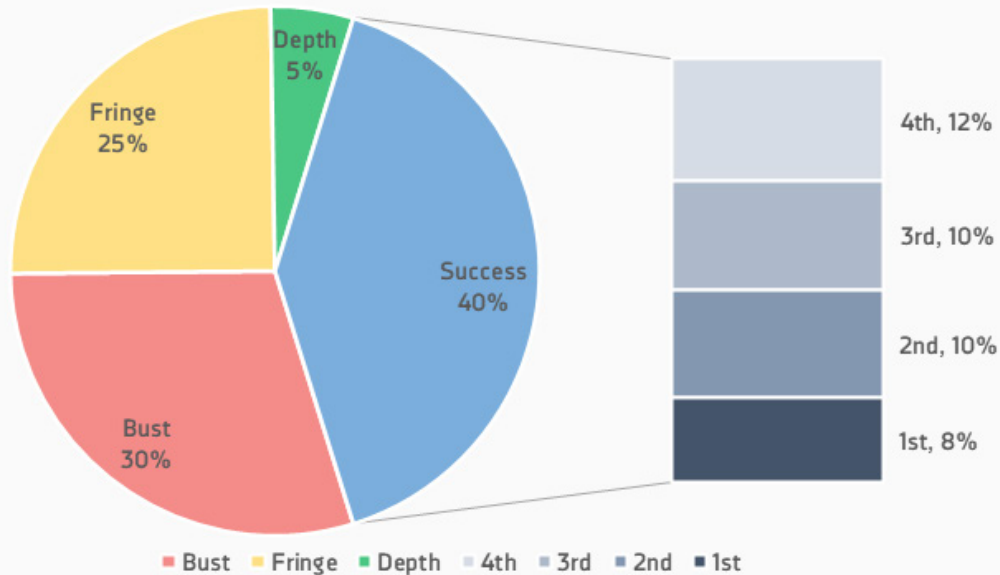
**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

DelBelBelluz is scoring, but I wonder if he's game's just too simple to make it work at the next level. Best read: Drew the defender outside the dot lane, then cut back inside and

## Luca Del Bel Belluz 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



dropped the puck back to a teammate. Otherwise, he's very cautious with the puck and doesn't seem to have much in the way of tools to get it back. Things open up a bit for him on the PP, where he moves around the slot with the puck -- it led to his goal. Skating posture's inconsistent, which leads to some puck protection and handling limitations. Based on this game, not a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 3rd, 2021

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

DelBelBelluz's skating is messy. Too upright through the lower body, preventing him from turning with power, crossing over properly, and generating speed with his stride. He's pretty inconsistent so there are strength issues here, but it'll require more than just time in the weight room to clean it up. He didn't show much off-puck instincts or timing ability, but he didn't overhandle, showed general awareness with the puck, and was quite disruptive on the backcheck. Not sure what to make of the puck skills. Wild changes in posture seemed to limit his handling, but he didn't show any noteworthy mechanics or touch otherwise. I didn't see a draft pick in this viewing.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 29th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

DelBelBelluz scored a very pretty goal in this game, show-

ing off his hands after settling down a mid-air cross-ice pass from Ty Collins. He used a nice burst of speed to get in alone to create the odd-man rush, but I still think skating is the biggest issue with his game. There was one shift where he was coming back to help out on a 2-on-1 where the lack of acceleration held him back. He was involved physically, but aside from his goal, I didn't feel like he got that involved in the offense and sort of disappeared after he scored. He had some good efforts to get up and down the ice, but this wasn't his greatest showing.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 24th, 2021

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

DelBelBelluz played on the top line with James Hardie (and originally Zak Lavoie, but then with Aidan Prueter). Although he didn't get on the scoresheet, he was constantly hunting for pucks and came back to help support his defense on multiple occasions where the Steelheads allowed odd-man rushes. He's a decent puckhandler and passer, but I didn't see him take too many shots in this one. On one instance, he forced his way through multiple Bulldogs defenders but lost control of the puck as a result of the pressure. I feel like his skating is going to be an issue at higher levels - DelBelBelluz is sort of a hulking figure on the ice and lacks a bit of acceleration and agility to where it delays his arrival to open areas of the ice.



85  
Rank

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

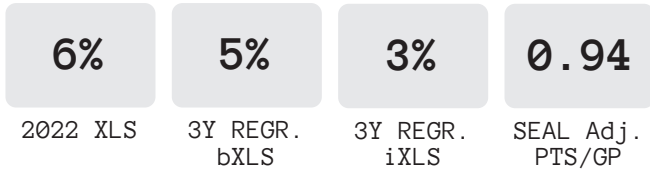
5  
Hockey Sense

6.5  
Physical

# SAMUEL SAVOIE

C | GATINEAU OLYMPIQUES

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. MAR. 25, 2004  
WEIGHT 190 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	64	18	15	33

## Scouting Report

Few players in this draft can match Samuel Savoie's physicality. His gritty, borderline violent playing style made him one of our favourite players to watch this season.

Rare is the shift where Savoie doesn't plaster an opponent to the boards. Sometimes, it serves a tangible purpose, like stealing possession of the puck. Other times, he's just sending a message: "Move the puck quickly or meet your doom."

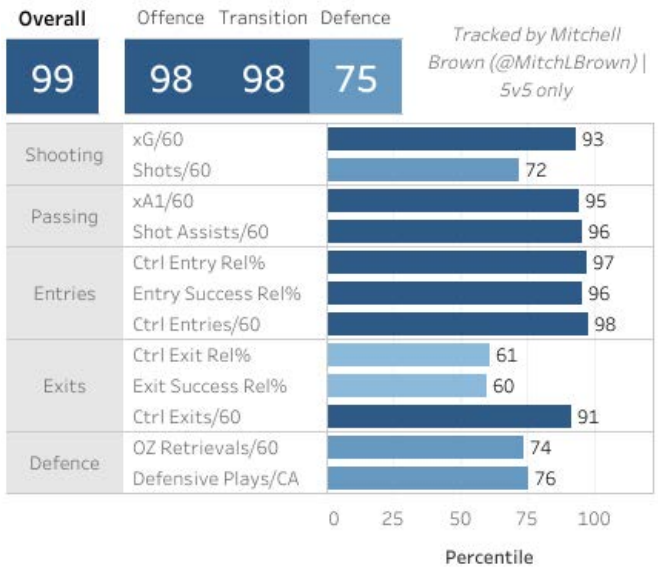
Savoie drives the net with matching enthusiasm, going all-in for every loose puck so that he can slem them past the goaltender. He's fierce on retrievals, capable of winning possession by cutting inside the space of defenders. There are some occasional deceptive elements in his small-area game too, like skate fakes to distance himself from defenders and escape with the puck.

"I think he's a pick," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in an April game report. "He could really explode in better conditions next year (and with the added experience). The thing that keeps me watching is that he's very young for this draft class. Most of its top talents are months older and no one is really scoring in Gatineau."

Savoie's motor, physicality, and inside game could form the basis for an NHL career in a checking role somewhere down the line, even if his meagre counting stats don't tell the same story.

Our scouting staff was emboldened in ranking Savoie based on that physical component, but there's adequate levels of

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 112.2



skill in his game, too. His skating is a projectable tool, and while he's not a playmaker, the Olympiques winger does possess legitimate passing skill. His smart, quick feeds keep the puck in his team's possession, allowing them to build towards scoring chances.

You won't hear Savoie's name called early in the draft, but there's a good chance that he'll walk the stage as a late-round pick eventually. The long-term play here is that of a bottom-six checking winger, and there's no reason he can't fulfil that prophecy.



## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Anthony DeLuca YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 96%	2 Jan Kana YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 96%	3 David Laliberte YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY: 96%	4 Maxim Lapierre YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 96%	5 Samuel Morneau YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 96%
6 Petr Pohl YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY: 96%	7 Jean-Sebastien Dea YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 96%	8 Alexandre Comtois YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 95%	9 Mathieu Melanson YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 95%	10 Paul Byron YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 95%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 15th, 2022

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Savoie was built for playoff hockey. He runs around looking to crush people, and makes some very intelligent defensive reads in the process. Doesn't just read the puck carrier, he anticipates and angles. Didn't accomplish much offensively, but he was working in transition. He makes plays from the boards to the middle in all three zones to change the point of attack. Sometimes gets locked into outracing, but he's becoming more intelligent and creative. He even delays and cuts across the front of defenders sometimes. I'm certain he's an NHLer. A good one? That will depend on improving his reads with the puck.

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

I'm having some pretty serious flashback to Andrew Shaw watching Samuel Savoie: the net-drive, the recklessness, the constant effort, the motor, the pace, the occasional deceptive passing play...I love so much about his game. His hockey sense ranks about average and the size is below-average, but he will definitely be on our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Strictly a pace and checking performance from Savoie. Scored a tap-in and missed another one. Some off-puck instincts, mostly by arriving at the net at the right times. Always establishes body positioning. One board play sequence where he drew pressure before cutting back into space. Outworks players on the forecheck, but he also anticipates and funnels the puck carrier. There's nuance to his defence, for sure. And he hits literally everything that moves. It's crazy. One crossover-heavy rush shows that he at least has the beginnings of translatable offence, but he's unaware of passing options. He's not manipulating opponents. Misses opportunities to use the middle and set up teammates. Part of that's consequence of the structure, but he would benefit from using the cutback and more deception. He's definitely a pick. Probably the most interesting of Gatineau's prospects.

**David St-Louis:** April 3rd, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs Shawinigan Cataractes - QMJHL

Savoie didn't create much offensively, but a lot of his skill-set and game will translate to the AHL and maybe even the NHL. He's still physical and the skating has the right form, the right mechanics. I think it could get a 5.5-6 grade on our scale. Already that, and his defensive engagement, could net him a checking role. He protects the puck, scans for outlets before getting to retrievals, and he completes passing plays in transition and the offensive zone. Nothing impressive, but a lot of it is translatable. I think he's a pick. He could really explode in better conditions next year (and with the added experience).

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Drummondville V. vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Savoie was the best player on the ice by a large margin. Relentless in all three zones, all four corners. He sprints for every puck, running through every opposition player on his way there. Board play could be a legitimate strength at the next level. He doesn't just hit, he establishes body positioning and uses cutbacks and changes of pace to keep defenders on his back. Some crafty escapes in this game, showing awareness of how to extend the cycle and attacking off it. Shot's mostly upper-body right now, but he shoots in-stride and tries to mask his release with blade deception. It could also be a strength. Finishes every single route, but he tends to lock himself to the front of the net. Makes the obvious passes quickly. Lacks the skill and patience to access more complex lanes. Not a manipulator, but his speed and handling skill could lead to it. Stride lacks refinement but he generates tons of power. Tweaking the mechanics a bit should give him NHL quickness. He looked like an end-of-board type in this game.

**David St-Louis:** March 19th, 2022

Rimouski Oceanics vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

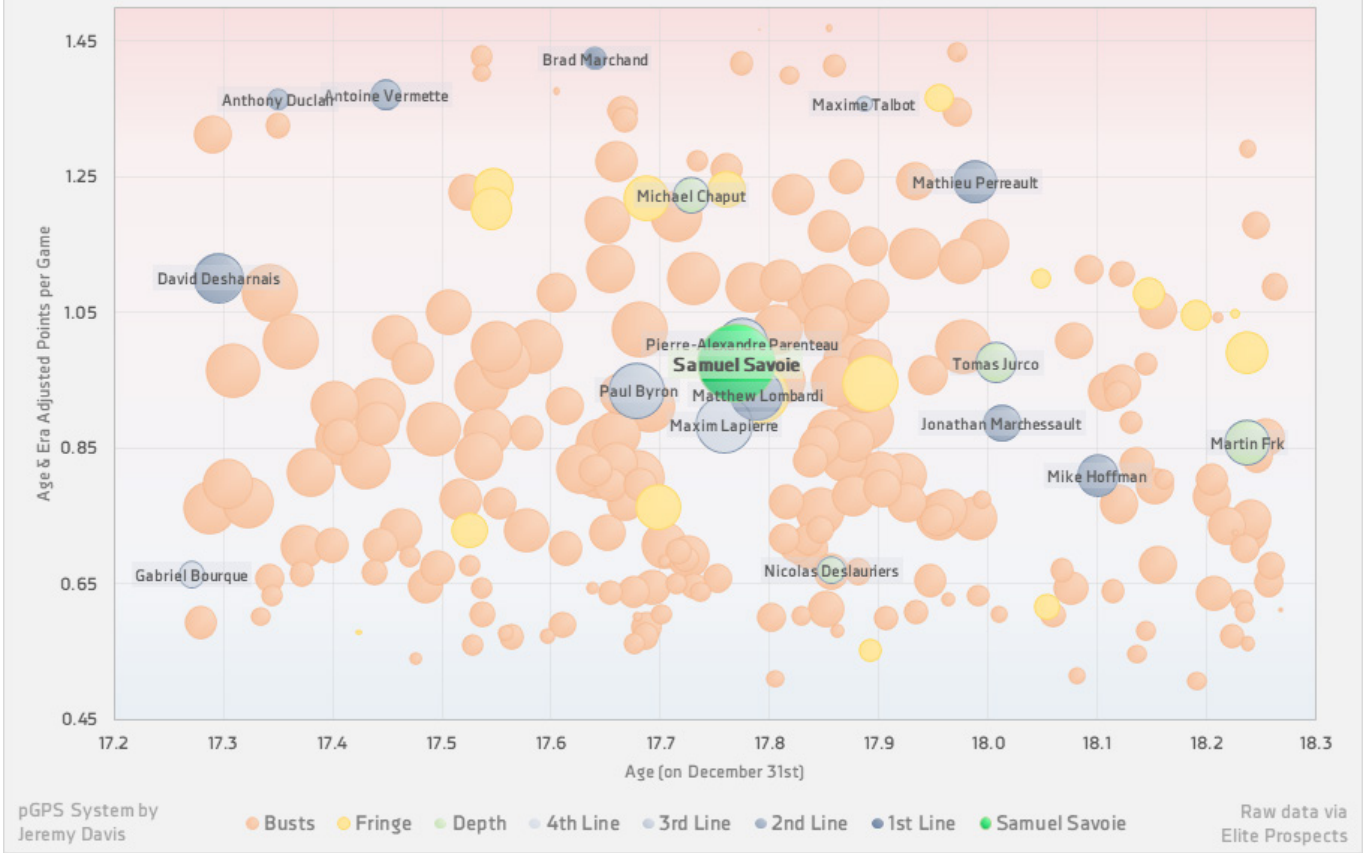
Savoie is limited offensively. The amount of solutions he has to defensive pressure is pretty small. He's mostly a straight-line attacker, who is physical, engaged defensively, creates

### Samuel Savoie 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 246 || Base XLS: 6% || Impact XLS: 4% || XPR: 40.1 || Drafted Pct: 31%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



from the forecheck and the backcheck and by intercepting. I'm not sure he would be able to score all that much at higher levels; he's already not scoring much this season.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Blainville-B. Armada - QMJHL

Not sure if I'm just getting good viewings, but Savoie looks great. NHL great? Not sure. But he'll play. He's physical, sprints for every puck, makes crafty breakout passes, and looks to attack the net with every opportunity. Showed a bit more nuance in this game. After fighting off a defender, he cutback and found the trailer. Flashiest sequence followed a similar pattern, but this time he made a reactionary deke to the inside. He turned his back to the net to prevent the reacharound, then passed across the slot. For the most part, his game boils down outracing and capitalizing on turnovers, but the extra layer of skills suggests there's upside here. I'd pick him in the third.

**David St-Louis:** February 27th, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs Rouyn-Noranda Huskies - QMJHL

Savoie scored twice in this game. He's pretty much pacey forward with some skill. He reminds me of Simon Pinard, who he played against in this game. He outspeeds, outpaces the

opposition both with his feet and passes, and he capitalizes on turnovers to create odd-man situations and score. I don't see him as a creator at the next level. Maybe he makes the NHL at some point by leveraging his pace and pressure.

**David St-Louis:** February 26th, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs Chicoutimi Sagunéens - QMJHL

The physicality is impressive. Savoie doesn't just finish checks, he finishes every check. He goes out of his way to hit and it's quite unusual for a 5'10" forward, but he's a total menace out there; opponents have to keep an eye out for him if they don't want to get knocked on their postérieur. Besides that? There isn't a lot that is interesting in his game. Some deceptive passing, some abilities in tight (ability to roll off checks, change speed to evade pressure) and a lot of effort defensively. He might be a pick, as his offensive game might really take off in the next few years; he has enough abilities and confidence and desire to get inside for it to happen.

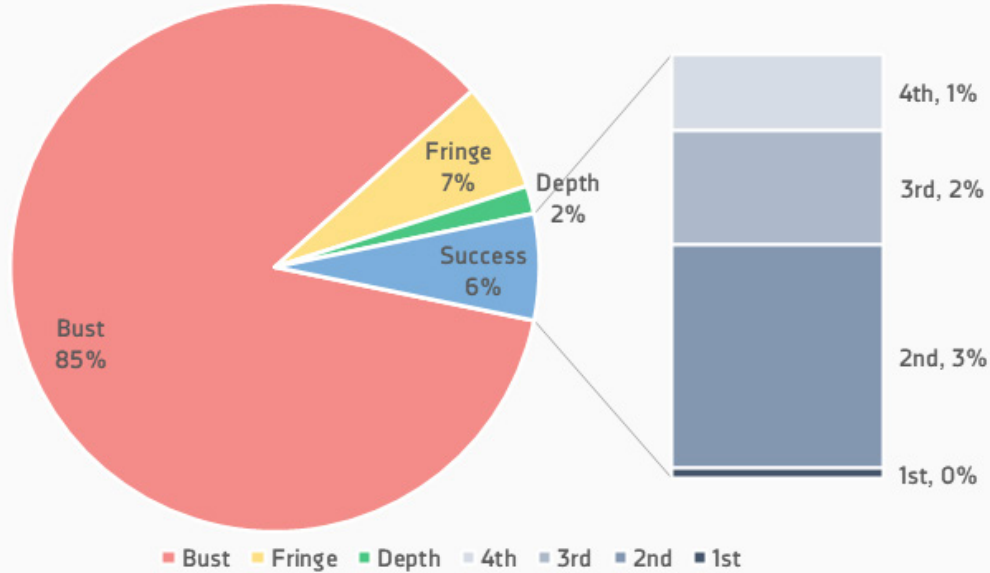
**David St-Louis:** November 24th 2021

Victoriaville Tigres vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Savoie is incredibly energetic, intense, relentless. He pursues pucks hard and attacks with a lot of pace. He's really inside-driven and disregards his own safety at times, too. He

## Samuel Savoie 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



will please coaches at all levels. And he has skill, too. He scans and makes better plays that similarly-sized Verreault, battles, creates passing lanes, spots pucks into space, beats defenders wide with speed, shows constant motor, shakes pressure in tight with changes of speed. So there are some manipulative qualities to go along with his intensity. The 4th and 5th effort, leave-it-all-on-the-ice style is the most attractive thing about his game, however.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 21st, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Best player on the ice. Savoie's a puck-retrieving machine and physical force. Runs through players like they're not even there. His game works well for this Gatineau team that's all about flinging the puck in the area and having their forwards making a recovery in the neutral zone. In this game, he showed some nuance within that structure. He delayed to find the trailer, in a position where he shot in my previous viewing. Connected with crafty backhand passes and used crossovers in transition to pressure the middle and draw defenders. Along the boards, he draws pressure, then cuts back into space. It will be a strength at the next level. Follows up every loose puck, directly leading to his first goal. Off-puck offence is mostly sprinting to the net or planting his feet at the top of the crease. Stride lacks refinement, but he's a powerful skater who has separation ability. Could be a mid-board candidate.


**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Drummondville V. - QMJHL

Savoie's everywhere. He sprints for every puck. And if he's second, he looks to make the puck carrier regret it. Not only physical, but he's strong and intelligent in how he approaches battles. He gets low, makes early contact, and uses his physicality to force turnovers. With the puck, he looked like a basic shooter with some off-puck ability. Scored by getting to the net; not a complicated read. Burned a defender wide, then fired off a chance with an in-stride wrister. Straight-line with the puck. No nuance to his game. Didn't seem like a pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2020

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

The best of Gatineau's strong 2022-eligible class in this game, no doubt. He set-up a gorgeous scoring chance from the corner with a look-off feed. He doesn't give away his targets while passing -- in any zone. Showed some off-puck offensive ability, finding pockets of space and playing between checks. Transition impact was lesser, driving plays up the middle when he looked, but giving up on other opportunities too easily. Intelligent positioning, but could've been more willing to engage in battles. He fired off a couple of shots for scoring location, but his shooting mechanics are pretty mediocre. 



86  
Rank

5  
Skating

4.5  
Shooting

6  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

# TYSON JUGNAUTH

D | WEST KELOWNA WARRIORS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. APR. 17, 2004  
WEIGHT 161 SHOOTS LEFT

39%	25%	25%	0.55
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
BCHL	52	9	41	50

> Committed to Univ. of Wisconsin

## Scouting Report

Like many Junior A players, Tyson Jugnauth plays the game at a slower pace. The difference with him is that the West Kelowna Warriors defenceman didn't adapt this style of play to facilitate his reads. He uses it as a playmaking tool.

Jugnauth understands the details that go into a successful creation game. He knows how to adopt a deceptive position to keep defenders guessing about his next choice of play. He knows how to manipulate pace, how to accelerate and slow down to force them to adjust their footwork, and he knows how to feint with his eyes, body, and stick positioning. These abilities gave Jugnauth a command over the ice in the BCHL. He didn't need to outspeed opponents as he could move them out of passing and shooting lanes with his tricks.

His playmaking game not only shines in the offensive zone, but also in transition. Jugnauth constantly looks to move the puck inside the most space. He looks to expand his team's offensive sequences with longer cross-ice and stretch passes with a relatively high success rate.

A relatively average skill level kept the West Kelowna Warrior prospect lower on our board. That, and his infrequent defensive showings.

It was also harder to properly project the shutdown element of Jugnauth's game than other defenceman in the draft. He wasn't tested all that often defensively in our viewings, leaving us with little in the way of a proof of concept. In his zone, the weaker competition allowed him to focus his entire attention on the puck carrier. He didn't have to scan for threats behind him as the attackers didn't try to give him false information as often. A quick peek at the position of the puck carrier's stick and shoulders was often all he needed to cut the next opposing pass.

At the next level, Jugnauth will have to learn to take information on the whole ice at a higher rate if he wants to block opposing plays. If he can learn to do that consistently and to engage opponents on the boards, Jugnauth could become a bottom-pairing, power play specialist.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Mike Salekin YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 87%	2 Duncan Keith YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 86%	3 Jordan Baird YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY: 79%	4 Erik Spady YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY: 79%	5 Troy Stecher YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 77%
6 Bo Pellah YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 77%	7 Justin Schultz YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY: 76%	8 Blake Cosgrove YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY: 75%	9 Tim Daly YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 75%	

## Tyson Jugnauth 2021-22 BCHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 9 || Base XLS: 39% || Impact XLS: 39% || XPR: 41 || Drafted Pct: 22%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**David St-Louis:** April 22nd, 2022

West Kelowna Rockets vs. Salmon Arm Silverbacks - BCHL

I continue to appreciate the playmaking, the fake shots into passes, the quick passing, the ability to spot teammates across the ice and as he dangles through opponents. But I don't see much else in his game at this point. I may have underrated the skating previously; he has a smoother edgework and a better ability to walk the blue line than I thought previously.

**David St-Louis:** April 2nd, 2022

West Kelowna Rockets vs. Vernon Vipers - BCHL

Another interesting playmaking performance from Jugnauth. He clearly understands how to manipulate, using change of speed, eye deception, and passing at the right time, as his teammates get in position, as he reaches the right areas, as the lane opens. He manipulates at lower pace overall, so we'll see how it translates, but it's a strength nonetheless. In transition, he can pass the puck through layers, underhandles to hit lanes, and looks cross-ice for teammates to expand the offence. Defensively, he doesn't have the backward striding to gap up to faster attackers, but generally, he doesn't get cleanly beat in between blue-lines. He also shows some anticipation of opposing plays and ability to cut them. He had one sequence where he cheated a bit offensively. The skills are average, but the ideas are

pretty interesting.

**David St-Louis:** March 26th, 2022

Merritt Centennials vs West Kelowna Rockets - BCHL

Jugnauth is a playmaker from the back-end, someone who understands the effect of deception and uses it to control the opposition. His pace is quite low, but he can accelerate at the right moments. That lower pace is both a creation tool and a consequence of the average skating (lack of ankle flexion, wide stride...). It might take a while for him to become an effective shutdown defence at the college level, although he has the anticipation of opposing plays, because he lacks the aggression and the closing speed. That said, the passing game is very interesting: He can wire pucks through the defensive box, uses space instead of trying low-danger shots, and moves the puck quickly, too. He's aware.

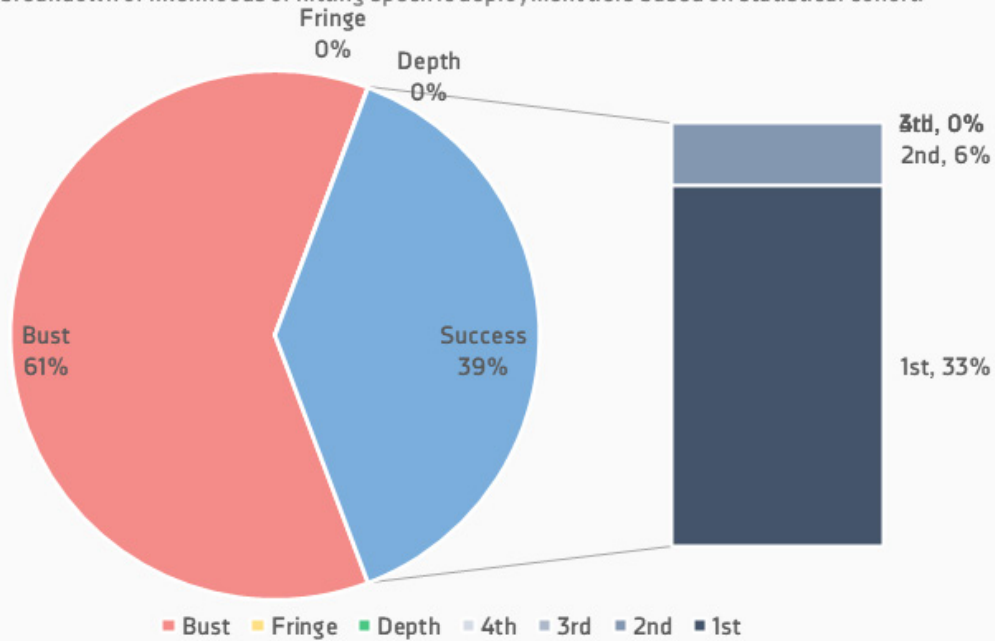
**Cam Robinson:** February 23rd, 2022

West Kelowna Rockets vs Prince George - BCHL

Jugnauth was highly engaged in this game, but in a more 'hunting' style than a fast paced attacking game. Despite his skill advantage at this level, he settled for several long-range, through-traffic shots that were easily blocked or turned aside. I would've liked to see him engage in some lateral footwork and deception to create lanes and opportunities. He did have

## Tyson Jugnauth 2021-22 BCHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



a high-end rush in OT where he layered multiple dekes in succession to get an in-close chance on goal. Two primary helpers - one a result of an easy breakout and the other sending a well-position pass into the one-time wheelhouse. Skating is okay but lacks depth and explosiveness. He did change gears fairly well in this one when transporting the puck. Made a ton of clean passes - clearly his best attribute but needs to be able to draw coverage with more poise to really take advantage of it at the next level.

**Cam Robinson:** January 23rd, 2022

West Kelowna Rockets vs. Cranbrook Bucks - BCHL

I really liked Jugnauth in this one. There was some bad sprinkled in with the good - but those were mainly from him activating and attempting more complex dekes, rush attempts, board baks to himself, etc. He was more fluid and displayed a lot more lateral agility before throwing pucks on net. He played with good pace and when he jumped on a puck in the NZ, he did it with speed and confidence. The skating looked better than previous as he was low in his stance and had some explosion. Not a ton on the defensive side of things - kept a fine gap but sacrificed the line pretty easily. In-zone he was moving a lot, swivelling his head to make sure he wasn't going to get beat backdoor, but didn't take opportunities to close out and end plays quickly. Overall, clearly a Jr. A kid who has a college future. Let's see where the development goes but there is some upside.

**David St-Louis:** January 23rd, 2022

West Kelowna Rockets vs. Cranbrook Bucks - BCHL

Hard to evaluate Jugnauth's defensive game. He just doesn't

play much defence. His team is in control all the time. The deceptive game is still there, the fakes to open shooting and passing lanes. He also showed an ability to carry the puck from zone to zone, combining weight shift fakes and east-west cuts to gain the offensive zone. I'm not all that impressed by the skill level, but the manipulation habits are there. He executes his feints with good timing, making sure that the defender is committing to him before pulling the trigger. A lot of projectable offensive elements, but the NHL projection is not all that clear at this time.

**J.D. Burke:** November 23rd, 2021

West Kelowna Warriors vs. Penticton Vees - BCHL

Real mixed bag type of performance for Jugnauth. Some really great stuff in this one, his displays of pacey playmaking and handling skill foremost among them. The deception and fakes from the blue line were a constant in this game - fake shots to passes, fake passes to shot, look-off passes, etc. Four-way mobility looked pretty solid, but it was hard to get a read on his forward stride with the camera angle. Jugnauth drew a pair of penalties by the second period on nearly identical plays, seeing an opening between a pair of defenders and pressing his advantage, forcing them to trip him lest they surrender a clean breakaway. Having said that, Jugnauth really struggled in the defensive zone and in transition in this contest. A lot of ill-advised turnovers and outlets that weren't even close to their intended target. Seemed like he was chasing the game a bit in the defensive zone. Definitely warrants further inquiry and could be a player near the end of our board.



87  
Rank

4  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

C  
Grade

4.5  
Puckhandling

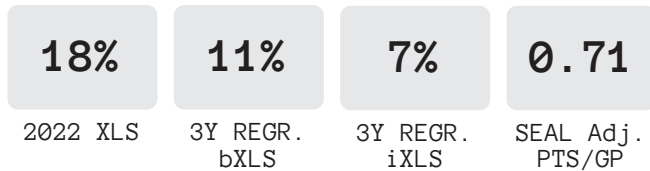
5.5  
Hockey Sense

6.5  
Physical

# RODWIN DIONICIO

D | NIAGARA ICEDOGS

HEIGHT 6' 2" D.O.B. MAR. 30, 2004  
WEIGHT 207 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	57	6	25	31

## Scouting Report

In the early stages of the OHL season, Rodwin Dionicio looked like a hard-hitting, turnover-prone blueliner without a ton of skill. By season's end, it was clear that he's not just one of the draft's hardest hitters on the blue line – he's one of its most intelligent.

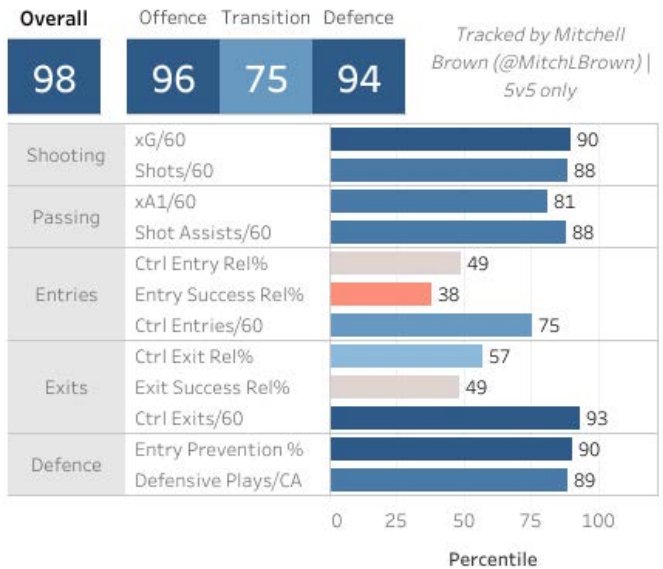
Dionicio bends the movement of the opposition in his favour to create advantages up the ice. In transition, he turns to face incoming pressure, fakes them with stickhandling and eye deception, then attacks the space on their heels. An extra layer of projectability comes from what Dionicio does after. Sometimes, he passes immediately. Others, he beats the next layer. Either way, he maintains the deceptive act throughout and consistently tries the best play.

From there, Dionicio activates into the play. His activation patterns are advanced, highlighted by well-timed weak side activations that introduce little risk. Rather than taking needless point shots, he prefers to build the play with passes and occasionally fakes out pressure before stepping inside to shoot. When activated, he shows patience, creativity, and vision.

However, it's these same standout elements that highlight Dionicio's mechanical shakiness and pace. A lack of lower-body flexion hinders his speed, agility, and stability. While his handling ideas are sound, his form's often choppy. And he requires a lengthy, slow glide to do his best work.

The mechanics prevent Dionicio from completing many of his best ideas with the puck. Despite his advanced understanding of creating advantages, heavy forechecking pressure often results in simple, uncontrolled plays or failed more advanced ones – both are turnovers.

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 152.5



The skating limits his otherwise sound, instinctual defence, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown explains: "Struggled with his pivots and backwards skating, resulting in a passive gap to defend against speed. His corrective tools are limited and pro-level attackers pick apart his skating and [tendency to reach]."

Throughout the season, Dionicio's fluidity improved, taking passes in-motion and starting to make plays inside crossovers. His defence tightened, too. He remains a long-term project, but if – and that's a big if – Dionicio improves his mechanics and pace of operation significantly, he could become a quality NHL defenceman, combining the best elements of old school and new wave.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Patrick McNeill YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY: 90%	2 Slater Koekkoek YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 90%	3 Beau Schmitz YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY: 90%	4 Chris Eade YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY: 90%	5 Ryan Sproul YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY: 90%
6 Trevor Murphy YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY: 89%	7 Lukas Krajicek YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY: 89%	8 Geoff Schemitsch YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY: 89%	9 Nick Ebert YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY: 89%	10 Adam Gibson YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY: 89%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

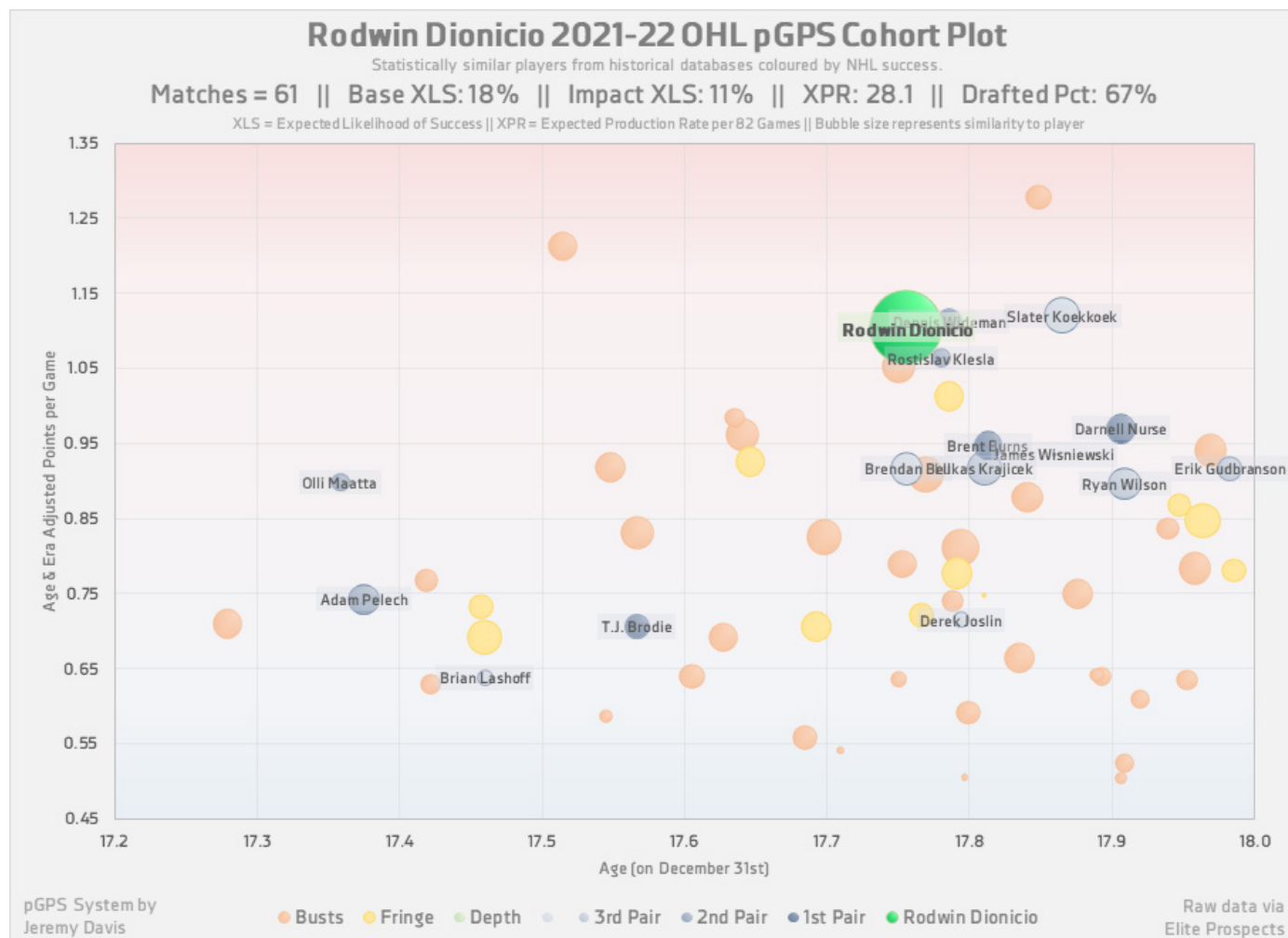
Dionicio intentionally manipulates opponents. The plays don't always work, but timing and volume of these sequences suggest they are legitimate. In one, he pivoted while handling the puck to face back pressure. Most players make the next play. He skated towards the next forechecker, then passed cross-ice to his target. Never gave away his intentions. He tries weight shifts, attacks defenders at an angle, uses changes of pace and pump fakes to mask his intentions. Heavy pressure on breakouts causes him to lose some of his effectiveness (unsurprisingly), but it's concerning that he defaults to so

many rims and low-skill plays. Struggled with his pivots and backwards skating, resulting in a passive gap to defend against speed. When he closes space, he shows play-killing ability with well-timed stick checks, subtle angling, and devastating hits. I have no idea how to project him to the NHL. But if the skating improves, he clearly has NHL ability – and more skill and intelligence than the average bottom-pairing player.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

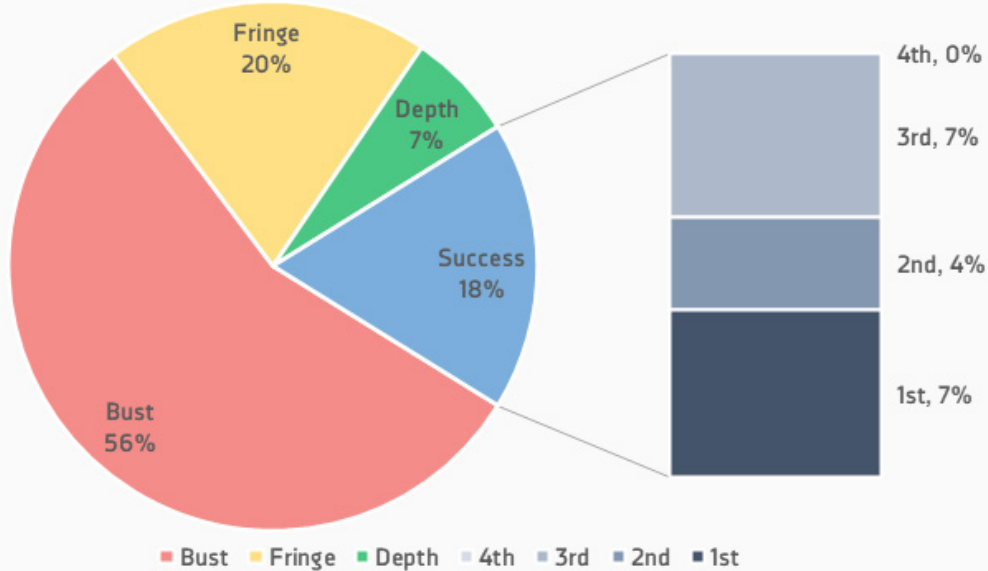
Dionicio always comes to play. This was no different. He's big and lumbering. But that doesn't stop him from trying.





## Rodwin Dionicio 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



He's a legitimately smart player, and not just in a run-the-scripts way. He adapts, problem-solves, and manipulates. A mid-third period was the perfect example of his game: he lumbered up the middle to a group of four defenders, he angled towards one, and as soon as their stick was within range, he accelerated (clumsily), defender around traffic (in a glide), then cut inside to shoot under a defender's stick. While he still gets pressured into poor passes up the boards and misses outlets, he also makes skill plays: backhand passes to the inside around a defender, cutback and outwait pressure before passing inside, and deking around forecheckers before making a quick short range pass.

Offensively, his game remains heavily activation focused, split between crafty on-puck reads and even better off-puck ones. No point shots. He beats pressure his hands, pinches at the right moments, and shows patience to wait for better opportunities. Sometimes, he misses the best play (failure to read) or can't access the lane (mechanics). He also doesn't move through all of his pass receptions, which led to a turnover in this game. Handling is rudimentary but he has ideas: forehand-backhand across the body on incoming pressure, underhandle when necessary, and fakes. He has a surprising amount of finesse at times. Defensively, he hits, angles, and tries. The lack of stability on his edges limits some of his effectiveness. He should make our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

A boatload of turnovers in this game, but Dionico continues to show an advanced understanding of transition play. He

steps to the middle, invites pressure, and passes through it to an open teammate. Constantly changes the point of attack with cross-lane passes. Deceptive with his eyes and puck positioning. Cuts back to outwait pressure. Gets and keeps forecheckers on his back. The pace is low, but he clearly has a workable delay game with an advantage-focused mindset. Now, actually getting the puck to its target is tricky for him. Part of that is the lumbering footwork and inconsistent tape-to-space passes. Defensive skating is virtually non-existent. He's an instinctual defender who gets stops with a tight gap, heavy shoulders, and a well-timed lunge. But his corrective tools are limited and pro-level attackers pick apart his skating and reaching. A team is definitely picking him, perhaps high. He'd make for a fine third or fourth rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Another intriguing performance from Dionicio, even if the passes didn't hit their mark. The good stuff: activation, using the inside lane, a bit of deception, well-timed pinches, retrievals, and confidence to make plays through layers. The bad: very few of those plays worked, and most of them ending up behind their target. Defensively, he's on his heels and drifts too close to the boards. He'll step up to throw a hit or come across the inside, but both of those expose him to getting burned up the middle. Moving and handling the puck at the same time creates issues for Dionicio, but that doesn't stop him from trying. And I appreciate that. I suspect a team picks him this year, which would be justifiable. A solid development staff could help him become a bottom-

pair transition specialist. That's a valuable player to nab in the third or fourth round.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 30th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Dionicio might have been Niagara's best draft-eligible player in this game. He activated from the point, led rushes up the ice, and wasn't burned on any rushes against or by poor positioning in his own end. Didn't overcomplicate his plays with the puck or make any ill-timed pinches into the offensive zone. This was a pretty encouraging showing for a player whose team was overwhelmed by Mississauga by the end of the game. I could see why a team might use a late round pick on him.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 25th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Dionicio plays well above his technical foundation. He

struggles to move and handle the puck at the same time, but that doesn't stop him from trying high-value plays. Once he gets the puck in the OZ, he immediately looks to beat incoming pressure, even sometimes manipulating (but he can't properly shift his weight). He steps into space, looks off his target, then passes cross-slot. There's a delay game that shows an advanced understanding of creating advantages in all three zones, but especially on the breakout. But he's too patient – twice getting caught waiting for pressure to fly by but they just skated at him and stole the puck.

As usual, he was mostly solid defensively. Force him to pivot, and everything falls apart, but in face-to-face situations, he'll kill the play. Doesn't load his push-off leg on the pivot. Physical and does a solid job managing faster, agile threats along the perimeter by taking away their space. Without skating refinement, his effectiveness will dissipate once he loses the physicality advantage. Lots of work to be done, but he clearly has an understanding of the finer points of

Photo Credit: Vivid Eye Photography



play creation. Will the mechanics get there? I'm becoming a believer.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Niagara's best draft-eligible. Dionicio's big, lumbering, and struggles with turnovers. But, he looks awesome out there regardless. With a quick shoulder fake and pre-scan on retrievals, he escapes pressure, then manipulates the next layer with a look-off cross-lane pass. Steps inside regularly if possible, and if not, tries to deliver the puck to teammates on the inside. Delays to outwait forechecking pressure. Activates at the right times, including one sequence where he busted out the one-touch between the legs deke into a backhand chance. Puckhandling doesn't always look natural for him – he widens his stance, drops his head, and locks his hand to his hip – but he's making the odd play in motion. Lots of reason to think this element of his game will continue to improve. Defensively, he's quite advanced. Sometimes over-extends, but he proactively eliminates space from the puck carrier and the stick's off-puck threats. Skating and coordination might limit his defensive upside at the next level. In which case, it's fair to ask what his role will be. Still, he looked like a draft pick – that transition skill is easily a pick in today's game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 11th, 2021

Niagara IceDogs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Dionicio has fantastic ideas with the puck. Clearly an advanced thinker who both has problem-solving and planning ability. In situations where most dump the puck, he delays and looks for a teammate up the middle. Deceives on retrievals, looks his intended target, and then connects up the middle, even off the backhand. He had several high-level OZ passes, including a manipulation sequence: he handled the puck, faked the shot with his full body, angled wide and forced the defender to chase, and then passed through him to his teammate waiting in the slot. Even though his mechanical flaws are significant, it's clear how he was playing centre full-time three years ago. And he's shockingly good defensively for a relative new defender. Perhaps a bit too reliant on a strength advantage, but he tracks plays in the DZ with constant scanning, eliminates off-puck threats, and manages quicker players down low without much issue. His sluggish

defensive skating gets exposed regularly off the rush, but he's quite proactive in DZC. Turns DZC into rush activation sequences without inducing too much risk. The shot (leans too far back), handling (fights the puck when moving his feet), and skating (lack of depth and control of edges) require serious work. He has turnover issues, but I'm a fan.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Dionicio fought the puck in this game. Tons of turnovers in transition: no-scan dump-outs, missed passes, and skates into pressure. He wasn't much better in the neutral zone, preferring to skate towards the boards and dump the puck in, even if a controlled play was open. He's physical and engaged defensively. Gives speed too much space, but he's reasonably proactive off-puck. The inception of OZP playmaking ability. I need to see more, but I didn't see an NHL draft pick.


**Lauren Kelly:** October 22nd, 2021

Niagara IceDogs vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

Dionicio played well alongside overager Isaac Enright, showing a willingness to engage in battles in his own end and use both his body and stick. He was better in his own end in this game, sticking mostly to using his body and letting Enright clear the puck. Though he did have a couple of nice rushes up the ice, and also jumped up into the offensive zone a couple of times. A lot better of a puckhandler in the offensive zone than in his own end - when he's pressured, he tends to panic a bit. I don't think he projects as more than a third pair defenseman at the NHL level.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 7th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Dionicio had an up and down game. He demonstrated his puck rushing ability on the powerplay and protected the puck well. He was also a steady quarterback on the man-advantage and a good distributor. But it was a different story in his own end - there were a couple of lazy clearing attempts that were picked off or sent straight to another player, or didn't even get over the blueline. He was able to keep up with players on the rush and keep them to the outsides. Dionicio needs to bring the same level of consistency handling the puck in the defensive zone as he does in the offensive zone. 



88

88  
Rank

C  
Grade

6.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

5.5  
Puckhandling

4  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# ELIAS SALOMONSSON

D | SKELLEFTEÅ AIK

HEIGHT 6'1"  
WEIGHT 183

D.O.B. AUG. 31, 2004  
SHOOTS RIGHT

11%	6%	1%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	35	11	11	22
SHL	10	0	0	0
WJC-18	5	0	1	1

## Scouting Report

Elias Salomonsson's evaluation turned into a philosophical debate in our scouting team this season. What matters more in a defenceman's projection? Tools or hockey sense?

In the first category, Salomonsson ranks very highly. Smooth is overused to describe prospects, but it fits this defenceman perfectly. His skating technique is among the best in this draft, especially for a player his size. Because it's so stable and adaptable, he can easily handle the puck, pass, and fire inside movements. His combination of range and mobility gives him a large area of action on the ice. Opponents have a hard time escaping him; even if they fake him, Salomonsson can recover, close on them and strip them off the puck.

In the second category, the sense one, Salomonsson received a significantly below-average grade. The Skellefteå defenceman never allayed our doubts concerning his awareness, processing, and anticipation. There were so many great offensive and transition plays that he didn't see and many questionable defensive reads, too.

"Not sold on the decision-making," wrote Lassi Alanen, our Dir. of European Scouting. "Some odd mistakes with the puck, skating into pressure or trying to handle his way through multiple forecheckers."

If Salomonsson can learn to stick to a system, letting it dictate his movements, he could have a future as bottom-pairing, shutdown defenceman in the NHL.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2022

Sweden vs Finland - U18s

There are still some puzzling moments in Salomonsson's game, bad decisions with the puck and many of them, but I still appreciate the potential and his summer birthday is always in the back of my mind. He can engage physically, close gaps off the rush, and find options on the breakout. The issue is that he's slow to support his teammates plays and, again, misses occasions to create better play. He has to use his movement capabilities more. He has mostly been defensive in this tournament.

**Lassi Alanen:** April 26th, 2022

Finland vs. Sweden - U18s

Salomonsson does have some intriguing tools. He's rather mobile, has a long reach and stick, can engage physically and plays a rather solid defensive game aside from a few occasional mistakes. He was pretty sound on retrievals, making comfortable and quick passes from his backhand. Not sold on the decision-making though. Some odd mistakes with the puck, skating into pressure or trying to handle his way through multiple forecheckers even if his puck skills aren't that great. Moving the puck reliably is a concern.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Oscar Fantenberg YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 93%	2 Amil Krupic YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 92%	3 Eric Moe YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY 92%	4 Nicklas Eriksson YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY 92%	5 Anders Danielsson YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY 92%
6 Calle Andersson YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 92%	7 Johan Fransson YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY 92%	8 Victor Berglund YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 91%	9 Martin Eriksson YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 91%	10 Ludwig Bystrom YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 90%

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Sweden vs Switzerland - U18s

How much does hockey sense matters for defensive prospects? Probably not as much. And it's why I keep being intrigued by Salomonsson's potential. He's so fluid, capable of stepping around or past opponents easily as he has so much stride and stick range. He clearly misses offensive opportunities, misses manipulation occasions but that doesn't matter too much -- or at least it won't matter too much inside a system that will dictate most of his moves. He already feels like the player I will be frustrated to have ranked too low.

**David St-Louis:** March 23th, 2022

Skelleftea U20 vs Rogle U20 - J20 Nationell

I always go into a Salomonsson viewing hoping that he will show me better decision-making, better processing, an ability to create plays for his team, but he's mostly just lost on the ice. The tools are very attractive, but he's too much of an improvisator to make the NHL without the intervention of a seriously talented development team. He needs to learn breakout patterns, activation patterns, when to pass, when to move, where to pass, where to move, how to create advantages in the offensive zone, how to create shooting and passing lanes, risk mitigation, puck management...He's young and has more development runway. He's probably a pick, but I wouldn't select him in the first or the second round, where he will probably go.

**David St-Louis:** March 6th, 2022

Skelleftea U20 vs Malmo U20 - J20 Nationell

There was one play in this whole game that gave me hope for Salomonsson's projection: a walk around the offensive zone followed by a pass through the defensive box to a teammate on the powerplay. The rest of the game was just a collection of poor reads, like usual. The skill is extremely projectable. He's so smooth, so range, so mobile...But the skill is also not projectable because it's not supported by any kind of processing ability. I think Salomonsson could be able to follow a system and make plays, but he would need a really strong structure and great support from his teammates to perform in the NHL.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 28th, 2022

Skellefteå U20 vs Timrå IK U20 - J20 Nationell

This season is not trending well for Salomonsson. He started the game quite well though. He looked like his best self, poised and moved comfortably defensively and had some good offensive plays. He scored a goal in the first period on an impressive slap shot. The further the game went, the worse Salomonsson looked.

His offensive game: He rarely engages further up the ice from the blue line. He just stands there and shows no instincts to help the offence. His passing and puck handling were underwhelming for the most part of the game. He can't create space, he does not plan his game and he is easily stressed with the puck. In one sequence he had A LOT of space in his own end and looked up the ice with the puck. A single opponent closed in on him and panicked and threw a bad pass towards his own goal and they needed to start the whole play over.

His defensive game: In the first period he had a couple of good shut down plays where he used his reach and good backwards skating and killed the attack for opponents at his own blue line. The more momentum Timrå got in the game, the harder Salomonsson had to shut down plays. He should work on his defensive stick work to be more effective but his backwards mobility is a strong asset of his. It looks like he is playing with confidence in his own end. He engages, he turns his head, telling teammates where to be. Sometimes, he will read a play wrong and he had a lot of his shifts in his own end the last two periods of the game and they allowed many scoring chances and were not able to turn the play over. He was not the worst player on his team in those sequences but with his merits and tools he should be a more dominant and comfortable defensive player at this level.

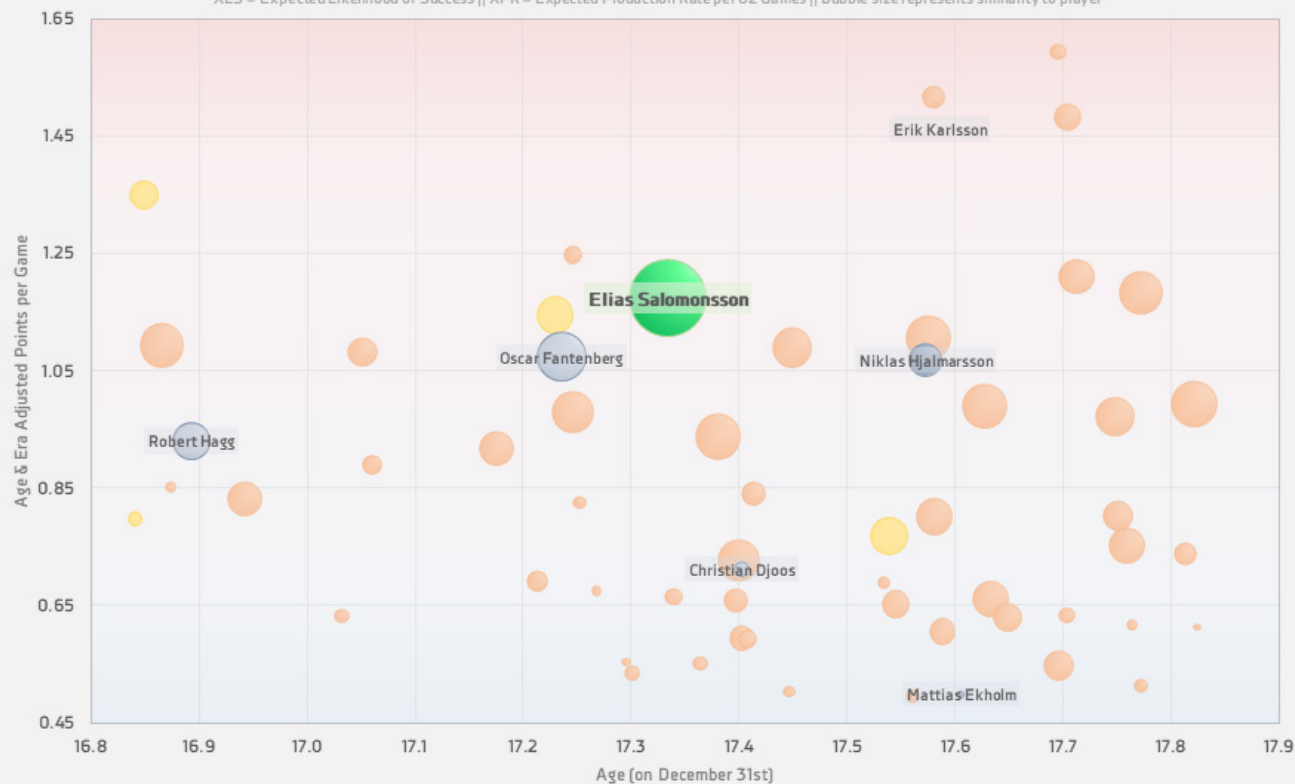
Elias will get drafted because of his reach, mobility and right handed stick. He also has a good shot and is a double-digit scorer in the junior league so far this season. His instincts and hockey sense are below average and he shows technical flaws in his puck handling game that does not help either. Seeing him as a future top 4 defenseman is being very optimistic. And frankly his defence is not good enough for a potential third pairing defenseman either.

## Elias Salomonsson 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 58 || Base XLS: 11% || Impact XLS: 2% || XPR: 17.8 || Drafted Pct: 28%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 62 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



pGPS System by  
Jeremy Davis

● Busts ● Fringe ● Depth ● 3rd Pair ● 2nd Pair ● 1st Pair ● Elias Salomonsson

Raw data via  
Elite Prospects

**David St-Louis:** November 20th, 2021

Skelleftea U20 vs Djurgardens U20 - J20 Nationell

The hockey sense doubts continues for Salomonsson: panicky plays, bad timing on line changes, not using his stick defensively, supporting late, not scanning... At this point, it is even hard to see him fill a role in the NHL. He lacks confidence, awareness, and processing of the play. He is all great tools, but those aren't great enough to carry him. He is hyper-reliant on others to move the puck.

**David St-Louis:** November 19th, 2021

Skelleftea U20 vs Djurgardens U20 - J20 Nationell

Salomonsson is probably one of most toolsy and more skilled prospects in the draft: truly smooth skating with perfect speed-retaining pivot, significantly above-average quickness, speed and agile lateral movements. He floats on the ice. And his handling is similarly high-level, always in his hip pocket. He even has some quite advanced passing skills. But he doesn't create anything on the ice. He doesn't seem to know how and is scared to try. A really bad combination for development. He defers to teammates on every play, passing too early, before attracting any kind of pressure, and he misses open spaces, lanes, and teammates to use constantly. He puck watches defensively and also misses passing lanes there. Considering the advanced technical ability and even

habits, this is very weird. Salomonsson looks like a freak athlete who never really learned to play the mental game. At least that's my impression from watching this contest.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 6th, 2021

Luleå U20 vs Skellefteå U20 - J20 Nationell

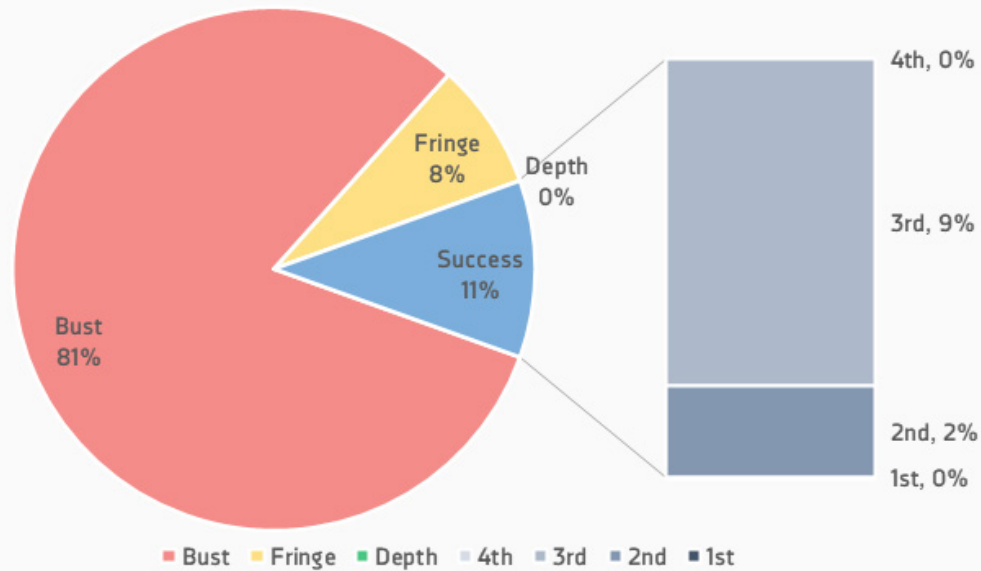
Elias plays on the top pair, the second PP unit and the first PK unit for Skellefteå. Salomonsson glides well with ease. He does not need much energy to be on the right side of plays using strong skating, both forward as backwards. His backwards skating is particularly strong. He has a slightly short stride and from standing still his acceleration could be better. But with good timing and gliding he wins puck battles with just being first to the puck in a lot of situations. He can also skate out of danger with the puck. He moves quite smoothly in all directions. His overall skating has above average potential if he can fix his stride a bit. On the power play, he plays on the left side and moves well to open for a shot. He can shoot one-timers and with a quick release but the power in his shots could use improvement.

Salomonsson has good puck control. He uses his whole reach to control the puck. He can skate with good control of the puck looking up to find the next play. He rarely makes mistakes by mishandling the puck. He does not possess an elite touch with the puck though. He rarely dekes his way

## Elias Salomonsson 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS XLS% Tier

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.

Chart



through or across the offensive blueline but can find creative passes the open up plays in the offensive end.

Salomonsson's reading of the game is inconsistent. His vision is good and you can see what he wants to do. With the puck, he tends to make a more difficult play than the situation demands which can get him into trouble. He often wants to rush the play with a strong long pass and when it works, it is good. It would be beneficial for him though to find more efficient easy plays at times. That said, he often plays with good gap control and can use his mobility and hockey sense to shut down plays and defend his own blue line. I like how he detects where the puck is heading most times and can compensate for some of his technical skating flaws. The fact that his instincts are to make good plays, I can see him being able to learn to be more consistent with experience.

Elias has good reach and uses that well but is not a physical defenseman. He uses his stick more than his body to defend. He is also capable of pushing forwards to the outside while under pressure in his own end. I also like how his third period is his best period with the team trailing. He competes and wants to win.

All in all, Salomonsson is an intriguing prospect for the upcoming draft. I would like to see more consistent decision making and more elite creative plays for him to be a top 15 pick. But he shows good vision, mobility and reach. There is a lot to work with and with a couple of years of development he could be top 4 defenseman in the NHL. As a right handed shooter he has a good chance of getting in the later half of the first round.


**David St-Louis:** August 18th, 2021

Skelleftea U20 vs Djurgardens U20 - J20 Nationell

Salomonsson can't play at this level at all. He's either slow-paced in his decisions or panicky. The funny thing is that he was manipulating forecheckers by accident in this game, taking so long to make passing decisions that he attracted them on himself and created more space for teammates. He has the skill to slip passes through opponents, but no real desire to do it. He had one great sequence where he made a breakout pass around an opponent and then picked up a loose puck in the offensive zone and skated behind the net to fire a pass inside. His hockey sense looked significantly below-average overall in this game. He is an athlete, but not one who can read the game all that well.

**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

Sweden U18 vs. USA U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Bit of a mixed bag for Salomonsson in this contest. There were some things I loved about his game in this one. The constant off-the-puck scanning, the one-touch passing, the proactive defensive reads, the physicality, and even the evasiveness as a skater. His off-the-puck sense is through the roof. Couldn't help himself once the puck was on his stick, though. Salomonsson just had to skate through two or three opponents at a time. There wasn't any real planning. It was just get the puck and go. He missed a tonne of passing opportunities in this contest, choosing instead to skate into pressure and lose the puck. Needs to use his teammates more often (at all). 



89  
Rank

C  
Grade

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

4.5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# MATTHEW MORDEN

D | ST. ANDREW'S COLLEGE

HEIGHT 6'5" D.O.B. JUL. 29, 2004  
WEIGHT 203 SHOOTS LEFT

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
CAHS	41	8	27	35
WJC-18	3	0	0	0

> Committed to Harvard Univ.

## Scouting Report

The performance that Matthew Morden strung together in limited ice-time with his U18 World Hockey Championships debut was enough to pique our curiosity and ponder the possibility of the St. Andrew's College defender as a top pick.

It was a massive step up in competition for Morden, from Canadian high school to facing the very best that the American development system can offer. And he more than held his own.

"What a debut for Morden," Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis wrote in the corresponding game report. "Just like Pickering, he wasn't the best performer, but the projectable elements were there: The mobility for his size (especially the ability to use his outside edges), his confidence and escapability vs the forecheck, and his vision."

In time, it became clear that we may have jumped the gun a bit. A look back at Morden's work in Canadian high school and USHL action revealed a lower-pace player who is still learning how best to use his physical gifts. The limitations to his technical ability became more apparent. Even seemingly basic items like his shot and pock-check lacked refinement,

suffering a long sweeping motion that made them easy to predict and counter for opponents.

With time, however, Morden could push his skills to an NHL level with the support of the right development staff. He could become an NHL-caliber mover, on top of having the range to intercept and move pucks.

"Skating needs work, but he's not behind the curve for a player his size," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote on January 1st. "Gets his knees to his toes and he has stability and control. Chases a bit defensively, but he's physical and his length gets stops."

What stopped our team from ranking him higher on our board was his processing of the play and decision-making, especially at the USHL level. It could take some time for Morden to improve the quality of his plays. Many of the patterns he picked up in High-School, the risky passes, loose gaps, and outside drives to the net, they won't work for him at the next levels. There's going to be a steep learning curve for this player.

## Game Reports

David St-Louis - April 28th, 2022

Finland vs Canada - WJ18

Morden didn't get enough minutes to get in the rhythm of the game. He wasn't used all that much as he was slow in his plays overall. The lack of pace is normal for someone who is stepping up in competition so much. He needs to get better

at IDing plays before getting the puck. The skating...He has a bit of a high stance, but overall it could become a strength.

David St-Louis: April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

A revelation. What a debut for Morden. Just like Pickering,



he wasn't the best performer, but the projectable elements were there: The mobility for his size (especially the ability to use his outside edges), his confidence and escapability vs the forecheck, and his vision. He anticipates and sees some plays develop. Decent rush defence, a bit of a loose gap sometimes, He approximates some plays, but at this point, the results don't matter much for him, more the ideas behind the plays and the technical ability. Those two things could turn into an impactful game with time. I liked the time where he dangles a high approaching defender at the point.

**Daniel Gee:** March 6th, 2022

St. Andrews College vs Northwood School Prep - CISAA

Morden is bigger, more skilled, and meaner than everyone in this game -- a clear step-up in skill and habits compared to his contemporaries.

A rather mobile transitional defender, Mordin might stumble in his backwards crossovers and heel-pushes, but he can ratchet up his pace so quickly to establish a gap that he can play a bit more aggressive than most in the neutral zone. Long swings, aggressive shifts to puck carriers on odd-man attacks, and lineups that evolve into board-pins were all patterns in this viewing. Even saw some stick-in-release work as the game went on. His reach was present in sustained pressure as well, deflecting multiple shots away. Morden stretches out his forward stride to a fairly large degree to chase puck carriers -- a bit of bad habit he possesses that I assume works at this level, especially pressure wise. Tends to want to envelope and rush puck carriers to create stops -- not wholly translatable. It was shocking how much he abused net-front threats. Just levelling and cross checking them into submission -- it got to the point where he went too far and started being penalised. Had a couple failed scanning sequences in this viewing; on one he didn't cover a man sneaking into soft ice, and was very indecisive when he finally saw the threat -- hesitated badly. He does get into passing lanes; Morden had a wonderful pass deflection reading the high-to-low Northwood cycle, reaching in to kill the pressure.

He started the game off with a bang, a really deft small area handle in his own slot to avoid forechecker, then attempting a high-difficulty saucer pass through layers (that was blocked). I think this kind of encapsulates his game -- he's so raw, but is at least pushing high-skill actions. Tends to almost always drive pucks wide, dropping his shoulder -- never really was able to integrate the inside on these carry-ins. Lots of lapping the offensive zone. Joins every rush he can, usually as a trailer -- can effectively up his pace to become an option. Most of his play in sustained offensive zone pressure was with the man-advantage. Drags most pucks from the boards to the middle and runs the entire point alone. Has a hard one-timer with strong mechanics -- arms unlocked and in front, releases through his

knee. Obliterated a teammate on one shot attempt. Can be a rather relentless shooter. On the same play he hammered a slapshot off the left-point, making the goaltender reach out with their toe to make the save -- can leverage so much of his size to create power. Same activation habits here, all outside lapping. Honestly looks like a B-grade prospect -- size, skill -- will get so much better in a good development system. Harvard defender factory is going to help a lot.

**David St-Louis:** February 27th, 2022

Shattuck's St. Mary's vs. St. Andrews College - CISAA

It's hard to see an NHL player here. The skating projects as average, but maybe due to a lack of strength or technique, the shot does not: a large sweeping motion. He seems limited in mechanics overall and the pace was too low in this game, both his movements and his decisions, for him to really make an impact. There was one instance where he attracted a forechecker and slipped a puck under his stick. Morden's rush defence is tighter, but he also makes large sweeping pokechecks that give time to the opposition to slip the puck under his own stick. The footwork is committing.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 1st, 2022

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Only 10 minutes for Morden in this game, his second outing in the USHL. He activates off the puck, joins the rush, and anticipates openings before many defencemen. Took on the entire team himself in one sequence, attacking the middle and then playing keep away before getting to the net. Flows between different ideas, whether that's joining the rush after defending or activating off-puck into the slot and then passing to the inside. Some poor decisions, but can't put too weight on those given the circumstances. Skating needs work, but he's not behind the curve for a player his size. Gets his knees to his toes and he has stability and control. Chases a bit defensively, but he's physical and his length gets stops. Lots to like in this one.

**David St-Louis:** December 31st, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Not a great game from Morden. He didn't show much of anything offensively except pinches, but mostly it was because his line couldn't get to the offensive zone as the defensive and transition game was lacklustre. Poor risk management in most situations, loose gaps in the defensive zone, low pace of play, and a constant attracted-by-the-puck defensive style. Off the rush, his defence was better: closer gaps, more physical, and better check attachment. In transition, he was at his best making picks for teammates. He didn't really open passing lanes, just threw pucks to them that were cut by the opposition. The pace, with and without the puck, was low in this game -- the main problem, which is relatively normal for a HS player.



90  
Rank

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

6  
Puckhandling

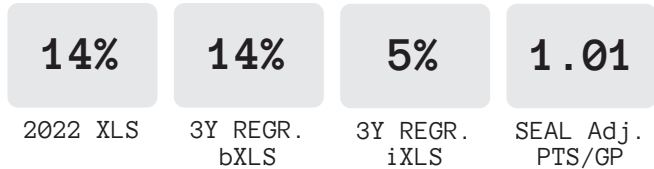
4.5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

# RYAN GREENE

C | GREEN BAY GAMBLERS

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. OCT. 21, 2003  
WEIGHT 179 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	59	19	32	51

> Committed to Boston Univ.

## Scouting Report

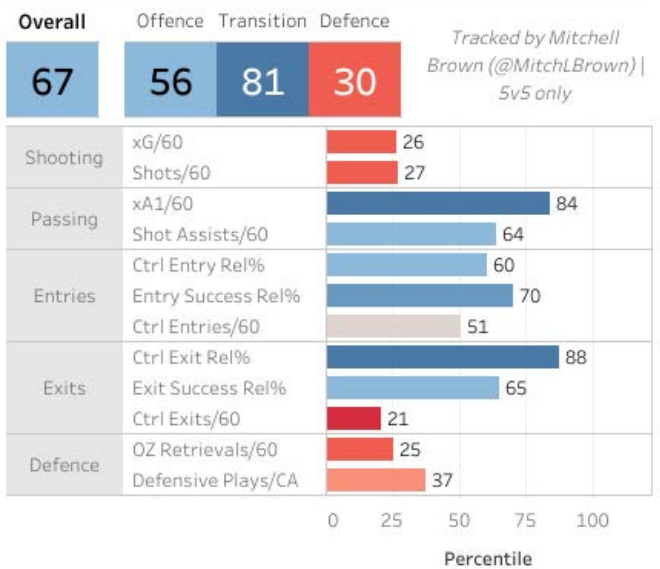
This season was nothing short of disastrous for the Green Bay Gamblers. They finished dead-last in the USHL's Eastern Conference with just 23 wins, while being on the losing end of blowout-after-blowout in the second-half of the season. Still, Ryan Greene posted a respectable 51 points in 59 games, impressing our scouts along the way.

Puckhandling is the skill through which Greene's game flows. With an expansive range of motion, frequent changes of direction, and in-motion skill, he's completed some of the most memorable handling sequences in the draft class. And unlike most prospects, he's the one dictating the 1-on-1 situation, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown explains, "[He] cut across the neutral zone, set up the defender with crossovers, baited the defender's reach by pushing the puck just in front of their stick, then pulled the puck back across for a backhand chance."

When Greene's not beating defenders, he's using those same puck skills to set up teammates. If the defender's reaching out, he pulls the puck towards his feet before passing. If they're well-positioned, he reaches around or uses his backhand. But the best flashes are when he sells the shot or a different pass, then feathers the puck through a tiny opening for a high-danger chance.

Additionally, Greene brings some defensive value through his backchecking and pressure on the point. While goal-scoring isn't the core of his game, his shot, especially the one-timer, isn't an empty threat. The skating mechanics require additional refinement, but his crossovers, turns, and other

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 103.9



edge-centric skating skills project as clear NHL abilities.

So, why isn't Greene higher on the board? His impact and skill level are misaligned. As Brown explains, "he's not a standout playmaker, shooter, or neutral zone play-driver. The prospect graveyard is filled with skill players who lack dimensions." To make the NHL, Greene better link together his puck skills with improved scanning habits, play selection, and defence. Given his passing skill, adding layers to his playmaking seems like the pathway of least resistance to the NHL: more deception, more scanning, and anticipating openings instead of trying to force pucks through closed lanes.

If Greene does it, he could become a fun piece inside a team's fourth or maybe even third line.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Mike Kompon YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 97%	2 Ryan Dzingel YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 97%	3 Travis Morin YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY 96%	4 Evan Allen YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 95%	5 Ryan Walters YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 95%
6 J.T. Miller YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 95%	7 Barry Tallackson YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 95%	8 Brett Bruneteau YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY 94%	9 Matt Berry YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 94%	10 Ryan Haggerty YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 94%

## Game Reports

**Joey Padmanabhan:** April 15th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Rough game for the Gamblers but not a bad outing for Greene. A tonne of special teams play on both sides saw Greene on the power play and penalty kill. He demonstrated a good amount of skill, showing off some diversity in his zone entries and solving opposing forechecks both in even strength and on the man advantage. He's a smooth skater with high-level hands; he protects the puck with nice reach under duress and has the edgework to create separation with a quick stop or behind-the-back pivot. I wasn't sold on his IQ in this game, which was something I thought was a strength for him. Some of his passes were questionable, he'd skate to his target and make a shallow pass to a man with multiple defenders on him. Other times, he'd misread his teammates' routes and feather area passes that ended up being turnovers. There's something intriguing here and the skill is undeniable, just want to see him put it together a little better at full strength.

**Daniel Gee:** April 9th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

This game got extremely lopsided, especially in the third. Greene was on for four goals against in the final frame; massive team-sized breakdowns part of the issue, effort another factor. Before that, Greene was okay in transition and in sustained offensive zone pressure. While he passed behind the flow of his teammates too many times. He had a strong 2-on-1 rush on a penalty kill where he was able to poke a puck away on the line, outwait a shuffling goalie and then execute a pass through the blue paint that was missed. He scored as an off-puck trailer on another sequence, taking a backpass and one-timing a pick top blocker -- got his whole body down to a knee to add power to his release. Some evidence of handling skill; one a second period play, he took a puck in his defensive zone, handled to the backhand on the subsequent OZ entry, spun, and toe dragged an opponent -- having the puck knocked away. Strikes me as a player who has a lot of tools but has no idea how to implement them to

their fullest. In sustained pressure, Greene's best sequence was in the second; he kept the puck in two times and then took a free puck on the right-hand circle, deked a pokecheck and hit a backdoor threat for the primary assist -- the skill blending was really nice. He showed off his mobility on one first period shift; Green wheeled the puck from behind the net. He pushed hip-pocket protection as he crossed over, looping high, ultimately having his point pass tipped. Had other shooting opportunities on the powerplay; he released off of one leg, elbow flared, but a lack of manipulation made it easy to disrupt his release. Not really creative on-puck either -- probably a below average sense grade.

Not sure how much weight to put into this defensive performance -- it looked like Green Bay gave up at a certain point -- which could mean something in the long run. Greene tends to reach too often, all while being very static. He showed some scanning habits but never really capitalised on the extra information. Failed a tie-up on a give-and-go that resulted in a goal. Very late in the game he was gliding back and reaching as Chicago scored another. Rough third, as mentioned.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Greene has skill. He uses hook passes, spin-around backhand passes, and demonstrates some shooting ability on the PP. Flashy handler at times, too. But he's not a standout playmaker, shooter, or neutral zone play-driver. The prospect graveyard is filled with skill players who lack dimensions. Of course, part of the job of scouting is projecting players for where the NHL is headed. But that still doesn't fill me with a ton of optimism. Perhaps if applies himself on the defensive end, scans more regularly, and starts anticipating openings instead of throwing pucks into them, he has a chance to play on a skill-first fourth-line.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

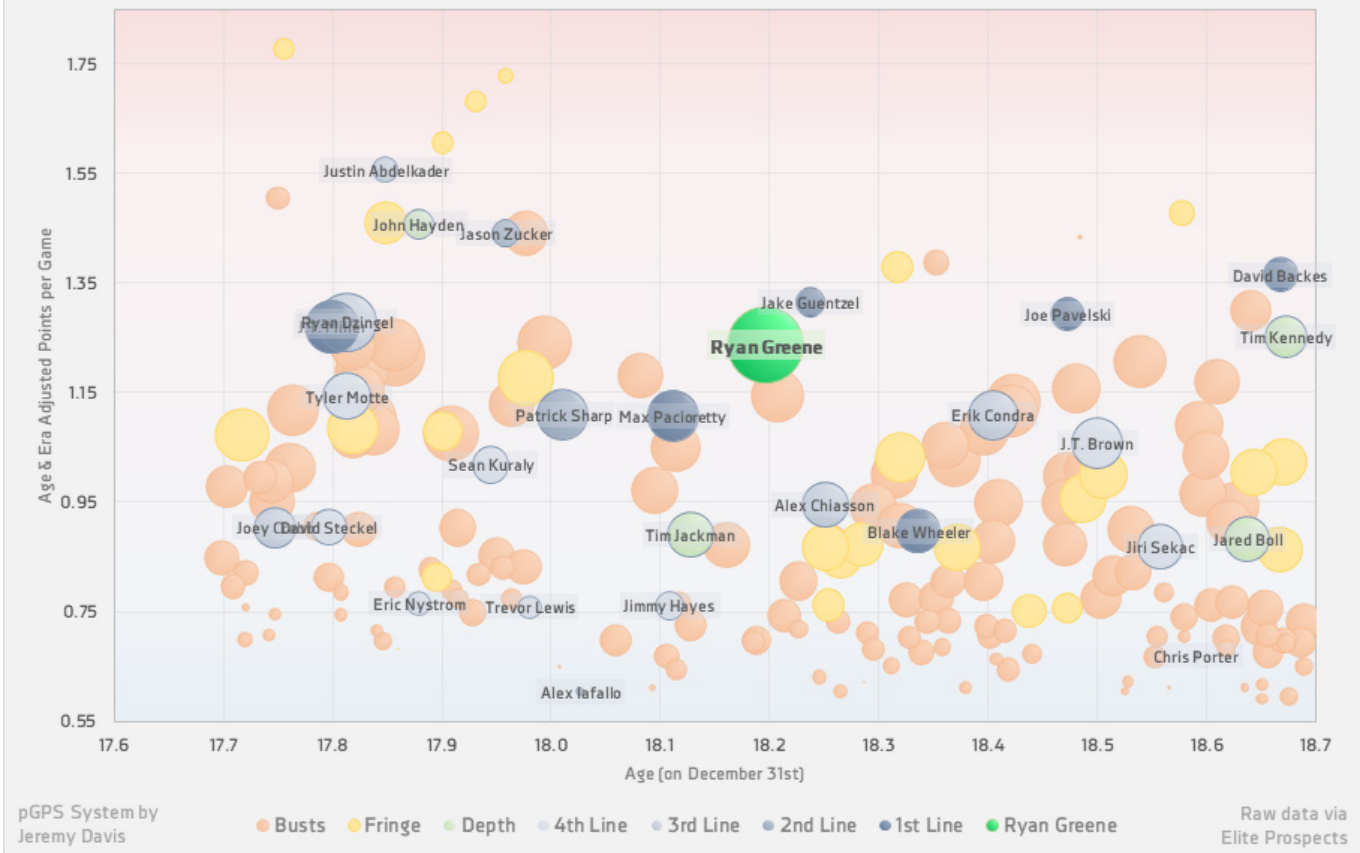
After the blowout, Green Bay opted to play this one passive-

## Ryan Greene 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 193 || Base XLS: 14% || Impact XLS: 6% || XPR: 39.6 || Drafted Pct: 40%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



ly. It almost worked. But Greene had issues on the breakout, where he often found himself flatfooted in the middle of the defensive zone. Instead of using his handling skill, he threw poor passes to teammates. However, he did connect with a long-range breakout feed through defenders. Turned a contested puck into a chance by deking, entering the mohawk to scan the inside, and then spotting his target. Fluid and consistently encourages defenders to bite with changes of pace or weight shifts. He's just a tricky projection because his impact and skill level are so misaligned. His limitations are largely reading the play and linked his different skills together. Could be an interesting development pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

While Lund was having success in a blowout game, Greene was contributing little. He attacks defenders 1-on-1 without any concern for the game around him. If he delayed for his teammates to finish their skating routes, he'd have far more success. He doesn't use space when it's given to him. On the other hand, he gained the middle by cutting inside across the front of the defender. That's a good sign. Scored with a one-timer on the powerplay. Impact remains a level below the puck skills. He's more of a third-rounder for me.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 11th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Greene didn't achieve much in this game. A vanilla pass to set up a scoring chance and a fun handling sequence to shoot under a defender's stick off the rush. Off-puck instincts are limited. While Lund finds space, Greene stays along the boards, neither getting open nor engaging in the battle. When the puck's on his stick, he feels in control of the game and understands openings. Without it, he seems lost. There are moments of defensive prowess and forechecking acumen, but they're so inconsistent still. Likely not a player I'd consider taking until the third round at this stage, but it's easy to see the appeal.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** January 22nd, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Quieter performance from Greene but he still does the little things right. He's nothing crazy offensively, but he's smart in transition and consistently finds his teammates with time and space. Defensively, he's so strong, tracking his man, blocking shots, winning his battles. He's got to learn to shoot more with possession, he's a little bit deferential and is always scanning for teammates. There's a lot of skill though and he plays a game that seems projectable to the next level.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Alright, Greene's good. He's creating offence in sustainable ways without losing the high-skill flashes. Created a number of chances: circling around the net and passing through multiple defenders, cutting inside before sending Lund down the middle for a chance, and a quick-possession pass around a defender's stick for an uncontested look. Moments of shooting skill, but nothing that suggested he'll be a scorer in the NHL: he struggles to get open around the slot and doesn't take the puck to the inside when given opportunities. Skating has a wide recovery, short extensions, and inconsistent depth. His crossovers and turns are closer to NHL calibre. Backtracked well and grabbed a couple of steals. Awareness of backpressure is lacking (he cuts back into pressure and doesn't use contact to create space), and he's not a consistent play creator. Perhaps more of a skilled connector at the next level without a ton of puck protection ability. Maybe a third-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

There's nothing I can write about Greene that I haven't written already. A deft puckhandler; certainly NHL-calibre. Actually doing anything with those puck skills isn't his strength. But there were moments. He connected with a pump-fake cross-slot pass, and then used a give-and-go to get a two-touch scoring chance – both are advanced reads.

In the NZ, he looks for teammates on the weak side, and even connected with a couple of tricky passes in situations where he normally tries to deke through everyone. I'm still not convinced he's a draft pick for us, but he's getting closer. I think there's a lot of runway for improvement here.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** December 16th, 2021

Madison Capitols vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Super impressed with this outing by Greene. So smart on both ends of the ice, tracking his man in the defensive zone and consistently winning board battles. He's simple but effective in the offensive zone, finding teammates in soft spots and creating pockets of space for himself with deft stickhandles. His passing is a strong suit, especially off the rush, he feathered a few nice passes that connected with teammates for high quality chances. His skating is surprisingly strong for a non-NTDP USHL prospect. There's good kneed bend, he sits into his stride, and keeps a relaxed upper body with good posture. I really think he's got the all-round tools to be a good player at the next level.

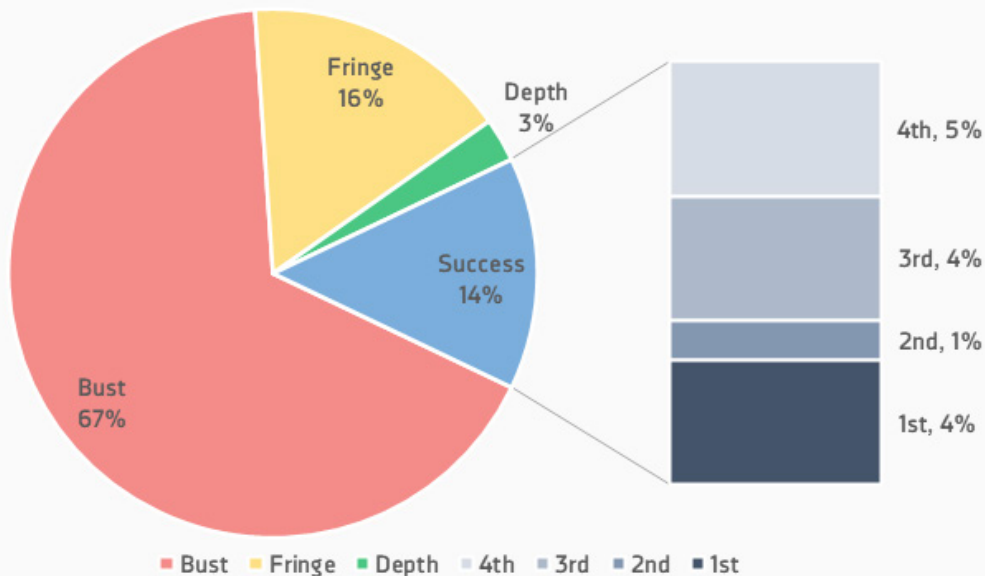
**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Greene had some awesome moments in this game, mostly through his hands. He manipulated the feet of the defender before cutting inside in one sequence. Much better off-puck details compared to previous viewings. Reloaded in the DZ to receive pucks with speed instead of stopping. Got above the

### Ryan Greene 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



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## "When Greene's not beating defenders, he's using those same puck skills to set up teammates. If the defender's reaching out, he pulls the puck towards his feet before passing."

puck on a few sequences – teammates should've rewarded him for it. Set up a goal on the powerplay by skating around the net instead of forcing a play. At 5-on-5, his game was limited beyond that manipulation sequence. Another where he delayed and backed off all five Steel players but then made the simple play. Feel like he's always on the cusp of a breakout, but doesn't seem to quite get there.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

I fear Greene's the same player that he was last season: just dekes. His best play of the game saw him cut across in the NZ, set up the defender with crossovers, baited the defender's reach by pushing the puck just in front of their stick, then cut around for a backhand chance. Perhaps he could've driven across the net for a better look. A couple of failed dekes and missed opportunities. Lacks some restraint, but I mostly felt his game was limited by a lack of activity. Poor off-puck movement, limiting support readings, lots of idling, and struggled to get the puck back. Didn't look like a pick.

**J.D. Burke:** September 24th, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Des Moines Buccaneers - USHL

Pretty much a copy+paste from yesterday's performances. Flashes of high-end skill from Greene with the puck on his stick, including an inside-out move to create a scoring chance in the middle frame, but nothing of substance. Liked his shot a lot more in this contest, for whatever that's worth. Needs to do a better job of facilitating offence through his linemates.

**J.D. Burke:** September 23rd, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Not an especially noteworthy performance from Greene. Played a lot on the inside, at the net front, and established positioning on defenceman a few times to win loose pucks, but that's about the height of his achievements in this contest. His handling skill is probably the single most dynamic quality in his game, but it's also his biggest weakness; he tends to overhandle away from passing and shooting opportunities, often with his head down, and at a glide. His skating is a bit rough. He tilts forward at the hips, lacks ankle flexion, and doesn't have much pop in his first two steps. Liked his competitiveness in this contest, but not much else.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 21st, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Despite being a late-2003, Ryan Greene's already challenging projection. His standout skill is handling; the way he cuts through traffic, drives the puck forward, and sets up chances. The skills around his hands seemed somewhat average in this game, leading to a mediocre scoring chance creation performance. His shot, passing, and skating all lack skill refinement. The skating's especially noticeable, where he's mostly an inside edge handler who lacks some ankle flexion and consistency. Defence looks average: he scans, adjusts, and occasionally diffuses a play, but he's mostly lurking instead of applying pressure. Right now, he's mostly a secondary creator on his line with a bit of flash. Nothing that really screams top prospect but he has moments where he looks like he could become one.



91  
Rank

C  
Grade

7.5  
Skating

6.5  
Tracking

4.5  
Transitions

5  
Post

4  
Hands

6.5  
Depth

# TYLER BRENNAN

G | PRINCE GEORGE COUGARS

HEIGHT 6'4" D.O.B. SEP. 27, 2003  
WEIGHT 190 CATCHES LEFT

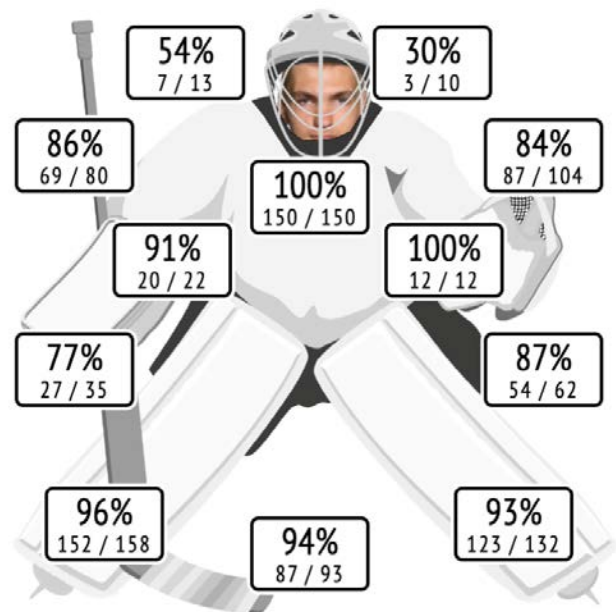
LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
WHL	39	3.58	.899	4

## Scouting Report

Very few goaltenders in the 2022 NHL Draft stand out as must-drafts – but despite a relatively deep year at other positions, it's not hard to imagine a scenario in which Prince George Cougars backstop Tyler Brennan is an early mid-round pick.

Playing behind a defence that gave him almost nothing to work with – either from a structural standpoint or a consistency-based one – Brennan still managed to put up a season that offered possibly the only consistent set of habits in the entire goaltending class. He boasts the smooth, almost-underwhelming transition game scouts found themselves enamoured with during Dylan Garand's draft year, but Brennan also offers the kind of size that general managers still covet.

His biggest weakness seemed to be anticipating where he needed to be when his opponents started moving the puck across the slot line, but it's still tough to tell how much of that was his fault and how much was a byproduct of inconsistent defensive structure in front of him. He managed to avoid falling into 'panic mode' habits as a result of those allowed plays, holding a consistently moderate depth structure that kept him from overcommitting and opening up empty-net opportunities.



Scouts may find themselves wishing for some experimentation to his game in an attempt to fill in the gaps left by his defence, but it's too early in his development to tell if that's due to a lack of malleability to his style or an attempt to stem some of the chaos. Overall, it's easy to see an NHL ceiling here – it's just a little too soon to tell what that ceiling would be.


**Cat Silverman:** April 1, 2022

Prince George Cougars vs. Kelowna Rockets (WHL)

Brennan does a remarkable job of showcasing the consistency he's managed to establish in his game behind one of the most unstructured defensive rosters I've witnessed in years. It's apparent that the outcome of this game (Prince George drops the decision 9-2 when all is said and done) isn't exactly a shining star on Brennan's resume, and he certainly doesn't play every moment perfectly. But even his biggest flaw – a nearly robotic level of consistency to his positioning and reaction to shots and cyclical movements from the Kelowna offence, which provides his opponents with the ability to pick out patterns and wait out holes in his coverage – is something that can be easily understood and explained as a strategy on his end. He struggles with aggressively pushing rebounds out into the corners of the ice, and it's hard to tell if he's got a good handle on puck-playing just from watching him attempting to stay afloat in this outing. But perhaps his biggest attribute that can be picked out watching him in this game in particular is the fact that he doesn't get himself turned around even when plays go into corners and behind the net. He remains unflinchingly dedicated to facing the bulk of the play out in front of the blue paint, and it eliminates countless opportunities for his opponents to get him turned around the way some younger, less disciplined goaltenders might.

**Cat Silverman:** March 23, 2022

CHL Top Prospects Game

Hard to read too much into what a goaltender does during the high-flying Top Prospects game, but there was a lot to like about what Brennan was able to showcase in a game that was certainly high-octane offence, but without the caved-in pressure in his own zone that Prince George sometimes allowed to build up in WHL games. It's clear that teams will need either some positive development from Brennan when it comes to his ability to read plays and regulate his movements on sequences that utilise sustained movement across the slot line, but Brennan still made some absolutely stellar choices when it came to his depth management during offensive break-outs for Team Red. It's much more palatable to watch him maintain that smooth, controlled transition game across the crease when he's not battling from behind rapidly-closing-in chaos like he does normally, and it's still hard not to give him too much for the fact that he just doesn't seem capable of being drawn into getting turned around inside his own crease. Still somewhat lukewarm on what he shows with his hands but his overall speed and game read talent showcase a goaltender who's likely to thrive in fast-paced environments. It'll be a treat to see him as an overtime goaltender based on how he played during this particular outing. 

**"Overall, it's easy to see an NHL ceiling here – it's just a little too soon to tell what that ceiling would be."**

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92  
Rank

C  
Grade

4.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

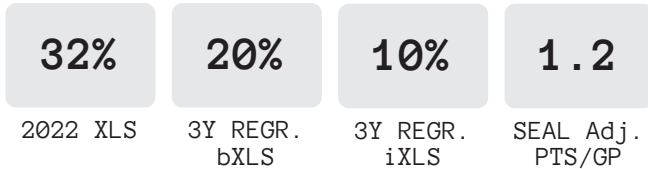
5.5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# SERVÁC PETROVSKÝ

C | OWEN SOUND ATTACK

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. AUG. 10, 2004  
WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	65	28	26	54

## Scouting Report

Without much fanfare, Servác Petrovský finished top-five in both points and points per game for a '04-born player in the OHL. His 0.83 points per game clip beat out many top prospects, including Hunter Haight, Owen Beck, Pano Fimis, and Paul Ludwinski. Just like the several Owen Sound prospects in this draft guide, Petrovský's game is one of detail and nuance.

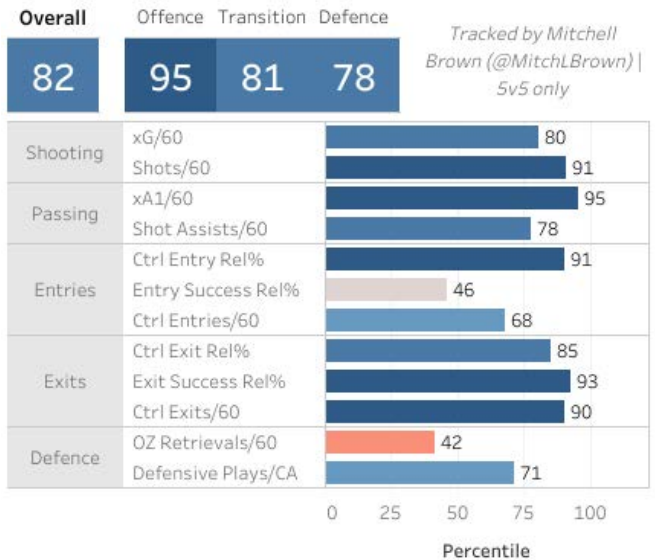
Petrovský's offence comes from his off-puck reads and shooting skill. He doesn't just identify the best pocket of space, he times his movements. He hits the brakes after sprinting to become an option at the top of the slot or sneaks behind a defender's back to become a backdoor threat. The ensuing shot comes off his stick without any wind up and is often cleverly placed.

The off-puck instincts also facilitates Petrovský's playmaking, where he gets a pass inside space, waits for a defender to close in, then passes to a teammate in even better positioning.

In the NHL, Petrovský's mechanical limitations might prove too limiting to become a play-driver. In isolation, his skating is functional and his handling occasionally pops, but the cracks begin to appear when he's forced to do them at the same time.

Here's Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown explaining how: "He keeps the puck in front of his body (rather than in his hip pocket), lacks ankle flexion, and moves the puck in rhythm with his strides. He requires a glide before doing anything - deking, passing, shooting,

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 96.2



which occasionally becomes a lack of adaptability."

There exists a clear path to the NHL for Petrovský's through his defence. He's a pro-level defender through non-stop scanning, intelligent positioning, and always keeping his knees bent, ready to accelerate.

Adding a bit more physicality will increase Petrovský's odds of becoming a defensive impact player in the NHL. As OHL scout Lauren Kelly noted throughout the season, he's already a subtly effective player on retrievals. If he can do it, he could become a defence-first fourth-liner. Increasing his deceptiveness and crossover frequency might earn him a third line role.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 John Hughes YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY 96%	2 Bo Horvat YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 95%	3 Bryan Cameron YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY 95%	4 Daniel Paille YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY 95%	5 Kelly Geoffrey YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY 95%
6 Nikolay Goldobin YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 95%	7 Nicklas Jensen YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 95%	8 Aaron Snow YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY 95%	9 Greg Nemisz YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY 95%	10 Andrew Fritsch YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 95%

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Petrovský's skill level might just be too low. He's a simple player with the puck and often avoids risks. The hands have moments, but he's a classic one-stride, one-push puck-in-front handler that becomes so turnover-prone in the professional ranks. The skating doesn't help either. Too stride dependent and he lacks the depth to manage contact along the boards. He sees mid-skill opportunities and executes, but he rarely identifies the best play. The defence and support game will be his path to the NHL. Maybe an end-of-board type.

**Marek Novotný:** March 25th, 2022

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Petrovský again had trouble keeping the puck on his stick. But he was able to fight for it and made some nice rushes. I finally saw more support from his defensemen, even though it was a crushing defeat. But he did a good job defensively on the penalty kill. He also controlled the puck in the neutral zone, complete with a spin move and subsequent pass. He generally supported his teammates and did a nice job with off-puck offence.

**Lauren Kelly:** March 4th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Petrovský was a good support player in this game, working well with linemate Guindon (who scored four goals). Good work in battles, will drive to the net when he doesn't have the puck, but tends to take it wide when he has it on the rush. Lots of shoulder checks and scanning on retrievals, and there was a decent rush from him in this game where he stichanded around a defenseman to get on the break-away, but a weak shot was turned aside. Skating looks about average, but strong defensively and can adapt to changes quickly. Good decisions without the puck and doesn't make too many mistakes. Probably a mid-round pick at this point, but there's room to grow.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 2nd, 2022

Kitchener Rangers vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Petrovský's a projectable defender. He proactively eliminates off-puck threats, changes coverage when necessary, disrupts the puck carrier in puck pursuit, and makes tons of crafty plays along the boards to win possession and make a play to the middle. Offence is mostly simple with the occasional complex play. In this game, that was a cross-slot pass for what should've been a tap-in. Scored with a generic outside leg wrister in transition, he got the jump on the defender and read the goaltender's positioning. Off-puck offensive reads aren't advanced (i.e., they lack timing and movement), but he generally chooses between supporting and scoring position well. The mechanical foundation is a bit weak. He lacks ankle flexion and hunches over, and his hands and feet only work one at a time. There's enough upside to justify inclusion on our board, but I think it's probably at the end. I see him as a potential fourth liner.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Petrovský understands how to play pro-level defence. He scans, keeps his knees bent, and supports battles. Where many players plant their feet, he moves, allowing him to get the jump on passes or diffuse plays in help defence situations. Offence is questionable. He tries to outspeed players, but his skating looks closer to a weakness than a strength projection-wise (some ankle flexion, but his hips stay too high, feet kick, inconsistent crossover use, limited skills). Some flashes of handling skill, but he mostly keeps the puck out in front. And he bobbles pucks regularly, even inside his flashy moves. He's Rohrer sans violence and off-puck instincts. Not sure that's a pick. But he's definitely worth following for the rest of the season.

**Marek Novotný:** February 4th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

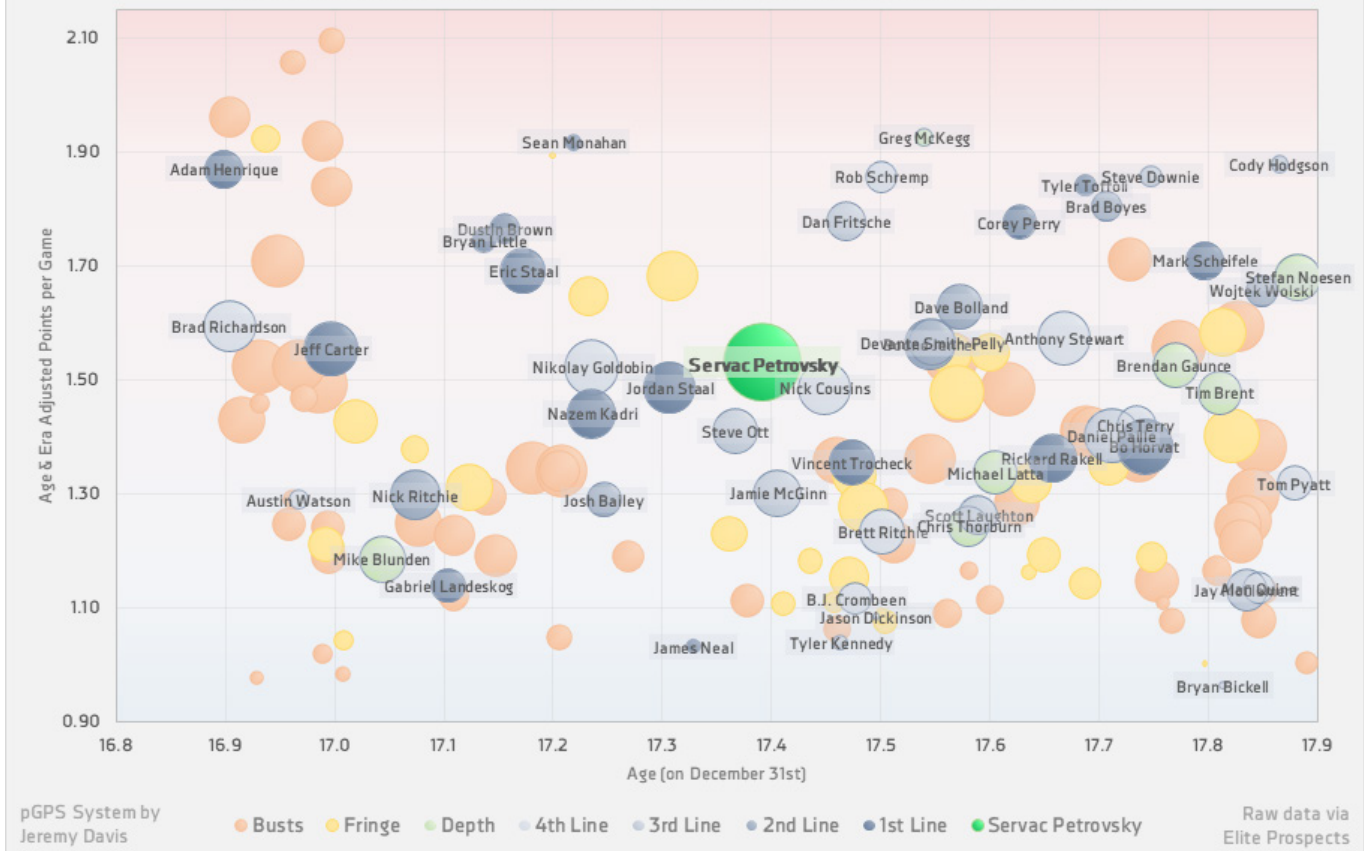
Petrovský was more combative and dangerous in the offensive zone. He again showed a quality shot, hitting the bar with his quick release. The Slovakian forward is visible

## Servac Petrovsky 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 144 || Base XLS: 32% || Impact XLS: 16% || XPR: 43.4 || Drafted Pct: 79%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



with his presence in the offensive zone, although he doesn't possess elite skills. He fights for the team, he can pass and shoot. That's where I see his strengths. On the other hand, I again didn't like him from a defensive standpoint, he lost pucks and his poor puck handling skills don't allow him to be a difference maker or a more impactful player in general. But he also creates pressure on opposing players and was able to disrupt passing lanes. His shot is a factor, scoring a goal again.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Perhaps I've underrated Petrovsky's offensive brain. He has the beginnings of manipulation in transition: attack the inside, bait the defender to lunge or crossover, then cut to the outside. But his locked-in-rhythm handling and skating prevent him from taking advantage. It limits his small-area game, too. Give him space, and he'll usually identify the best passing option and connect. Lack of deception prevents his intended target from getting the open net. Off-puck offence remains a strength: he doesn't just occupy the right areas, he times his movements into them. That led to a few scoring chances and post. His goal was a backhand after getting a recovery steal in the NZ. Truthfully, those reaching steals are

a common part of his game. He's a highly disrupting player who easily reads changes in coverage and acts decisively. Taking the extra stride would turn him into a true play-killer. He's likely a draft pick, with hopes that he develops the mechanical foundation. If he can, he's probably a defence-first bottom-six forward who kills plays before they start. There's value in that.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 20th, 2022

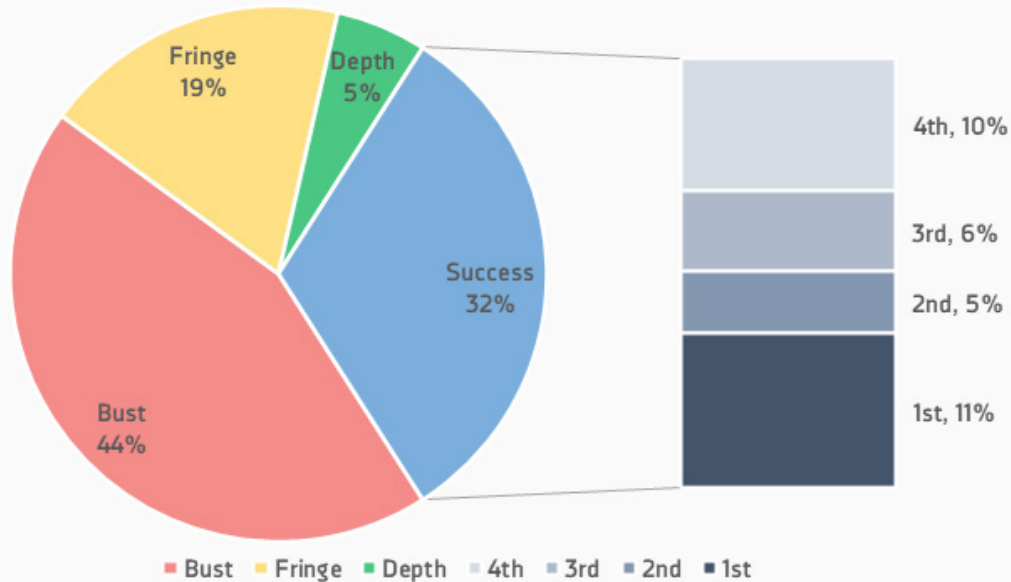
Owen Sound Attack vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Petrovsky's limited by his skating and handling mechanics. He handles the puck with his stick perpendicular to his body, exposing it to defenders. Locked on his inside edges. When his linemates aren't able to create, Petrovsky's can't create individually. He's a give-and-go player with some crafty playmaking ideas and off-puck offence. Even in that style, he needs to deceive more and occasionally make plays on the heels of defenders to believe it'll work in the NHL. Still, he's a solid defender.

He stays on his check but doesn't mindlessly chase. Many of his reads are advanced, like angling out the puck carrier from the middle of the ice in DZC. Wins battles through body positioning and engagement, but his lack of individual skill hurts the escape. Looks more like a potential fourth

## Servac Petrovsky 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



liner. Unsure if he's a pick, but I've seen enough offence in previous viewings to justify it.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 15th, 2021

Owen Sound Attack vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Petrovsky's solid. He's consistent on the forecheck and backcheck, consistently supports the puck in the right position, and makes the odd skill play. His best was a look off cross-slot pass, waiting just long enough to clear the defender's feet. With the puck for longer stretches, his skill looks like a bit weaker. He handles the puck in front of his body on his inside edges; prevents him from deceiving, changing directions, or making the next play immediately. Reaches a lot, too. He tries to offset this with more give-and-gos and off-puck play, usually. Consistently puts himself in the middle of the offensive sequence, slowing down to stay between two teammates or speeding up to create space behind him. A tough game for Owen Sound overall, but I think he clearly has draft-worthy qualities. Perhaps he's more of a third or fourth-liner who brings a bit of offence.

**Marek Novotný:** January 9th, 2021

Owen Sound Attack vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Petrovsky played a game I have mixed feelings about. His presence is felt especially in the offensive zone and sometimes he leaves his mark in the neutral zone. In the offensive zone, he tried to keep the puck alive, screening the goalie's vision and waiting for the incoming shot to tip it in. He was part of the PP and PK units. His skating and puck control

limit him, and because of that, he can't take the next step to be a significantly dangerous forward. I see potential in his offensive mindset, setting up the offense and overall movement and vision in the offensive zone. Defensively, it wasn't good. He wasn't aggressive or quick enough and lacked good decision-making. He was also often outmuscled in fights. He scored a nice one-timer goal, though. Shooting is his strength, that's where I also see a reason why he could be selected as a mid or late pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** December 28th, 2021

Slovakia vs. Sweden - WJC20

Petrovsky was demoted in this game and played under 9 minutes on the fourth line. Still, he tried to make those shifts count, picking off passes and using his body to separate players the puck. There were a couple of nice rushes by him early in the game. He picked off a pass and skated up the ice but fired a rather harmless shot on goal from distance, and another rush where he fed the puck down to the slot for a scoring chance. Unfortunately, as the game wore on and Sweden increased their lead, Petrovsky saw less and less ice time and played just four shifts in the third period. It would be tough to draw conclusions on his NHL projection based on this one showing because he played so little, but I was pretty pleased by what I did see in the limited ice time.

**Lauren Kelly:** December 26th, 2021

Slovakia vs. USA - WJC20

I thought Petrovsky was the strongest draft-eligible Slovak

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**"Petrovský's offence comes from his off-puck reads and shooting skill. He doesn't just identify the best pocket of space, he times his movements. He hits the brakes after sprinting to become an option at the top of the slot or sneaks behind a defender's back to become a backdoor threat."**

forward in this game. Where Slafkovsky and Mesar were sort of hot and cold at times, Petrovský was always pressuring puck carriers, coming back to support his defenders, and making sure he was in the right areas of the ice. He didn't get much of an opportunity to establish himself offensively, but there were flashes of what he's capable of - a strong carry up the ice, and solid passes under pressure. Slovakia struggled to keep up with the Americans after a strong start to the game, but I thought Petrovský held his own and had a strong two-way impact.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Petrovský's mechanical foundation doesn't scream NHL player, but his decisions often do. The problems aren't just skating or handling; it's when he's forced to do them at the same time. He keeps the puck in front of his body, lacks ankle flexion, and moves the puck in rhythm with his strides. In a different game, that probably leads to turnover issues. He requires a glide before doing anything - deking, passing, shooting, which occasionally becomes a lack of adaptability (a new play opening up in the time that it took to him to complete the original play). The other side of the equation

is how Petrovský supports the puck, gets open around the net, and shows the beginnings of deceptive playmaking. He's a clever player overall, whether that's the slick shot placement on his goal (most players go high where he went low) or positioning himself between two teammates to become a link. Strong defensive player with some advanced reads. Looks like a mid-rounder.

**J.D. Burke:** August 7th, 2021

Slovakia U18 vs. Russia U18

Hlinka-Gretzky Cup Gold Medal Game

If Slafkovsky was the best Slovak in this contest, then Petrovský was the obvious candidate for runner-up. Just a really strong performance in all three zones. Petrovský's two-way diligence really led the way in this game. Tracked well in the neutral zone and made well-timed interventions to disrupt rush chances. Caught someone on the track with a massive hit at one point. Some neat stuff in the offensive zone, too. Petrovský almost opened the scoring early on a rush chance, instead catching the post with a catch-and-release wrist shot. Picked up an assist in the third period with a won faceoff. Skating looked about average, but his skating habits were all fairly advanced.





93  
Rank

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

6  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

# ZACHARY BOOKMAN

D | BROOKS BANDITS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. MAR. 29, 2002  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS RIGHT

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
AJHL	55	21	81	102

## Scouting Report

If there was an award for the most entertaining defenceman in the 2022 class, Zachary Bookman might win it.

“Bookman’s deception consistently stands out on the power play,” wrote Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown on February 8th, 2022. “He spots his target, looks away, waits for the reaction, and then passes – almost every time. Just as impressive is his adherence to activation principles: moving through the pass reception and using space. Anticipation of exchanges and hand-offs, one time leading to a point-blank chance for a teammate. Circling the offensive zone with a bunch of backward crossovers before finding a teammate on the inside.”

Bookman was barely on anyone’s radar before this year, his third one as a draft-eligible player, but this season, he forced scouts to pay attention with his 102 points in 55 games, a production good for the third spot on the league’s leaderboard.

The defenceman was the offensive motor of the team

from the backend, a quarterback and a scorer. He supported plays all over the ice, manipulated defenders one-on-one, and distributed the puck quickly and efficiently. And his offensive engagement also translated to a sound rush defence. He often killed opposing plays before they even reached his defensive blue line.

His status as a double overager at the draft and some concerns about his skating kept him lower on our board. Players his age are expected to dominate, especially when they play for a powerhouse team like the Brooks Bandits. Many of Bookman’s plays, while impressive, weren’t necessarily creative; they stemmed from the offensive system put in place by his organization.

If Bookman can become an even better playmaker and improve his ability to close on attackers in the defensive zone, he could have a future as a bottom-pairing power play specialist.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 13th, 2022

Okotoks Oilers vs. Brook Bandits - AJHL

Very interesting game from the overager, offensively and defensively. He shows good positioning defensively overall, but lacks the high-end recovery tools of shutdown defenceman. He activates down the wall in the offensive zone, takes passes, and fires in stride, and makes give-and-goes to open better opportunities for himself. He creates passing lanes on breakouts by faking defenders with a first

puck positioning and then changing it at the last second. He’s aware and adaptable, at least it seems from this game. I like the pace of his overall game even if the skating is an average projection. He hits teammates quickly and in open space and creates better opportunities for them.

**David St-Louis:** March 19th, 2022

Brooks Bandits vs. Canmore Eagles - AJHL

Bookman made a lot of plays off offensive faceoffs in this

game. He attacks down, abuses the confused, spun out of control opposing team, and finds a teammate in the slot. He fakes shots to create better plays, like drop passes, but a lot of what he did this game felt like set plays, that were part of the team's structure or initiated by teammates. Bookman supports, complements, and creates, but I'm not sure the last verb is the strongest one in his game right now. Again, I didn't get to evaluate him defensively all that much, as his team was pressing forward for most of the game. In transition, he links plays: deceptive passes in the breakouts, immediate activations, followed by slot-drives. The skill level and the offensive instincts are good enough to make him a decently high pick in the 2022 draft.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 26th, 2022

Drumheller Dragons vs. Brook Bandits - AJHL

Bookman did the usual stuff, but it wasn't a great performance. The activation, playmaking, and defence were here, just in less exciting ways. Does a lot of damage by activating from OZ faceoff wins, usually down the boards and outracing defenders to the inside. He's deceptive, even in-tight, but it didn't result in much offensive creation. Tight gap, as usual. Kills plays before they start and eliminates off-puck threats. Breakouts look more like a weakness than a strength. He flips between not trying to make thing happens and being way too aggressive. He doesn't manipulate or even deceive; he identifies and executes. There's no adaptability of greater foresight to his exits. He's a still prospect, but I finish the regular season less optimistic about his NHL future.

**Russ Cohen:** February 25th, 2022

Brooks Bandits vs. Drumheller Dragons - AJHL

This was a physical game. Bookman can handle it. He gets the puck up the ice effortlessly with smart dump ins. He walks the line and really fires a quick wrist shot on net with some oomph to it. Bookman had great puck possession. He almost walked right in for a goal but it was stopped by the goalie. He's sneaky too. His backwards skating is terrific. The team's offense runs through him. Bookman knows where the puck is headed and plays defense accordingly. On his first assist, he set the scoring record with a nice cross-ice pass to set up a goal. Pro pass for sure. On his second assist, Bookman curls into the offensive zone 5-on-5. Uses deception on his shot. Gets the wrist shot on net for the deflection.

**David St-Louis:** February 12th, 2022

Lloydminster Bandits vs. Brooks Bandits - AJHL

Bookman's handling technique is quite good, much better than Corson Ceulemans, his comparable from last year. He's also more deceptive and better at manipulating defenders. He makes fast one-touch plays to teammate to set them up

for shots, but could gain to do it even more instead of trying some pucks to the slot. The transition game didn't shine as much this game. Bookman didn't need to play much defence overall. His team dominated the whole game, but his backward skating looks like a strength.


**Mitchell Brown:** February 8th, 2022

Brooks Bandits vs. Canmore Kodiaks - AJHL

Bookman's deception consistently stands out on the PP. He spots his target, looks away, waits for the reaction, and then passes – almost every time. Just as impressive is his adherence to activation principles: moving through the pass reception and using space. Anticipations exchanges and hand-offs, one time leading to a point-blank chance for a teammate. Circled the OZ with a bunch of backwards crossovers before finding a teammate on the inside. Gap control was consistently strong. Establishes his gap early, angles, and times his engagements with the pass or stickhandle. He lunges on occasion, and his habit of leaving his feet in DZC will prove costly at the next level. Clearly, an advanced passing mind in the OZ, but loses some of the deceptiveness, pace, and inside play in transition. Very basic retrievals that don't use any of his OZ skills – he just continues forward or reverses the puck. The shot looks projectable too, both his one-timer and wrister. Uses the activation habits to decrease his distance to the net before shooting. The projection's so murky given his age, competition, and high quality of teammates. But there's no doubt he's worth a pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 19th, 2021

Camrose Kodiaks vs. Brooks Bandits - AJHL

Brooks does a lot of interesting things, particularly off faceoffs. They also have a ton of activation, much of it mindless. The spacing's poor, they overlap routes without purpose, and move without much of a purpose. Well, except for Bookman. He understands when and where to sprint. He adjusts his routes according to the play around him. He works laterally when most of his teammates are just activating towards the net. Combines activation with DZ coverage and his gap. The activation side seems instinctual. Set up a goal by getting the steal, chipping the puck into space, hunting it down, and then manipulating the defender with a fake shot before passing underneath for a tap-in. High-end play. Plenty of standout defensive sequences, timing his engagements and getting early steals in the NZ. Puck-moving's a question. Missed some passes to force worse plays. Didn't manipulate incoming pressure. In the NZ, consistently looked cross-ice for teammates. The stride's probably average due to a wide stride recovery, short extensions, and a lack of hip engagement. But his footwork and skills are a 6 or above. Even considering the age, he looked like a draft pick. 



94  
Rank

6  
Skating

6  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

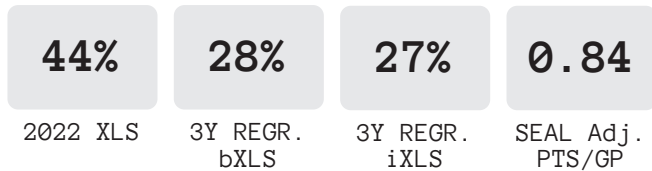
4.5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

# TY NELSON

D | NORTH BAY BATTALION

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. MAR. 30, 2004  
WEIGHT 196 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	66	9	42	51

## Scouting Report

Ty Nelson is a defenceman who subverts expectations. Everything about his profile suggests that he's an offensive blueliner in the making, whether it's his OHL draft pedigree as a former first overall pick, his 5-foot-8 frame, or the 51 points he amassed in 66 games for the North Bay Battalion in his draft year.

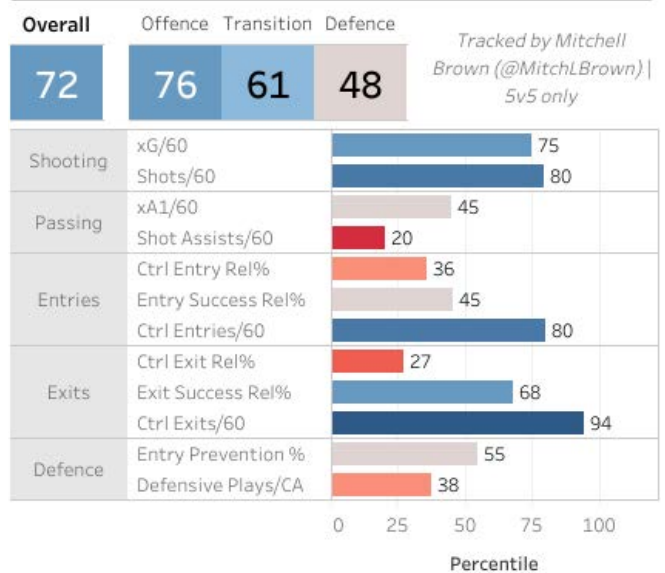
We used to view him in this light too, assigning Nelson the No. 24 overall ranking on our first board back in November. At least, we were open to the possibility, even if proof of concept eluded us in many of our viewings.

As the unremarkable offensive performances accumulated, we eventually had to move on from any previously held notions concerning this player's profile, though.

"Still waiting to see Nelson's offensive skill," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown lamented in a January report. "He can hammer the puck, occasionally set up a teammate on the inside, and activates somewhat regularly. But he mostly chooses to do the first one. Sometimes, he shows a more complex passing idea, but his pass is so far from his target it makes me wonder if he actually sees options."

Many of those same issues rear their head in transition, where Nelson regularly mishandles the puck or fails to connect on the simplest of breakout plays. His skating skill should make him one of the better puck-movers in the OHL, but instead Brown's manually tracked data set places him in the 61st percentile among CHL/USHL defenders last season.

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 151.4



The only part of Nelson's game that consistently drew strong reviews from our staff was his play in the defensive zone. No complaints there. The Battalion defender gaps up early in the neutral zone, keeps pace with pacey attackers and manages to make stops consistently. You'd never guess Nelson was 5-foot-10 based on the way he contains along the walls and comes away with possession from most puck battles.

If there's a future for Nelson at the NHL level, that's it -- as an undersized defensive savant with perhaps some utility in transition with a little careful development to that part of his game. He has a long way to go before he's there, though.



## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Matt Finn YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 92%	2 Michael Del Zotto YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY 92%	3 Calvin de Haan YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 91%	4 Slater Koekkoek YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 90%	5 P.K. Subban YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY 90%
6 Tim Gleason YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 90%	7 Cole Jarrett YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 89%	8 Stephen Silas YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 89%	9 Dennis Wideman YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 89%	10 Tom Mannino YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY 89%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** March 27th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

With his playstyle, Nelson would get drafted in the top-20 of this draft if he was 6-foot-1'. The physicality, the defensive efforts, the way he hits and establishes body positioning on retrievals, takes care of sticks, and his occasional flashes of transition and offensive abilities...They would be way more interesting and projectable. But at his size: 5-foot-8 or 5-foot-9? (Central scouting says it's 5-foot-10' but I'm not sure I believe it). They're not enough. His game lacks poise and the keen intelligence that characterize the players his size that makes it. Close defensive pressure makes him rush his plays -- constantly. He makes bad decisions under pressure and the only time you really see his game shine is when he gets more space to activate, skate down (or up)...He won't get all that much at higher level. He could become a battering ram, but does he have the hockey sense to move ahead of the play, get inside on opponents before they receive the puck and eliminate their sticks? Probably not. He's more of a B-C prospect for me at this point. I watch his games and I'm not all that convinced. It's mostly the size argument and it's too bad, but you can't ignore it.

**David St-Louis:** March 3rd, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

I see a sixth NHL defenceman, a rush defender, and solid enough in-zone presence, more physical than you expect for someone his size, but who lets the occasional attacker slip behind him. I see a player who will make the occasional middle breakout, but who will mostly default to rims under pressure, as he has to play it safe to keep his role in the lineup, but who will compensate for his downfalls by participating and distributing offensively. Nelson can improve the location of his shot, and beat goalies cleanly. So, not a ton of upside there overall, but a better projection than for most defencemen his size. I would like to see more controlled plays from him.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Nelson seems to be heading in the opposite direction of most of his draft-eligible peers -- that is to say, the wrong direction. On one of his first shifts of the game he was laid out and shaken up -- I thought he might actually leave the game. Whether that hit affected how he played for the rest of the game is tough to say, but it was all downhill from there. He was stripped in the corner before the puck ended up in his team's goal on Sudbury's first. His defensive positioning was all over the place and he struggled to maintain coverage. He reacted quickly to try and intercept passes, but it didn't always pay off. He really did not like leading the rush in this one, deferring to his teammates constantly even if he had the better route up the ice. When he did rush the puck up the ice, his head was up the whole way, his stick-handling and deception was on display, and he maintained his speed through traffic. He likes to take the puck wide but usually feeds it to a teammate in the slot. But as far as actually generating offence, it was mostly just powerful but harmless point shots from him. I really don't know what's going on with his game right now. Is he in his own head? Because sometimes it seems that way. I wouldn't draft him at all based on this viewing.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

For a dynamic puck rushing defenceman, Nelson was shockingly quiet in this game, to the point where it felt like I hadn't seen him on the ice at all for most of the second period. His most notable play of the game was when he broke the puck in half after he rang a shot off the crossbar. He had a couple of harmless puck rushes up the ice, was stung on a blocked shot, and took an errant high sticking penalty late in a tie game that could've been costly. Other than those instances, I didn't notice him too much in a negative or positive way. Starting to feel like he's a pretty confusing

projection, because I wouldn't draft him if I was basing my decision off this one game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 25th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Second straight outing where Nelson hardly looked the part of a draft pick, let alone a first-rounder. He had an assist from a set play off an OZ faceoff and had a nice rush up the gut after spinning away from pressure. His defence remains a selling point, but he's not a big play-killer – not because of his size, but he's too passive through the NZ and in DZC. Once he closes the distance and engages, he's clearly solid. But all the usual stuff still applied in this game: he takes awful shots, has solid passing ideas but never comes close to executing, usually defaults to the outside in transition, and his breakouts are bad. They're so bad. He consistently puts the puck on his backhand and then just keeps it there – as if he's waiting for forechecking pressure to force him into a dump-out. I'll leave it up to you to figure out what happens next. There were moments are more creativity, like using the middle to start the rush or passing through it – and he failed every time. He even scans, his passes are usually just off. One wasn't his fault, to be fair. But I still don't see the upside here. He shoots hard, defends reasonably well, and leaves value on the table in all three zones. Really, it's banking on skating and the occasional rush. Maybe an early in this draft class, I guess.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Still waiting to see Nelson's offensive skill. He can hammer the puck, occasionally set up a teammate on the inside, and activates somewhat regularly. But he mostly chooses to do the first one. Sometimes, he shows a more complex passing idea, but his pass is so far from his target it makes me wonder if he's actually seeing options. It's the same story in transition. He'll hit cross-lane targets or use the middle, but spends most of the game taking one look up the boards and chucking the puck at the easy target. Defensively, Nelson's consistently impactful and could project as above-average in the NHL. Heel pushes limit his exposure when defending the rush, he angles plays wide regularly, and he wins battles by trapping the feet and getting his hips lower than the attacker's. Looks for opportunities to run through attackers, too. The next step for Nelson's defence is establishing his off-puck gap earlier, taking fewer off-puck gambles (i.e., stepping up for interceptions because he's poorly gapped), and improving his pivots and push-off power. I don't see a first-round pick

in Nelson. He'd be a fine mid-second rounder with a chance of becoming a No. 4 after significant development.

**Lauren Kelly:** December 17th, 2021

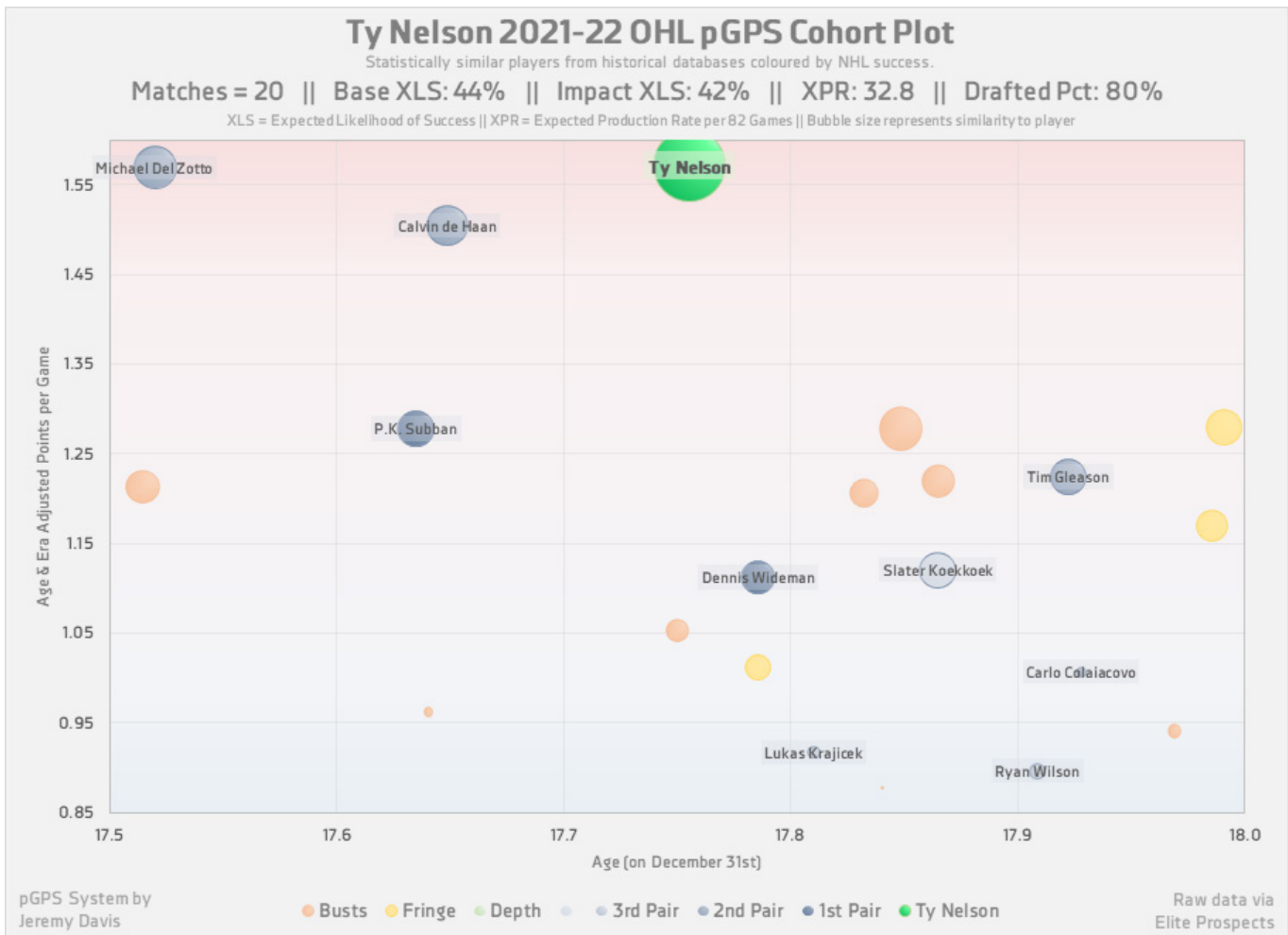
North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Nelson was all over the place in this game, good and bad. Where most of the Battalion seemed fatigued (playing on back to back nights and having to travel from North Bay to Mississauga overnight), Nelson was flying for most of this game. He showed off his strong puck protection and carrying abilities with a rush up the ice that was pokechecked away, and another where he dodged a pokecheck below his own goal line trying to start the rush. Also laid a clean hit at his own blueline. His gap control was excellent in this game and his ability to execute plays with the puck under pressure was a standout all game long. Also showed off his booming slapshot in this one, and had four shots on goal. But he was also on the ice for both goals against and didn't look that great on either play. On the first goal, he slid trying to deflect the puck out of harm's way in the slot and missed, taking him out of position and unable to defend the subsequent scoring chances and eventual goal. On the second goal, he tripped up Owen Beck on the rush while killing a penalty (Beck still managed to get around him), and while he wasn't out of position on this particular goal, it still put the Battalion back on the penalty kill.

**J.D. Burke:** December 11th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Pretty solid performance from Nelson on the whole, especially considering the fact that he played 38 minutes of ice-time (38 minutes!!!) by the final horn. I'm still not necessarily sure what the selling point is on his game as an NHL prospect though. I just don't see any separating skill in his toolkit or the sort of elite offensive sense that would carry a 5-foot-10 defenceman to a regular role in the NHL. The shot is nice. Especially the wrist shot. You maybe grade that as an NHL level tool, but what else? Nelson struggled to connect on a lot of his outlets in this game. He could do himself a world of favours by scanning more often for options off of the puck. Missed a few opportunities for scoring chances off-the-puck, standing still when open ice and a passing lane were pretty much right in front of him with a little more initiative. Nelson defends well in space, and he handles body-on-body sequences better than one might expect given his build. Ultimately, though, even a good performance like this one leaves me with more questions than answers.



**Mitchell Brown:** November 25th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Peterborough Frontenacs - OHL

Nelson didn't do much in this game. He activated regularly, grabbing a scoring chance and a couple of shots. Beat the defender wide and then dropped a pass blindly into the slot - no one was there. Scan first. With the puck, he's simple and lacks efficiency. Less passing to teammates more covered than himself compared to previous viewings, but still did it twice. He panics under pressure. Didn't manipulate, deceive, or look cross-ice for options. He looks up, sees a teammate, and then decides to pass to them, regardless of the other options available. It's particularly noticeable on retrievals. I didn't see any notable defensive value either way. Didn't look like a top-two rounds pick in this game.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 19th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

Nelson was a bit more passive in this game than I'd seen in previous viewings. He did have a couple of nice rushes up the ice - one where he passed off to a teammate who left the puck behind, and another where he took the puck up the ice, side-stepped a stickcheck before shooting the puck wide instead of maintaining possession and letting his teammates get set up. He also had a nice backpedal in

the offensive zone, looking like he was gearing up to find a better shooting lane before passing to a teammate. What I did notice is that his shifts are really long... they're about a minute and a half on average. Though he didn't seem fatigued by the end of them, I wonder if that kind of shift length is sustainable over the course of the season. He didn't make any glaring defensive mistakes or positional errors, in fact he was rather effective defending the rush and his gap control looked good. Long-term projection is going to be difficult, but I still feel like he's a first round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 14th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

I didn't see anything worth getting excited about in this game, especially at 5-on-5. When pressured, he completed just one of seven breakout attempts. He threw pucks at teammates with more pressure than himself, missed inside lane options, and didn't show any greater thought, like problem-solving or manipulation ability. The defence is definitely a strength: the physicality, gap control, and awareness will scale up nicely. Offensively, he's mostly a shot but showed some more advanced details as a passer. He took passes in motion this game and moved into space. He didn't activate much but had a couple of quality sequences on the PP. The

best saw him delay to let pressure close, spin away, set up a teammate, and then fire home the loose puck with a picture-perfect wrister inside his feet. That's about the extent of deception in this game. He has a lot of tools, but the execution will be a problem.

**David St-Louis:** November 14th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Not sure what to think of Nelson. There are some poor decisions with the puck, some missed plays defensively, and he is a bit inefficient on the offence in general, forcing plays, missing plays, but at this point of the season, after a year off in the OHL, I don't think decision-making is the main factor in a projection. Nelson looks like a future above-average NHL skater for me. Despite his stucky build, he is agile and quick and fast up-ice. The skating mechanics are sound, the knee-bend, the back posture...He sits a bit too back on his skates, but it won't matter too much. His shot looks powerful and he has passing skills, variety and precision, when he doesn't rush his plays. I even saw some deceptive plays from him and some playmaking concept like attracting defenders before passing. He scored twice with shots from the point. The reason to doubt him are the size, his style of play (the hyper-activation that he won't be able to do in the NHL), the off decisions at times, and the fact that he is more of a "doer" than a thinker of the game. He attacks spots and then figures out the next play. Still, the decisions will settle with more experience and maturity. The defence will stay a strength even at higher levels. He is too strong, too engaged, too mobile. And the puck-moving activations will be useful for any team. He just needs to develop a more poised, intelligent short passing game. I could even see him become a powerplay quarterback with a slight change of mentality toward more efficiency, less point shots and more offence-building passes. I'm a believer.

**David St-Louis:** November 12th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs Sudbury Wolves- OHL

Nelson is an hyper-active, physical, puck-moving defenceman, the kind we usually like at Eliteprospects. His gap is tight off the rush; he literally kills them with some huge hits sometimes. I like his four-way mobility to match attackers as they skate through the neutral-zone and his absolute desire to wall off access to his own end, even if, for that, he has to come to a stop at the blue-line and literally force the opposition to dump the puck in. He puts his body on the line defensively and his motor is non-stop. I didn't see a lot offensively from him this game, but I liked the movement there, too, the way he skated through reception, and moved

laterally to create new passing lanes, and buy time for teammates to get in position. He uses the open ice in his passing and skating (makes changes of side, activates, improves the location of play). Not sure how much foresight and control there is in his overall game, but the constant movement and involvement is interesting.

**David St-Louis:** November 7th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs Ottawa 67s - OHL

If Nelson could calm down the pace on the breakout, I think he would be a constant positive transition force. Right now, there are a few bombed plays. They are not panicky plays, at least I don't think so, as he doesn't seem all that phased by close contact hockey, but more attempts to immediately beat the opposition with a pass that unfortunately lacks precision. I like his activations. He takes available space on every play. On the offence, he is all over the place. Some movements have purpose; others don't. Again, his game needs an influx of timing and control with the puck, but it's better to be hyper-active than slow-paced...At least I think so. His defence is his strongest point for me, a bunch of hard, timely intervention, hits and stick lifts. He recognizes his check fast and can move from one opponent to the other seamlessly with his skating. He angles off opponents to the boards to separate them from the puck well.

**Daniel Gee:** November 4th, 2021

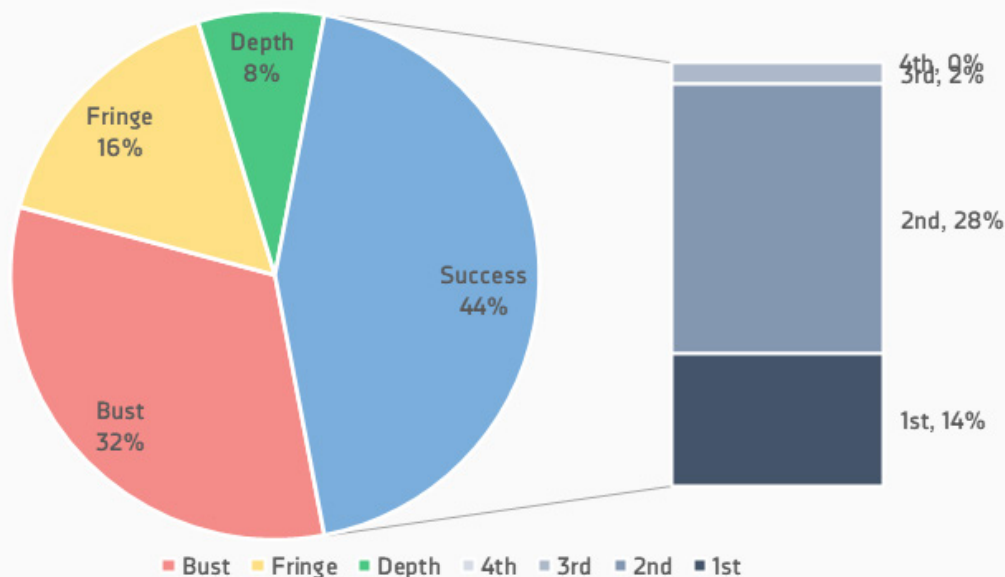
Peterborough Petes vs North Bay Battalion - OHL

Nelson was undoubtedly flashy in this game against Peterborough, but inconsistencies in his transition game, along with some major defensive mishaps tempered his overall performance in this game.

Probably the most concerning aspect of Nelson's game is a complete lack of scanning, mental mapping, and secondary threat identification. In this game alone, he had numerous sequences where he failed to provide any type of resistance on opponents hunting rebounds or driving dangerous areas of the ice. The lack of scanning is a compounding issue that leaves Nelson with very limited information in sustained sequences and secondary plays off of transitional attacks against. In the second after supporting a battle in the far corner he reactively moved to the net-front, lost sight of the puck and watched as a rebound pooped off his goaltenders pad right to a man on the left-hand circle -- Nelson wasn't even facing the right direction as the puck went in. While he has some ability to tie up sticks of primary threats in the crease, timing efforts when pass/shots arrive in his vicinity, puck-watching can become an issue. He will need some major adjustments here. Nelson provides some value

## Ty Nelson 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



while defending transitional attacks. He's highly mobile, has edge-to-edge maneuverability, and can make up space. The issue is secondary-threat identification rears its head here, however. In the second period, he became fixated on a puck carrier, missed a threat filing the opposite lane, and again was behind the play as the secondary threat scored on a rebound. He can be overly aggressive, momentum from overactive feet punishing him against more shifty attackers. Decision making in general was questionable.

Transitionally, Nelson has some serious projectability. While he jettisons too many pucks, looks off obvious pass targets, and dumps too many attempts in, he is a great manipulator with his eyes. Constant eye-line manipulation absolutely destroys opponents schemes, in-motion passing adding extra layers of difficulty. Nelson can separate and escape out of pressure (but a lack of scanning hurts him on retrievals). He burnt up the ice multiple times through his linear crossover drives -- none of the attempts amounting to much. Nelson has some limited body manipulations -- shoulder shimmies, and some semblance of weight-shifts. The thing is, his usage of these manipulations are flawed, sometimes activating into them with no pressure, or straight up not using them in times where it would be beneficial. This is probably an area of his game that will take off as time goes on. When Nelson was able to set up in this game, the eyeline manipulation and fake-shots started to flow. Had a wonderful set up where he loaded a shot, waited for a lane to open and hit a teammate backdoor for an assist. Uber-patient, four-way mobility on the line -- he could be very fun back there. Some worry about predictability; he

uses the same fake-shot every play, but his shot is such a threat -- I get it (similar to Rathbone at Harvard). Downforce is incredible, arms unlocked, one leg release all synced. Wonderful shot mechanics.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 31st, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

For most of the game, Nelson provided the perfect example of what to not do as a defenceman with the puck. The key stat: 55 percent of his 22 exit and entry attempts were turnovers. The puck management issues have a ton of sources, starting with the basic failure to pre-scan on retrievals, failure to check to the middle before making decisions, giving up on activation routes too early -- to more high-level stuff -- inability to manipulate incoming forechecking pressure, lack of explosive movements to separate from back pressure, overreliance on straight-line attacks, lack of patience/delay game. In the offensive zone, he stops most pucks dead in between his planted feet. Sometimes his shoulder shakes work, but he can't work laterally or gain open space as a result -- it's usually just to set up a poor shot. There were also moments where Nelson did the basics and even flashed the high-level stuff. He activated off-puck from the point, then fired off a wrister that neared mechanical perfection. A two-touch backhand pass around a defender led to a chance in one of just a couple of sequences where he finished his activation routes. While he still didn't manipulate, he beat defenders into his desired lanes and delayed and reset for an exit twice. Just a super high-event game with tons of awful decisions but also some more advanced ones. Really, he looks



like a 16-year-old starting out his OHL career. I mean, I guess he is just starting out his OHL career -- that might explain it. Some strong defence. I have no idea where to rank him. Maybe a late-first, early-second? Even the flashes of better stuff don't exactly scream No. 3 defender.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 30th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

The Battalion seem to rely on Nelson for everything, which speaks to how well he seems to have adjusted already in his rookie year. He plays on the first powerplay unit, kills penalties, and is out on the ice for every key faceoff. He boasts a heavy shot with a strong release, and he took a slapshot that led to him recording his second assist of the game. Nelson's also an adept passer, finding teammates with long stretch passes, or short ones to get play going up the ice. His positioning continues to stand out, whether it's in his own end or in the offensive zone. Even when Nelson joins or leads the rush up the ice, he'll always peel back before hitting the hash marks, even if play isn't turned over. He keeps up well with opposing players on the rush, either using his stick to break up plays or his body to force them to the boards, and does it very well. He's not overly physical and though he doesn't shy away from that side of the game, he doesn't allow throwing hits to take him out of the play.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 23rd, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

There's a lot to like about Nelson, but I question the upside. For one, he's a mostly solid defensive gap, especially off the

rush. He commits his weight a bit too much sometimes, he understands how to make up a deficit, how to surf and angle out the attack, and how to use his lower body to engage in puck battles. Most of his breakout passes occur inside movement, and he's not shy about joining the play after. Tends to stop the puck dead in OZP, but moves laterally. In this game, setting up a scoring chance with a waist-high shot pass straight on his teammate's stick. The shot looks projectable to NHL average, at least, showing refinement (narrow body posture, downforce through distance between feet, and hands in front his elbow elevated) uncommon for defenders at this stage. While he's as wide as he is tall, it's easy to see the room for skating improvement. His limbs bend at the right angles, he sinks his hips into his stride, and he keeps his chest up. Crossovers are quiet and involve his hips, he just lacks some skating skills and dynamic skating qualities. I think he'll add those.

Those make Nelson a pick, but I didn't see any standout offensive or transition skill. Makes plays fast, perhaps too fast. Doesn't manipulate incoming pressure, deceive in any manner beyond the most basic level, and lacks problem-solving ability with the puck. Too quick on the trigger to throw possession away, even if there are clear, easy-to-hit options on the inside. It's not a question of structure -- his teammates show more creativity on the breakout. Doesn't finish off-puck routes or his activation sequences. I think he's a bottom-pairing defender based on this game, a fun one though.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 11th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Nelson really started to establish himself physically in this game, his third in the OHL. He was throwing hits and pinning players to the boards in puck battles. Defensively though, he had an up-and-down game. There were instances where he was too deep in the offensive zone and caught back, and one occasion where he made the wrong choice on a 2-on-1, and by sliding out of play led to a 2-on-0 shorthanded chance. Overall though Nelson was pretty solid positionally, especially on the penalty kill. He was using his stick to break up passes, and blocking shots. Nelson is constantly looking around to see where players are on the ice, and he shoulder checks multiple times on puck retrievals. He wound up for a slapshot on one sequence and he should take more of them, it's got some heat to it. His passing and puck handling continues to impress and hopefully he can get to a point where he's more consistent defensively.

**J.D. Burke:** October 8th, 2021

Soo Greyhounds vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

I would say the less said about Nelson's performance the better, but that's not really how this line of work operates. Suffice to say, he was going through it. Limited puck touches kept Nelson largely out of the game through the first half of this contest. There just wasn't really anything there to evaluate, save for some over-committal neutral zone defending and the odd unspectacular breakout pass. The second half of this contest was just an unmitigated disaster for Nelson though. By my estimation, three turnovers that led directly to Grade-A scoring chances, a shorthanded breakaway against his team among them. To make matters worse, Nelson totally ate it trying to surf defending a 3-on-2 rush, creating a 2-on-1 that led to a goal against. Obviously, not going to blame

him for that – it happens! – but that's just the sort of night it was for Nelson. Didn't even look like the sort of player I'd feel comfortable using a mid-round pick on, much less a first, but that's going to happen in the odd game even for the best of them, and the season is early. I just wish that, if nothing else, I saw some high-level displays of skill or tools, and I didn't even get that much here.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 7th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

Nerves definitely seemed to affect how Nelson's first few shifts in the OHL played out. He seemed all over the place in the defensive zone, his poor positioning led to some scoring chances against. When he got the puck, though, he fed a great outlet pass to spring a teammate on the breakaway. Nelson seemed a bit overzealous to start, trying to help out everywhere and overcompensating. As the game continued he settled in and looked a lot more comfortable by the end. He had two primary assists in this game - a point shot that was buried on the rebound, and a drop pass in the neutral zone that was taken straight to the net for a goal. As far as first impressions go, Nelson's a very confident puck carrier and distributor, and I liked that he didn't feel a need to defer to his teammates and rushed the puck up the ice himself several times. I do think his defensive zone positioning still needs improving, but it was a lot better by the end of the game. It was also good to see him get extended stints penalty killing, and he didn't make many mistakes shorthanded. He recognized when he needed to pull back after joining the rush and wasn't caught on any ill-timed pinches. As a smaller defenseman though (and at times I felt like he seemed a lot shorter than 5'10) he did lose several key board battles that led to scoring chances, so that's something else he needs to improve upon.



95  
Rank

C  
Grade

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

4.5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# NIKITA BLEDNOV

F | AVTO YEKATERINBURG

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. OCT. 25, 2003  
WEIGHT 165 SHOOTS RIGHT

1%	0%	0%	0.67
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
KHL	4	0	0	0
VHL	29	3	1	4
MHL	12	4	5	9

## Scouting Report

Nikita Blednov has mastered the fundamentals of the game. He plays a simple, effective brand of hockey based on sound positioning and effort. Just the sort of player a coach loves to have at the bottom of their lineup.

More than anything, he's a shutdown player. Blednov's a grinder who takes serious pride in honing the details of the game. He reloads to defensive positions ahead of turnovers, scans the ice to locate his check in transition and the defensive zone, and his stick constantly occupies opposing passing lanes.

"Blednov's active stick and quick reactions make him a very useful player in the defensive zone," Elite Prospects Russia regional scout Dylan Griffing wrote last October. "He closes down space and attacks the puck and then quickly moves

it out of danger and begins the breakout. He's aggressive in races for loose pucks."

In the offensive zone, Blednov is fairly predictable: He works to retrieve pucks, move them to teammates, and attack the net. It's a simple, honest game.

"He did his role well, chasing down players on the forecheck, scanning the defensive zone, and taking up space," Griffing added in a November report. "He made some nice plays in tight areas with his hands."

While his lack of creativity and his average tools might prevent him from accessing the NHL, Blednov has put himself on a path to becoming an effective shutdown player, the kind that locks down a role in a team's bottom-six and earns more minutes in the playoffs.

## Game Reports

**Dylan Griffing:** November 28th, 2021

Dynamo St. Petersburg vs. Gornyyak-UGMK - VHL

Eight and a half minutes for Blednov playing as a checking forward. Did well at his role, chasing down players on the forecheck, scanning the defensive zone, and taking up space. Made some nice plays in tight areas with his hands. Generated offense in a small role, using his speed and skill to dominate in his transition attempts, had two shot attempts, and passed to the slot a couple times.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 6th, 2021

Izhstal Izhevsk vs. Gornyyak-UGMK - VHL

Still just eight minutes of ice time for Blednov as he continues to get a limited role in the VHL. Responsible defensively to actively cut off the outside path and block passing lanes. Struggled to beat players 1-on-1 when in the outside lane, lacked the dynamic play at pace and resorted to trying to bank the puck around them and hoping he could get to the loose puck first, which he rarely did with control. In the offensive zone, he was able to make some good moves around the perimeter and could explode into the inside lane



to get some good looks on net. Still, he did struggle with being dynamic and the defense started to read him easier and easier as the game went on, really limiting his impact.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 30th, 2021

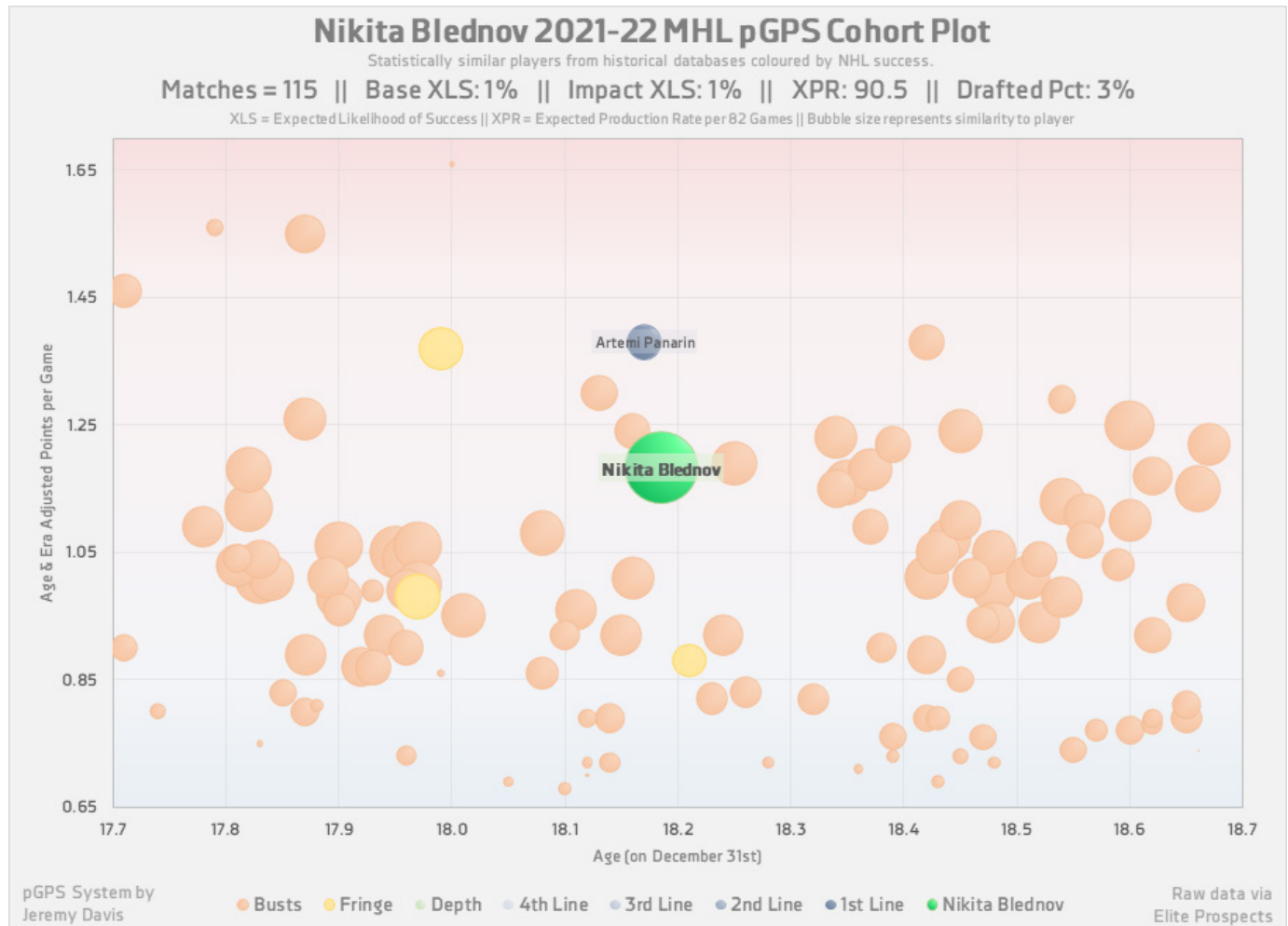
Avtomobilist Yekaterinburg vs. Kunlun Red Star - KHL

Strong performance from Blednov in his first real KHL game. His defensive game stood out again, dropping back to cover or jumping up with his stick to disrupt. Quick, solid reads to pick his spots off the puck and then quickly scan to know what to do when he gained possession. His rush patterns were notable, cutting across the ice to give both himself and the puck carrier additional space on the entry. He played a very inside driven game with most of his rushes and passes going straight to the center. Would've liked to see him make himself a passing option when the puck was at the point and drifting closer to the half-wall rather than clumping up with the pack closer to the net. He was finding soft ice to play his more shoot first style of offense and he had 2-3 good looks this game. Most shifts he was the F2, but when he was out there as F1, his forecheck impacts were noticeable with his pace and stick.

### Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

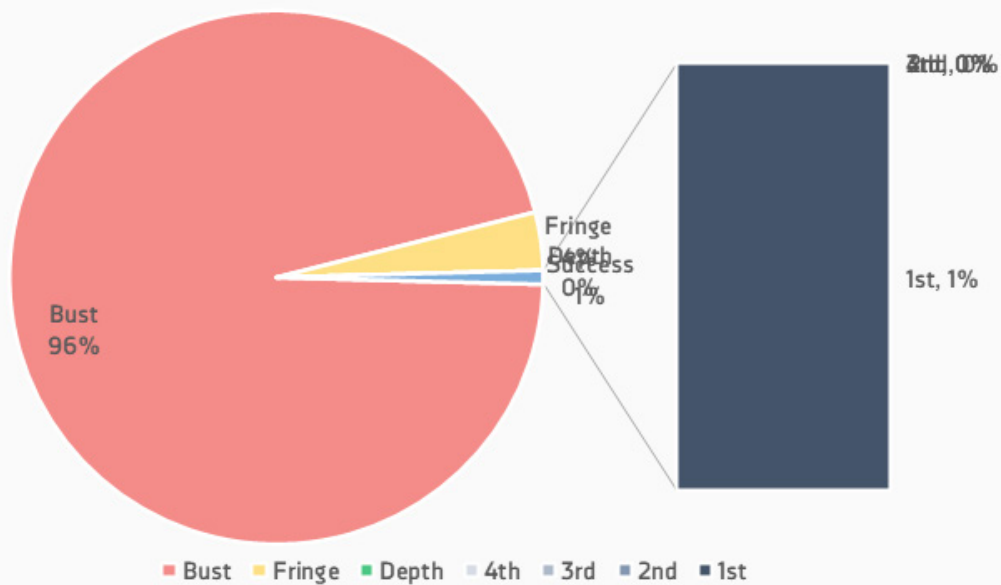
1	Rafael Shakurov	YEAR: 2013	SIMILARITY 95%
2	Igor Rudenkov	YEAR: 2013	SIMILARITY 95%
3	Nikita Lukin	YEAR: 2010	SIMILARITY 94%
4	Alexander Torchenyuk	YEAR: 2010	SIMILARITY 94%
5	Artyom Prokhorov	YEAR: 2013	SIMILARITY 94%
6	Alexei Filippov	YEAR: 2012	SIMILARITY 94%
7	Kirill Voronin	YEAR: 2012	SIMILARITY 94%
8	Dmitri Zakharov	YEAR: 2010	SIMILARITY 93%
9	Kirill Rasskazov	YEAR: 2011	SIMILARITY 93%
10	Vyacheslav Osnovin	YEAR: 2012	SIMILARITY 93%



"While his lack of creativity and his average tools might prevent him from accessing the NHL, Blednov has put himself on a path to becoming an effective shutdown player, the kind that locks down a role in a team's bottom-six and earns more minutes in the playoffs."

### Nikita Blednov 2021-22 MHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**Dylan Griffing:** October 6th, 2021

Gornyak-UGMK vs. HK Tambov - VHL

Blednov's active stick and quick reactions make him a very useful player in the defensive zone. Closes down space and attacks the puck and then quickly moves it out of danger and begins the breakout. Aggressive on races for loose pucks. He did well to find soft ice, but took too long doing so and his teammates were finding different outlets. Nearly picked up an assist after redirecting a point shot to his teammate across the crease, but it was whiffed. He has the potential to be a solid checking line player, just needs to build on his puck handling and offensive awareness to take his game to the next level.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 21st, 2021

Gornyak-UGMK vs. Dizel Penza - VHL

After nearly a month of bench warming for Avtomobilist, Blednov finally got to play hockey and make his VHL debut. He only played for six and a half minutes, but he made the most of his time out there. Defensive positioning really stuck out first, scanning the ice, dropping back to cover for his defenseman, and just containing the opponents in his area. He isn't shy to make things happen with the puck. He took four shots in his 11 shifts and used his strength to hold off defenders as he drove to the net. He utilized slip passes well. Just a solid performance for a young player in a limited VHL role.



96  
Rank

4  
Skating

4.5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

C  
Grade

4.5  
Puckhandling

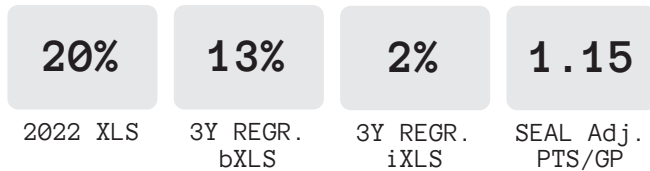
6  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# ZAM PLANTE

C | CHICAGO STEEL

HEIGHT 5'9" D.O.B. AUG. 24, 2004  
WEIGHT 161 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	31	10	11	21
USHS-MN	22	24	40	64

## Scouting Report

Points follow Zam Plante. In a 42-game career with Hermantown High, he scored a staggering 125 points. Despite playing third-line minutes in the USHL, he scored 21 points in 31 games, including 14 in 15 games to close the season.

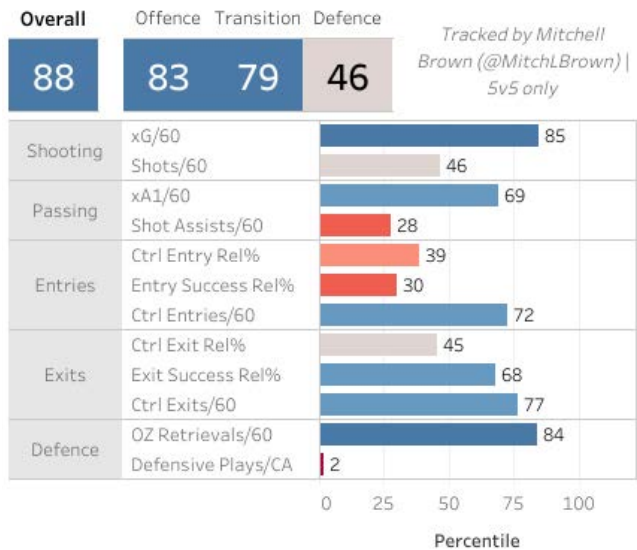
The points speak to Plante's intelligence and awareness. Away from the puck, he's always moving to support plays and get open for off-the-pass shots. With it, he's a crafty, skilled distributor. He passes through, around, and over sticks on both the forehand and backhand, with pressure or while charging ahead in open ice.

A combination of defensive intelligence and motor make him impactful across the ice. "He is suffocating in his approach, upping his pace to force bad decisions, taking the optimal route to funnel pucks to the perimeter, and disrupting transitional attempts," Elite Prospects crossover scout Daniel Gee wrote in an end-of-season report.

After recovering possession, Plante usually knows the next play immediately. Sometimes, he uses the passing skill to make a quick play to the middle, avoiding defenders entirely. Others, he cuts back to get the defender on his back while he waits for his teammates to arrive in scoring location.

To play this game in the NHL, Plante's mechanical base requires refinement. He attempts to offset his lack of ankle flexion by dropping his torso to the ice. That posture limits

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 110.8



his stability through contact and quickness. He also tends to handle with his top hand locked to his side, limiting his range of control.

Plante doesn't have to become mechanically perfect by any means. Intelligence, pace, and skill count – they should make him effective in the NHL without skating and handling technique as strengths. But the closer he gets to NHL average, the better his NHL odds. He could become a do-it-all third-liner.

**Daniel Gee:** April 23rd, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks -USHL

Plante was amazing in this viewing. A game where he faced limited minutes, but still generated a tonne of offensive looks.

Plante's stride is always on mind when you watch his transition game, even at the USHL level. He was winning some races to loose pucks and hounding puck retrievers before they could get breakout passes off. I think where it affects him the most is when he's working off-puck to get to passes that are placed into open space. In this viewing he occupies the right areas when he can make up space. In the first, Plante jumped on a loose puck and hammered a slop shot (at the crest) attacking the rebound shortly after. He has some solid protection habits -- dropped shoulder, cutting hard on his edges; on one shift he was able to send a dangerous pass to the crease to a crashing off-puck teammate. His best transitional play was kind of a broken play; Plante popped a puck through a neutral zone defender, broke through on the right-wing, and got a short side shot off with space. Not sure there is a tonne that is projectable.

Saw more dangerous and translatable looks via sustained offensive zone pressure. He floated into a loose puck in the first, punching the puck laterally to a more central spot in the slot, and sniped a shot glove side -- Plante's arm is locked to his hip limiting his downforce potential currently, but the placement was top-notch. Loved another shift where he pulled the puck off a won faceoff, cut into the slot and fired -- really persistent attacker. Later in the game, planted on the right of the net, he took a pass, reversed into the crease and nearly scored on a between-the-legs shot. Off-puck he was driving dangerous areas (backdoor, slot, etc). Has some body position habits on retrievals fighting for second-chance pucks (pretty essential given his size).

Very proactive defensively in this viewing. Tipped pucks throughout the game, guided multiple transitional attacks to the side-boards via his back check effort. Even grabbed secondary threats. Pretty exciting performance. Didn't really see the passing prowess he displays in USHS and he is undoubtedly mechanically limited, but if that shows up to layer on what he showed in this game, he could pop next season.

**Daniel Gee:** April 9th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs Chicago Steel - USHL

Strong game for Plante, who is still limited by his tools and habits, but is still finding a way to contribute in a depth role.

Plante is pretty limited on-puck transitionally. Lacks separation ability, manipulation-tool blending, and volume attempts. He can't exactly turn defenders and attacks directly into pressure (leading to a couple of turnovers in the game).

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Riley Barber YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 95%	2 J.B. Bittner YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 95%
3 Jacob Micflikier YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY 94%	4 Rocco Grimaldi YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 94%
5 Connor Brickley YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 94%	6 Vinnie Hinostroza YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 94%
7 Jon Waibel YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 93%	8 Garrett Allen YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 93%
9 Cason Hohmann YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 93%	10 Shane Berschbach YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 93%

It worked on one shift he was able to take a pass, handle and exploit an aggressive swing by attacking the defenders triangle, finally missing high on a drive. Scared about his ability to do this against better defenders. On another sequence he was too static on the entry, but protected the puck well to at least delay into a pivot to attempt and hit a trailer (that he missed). Not entirely ideal but he problem solved past his inability to take the puck to the net. He's better off-puck because he can drive the middle of the ice, allowing his linemates to complete the entries. It will be on Plante to figure out how to expand his skating ability, or come up with new solutions.

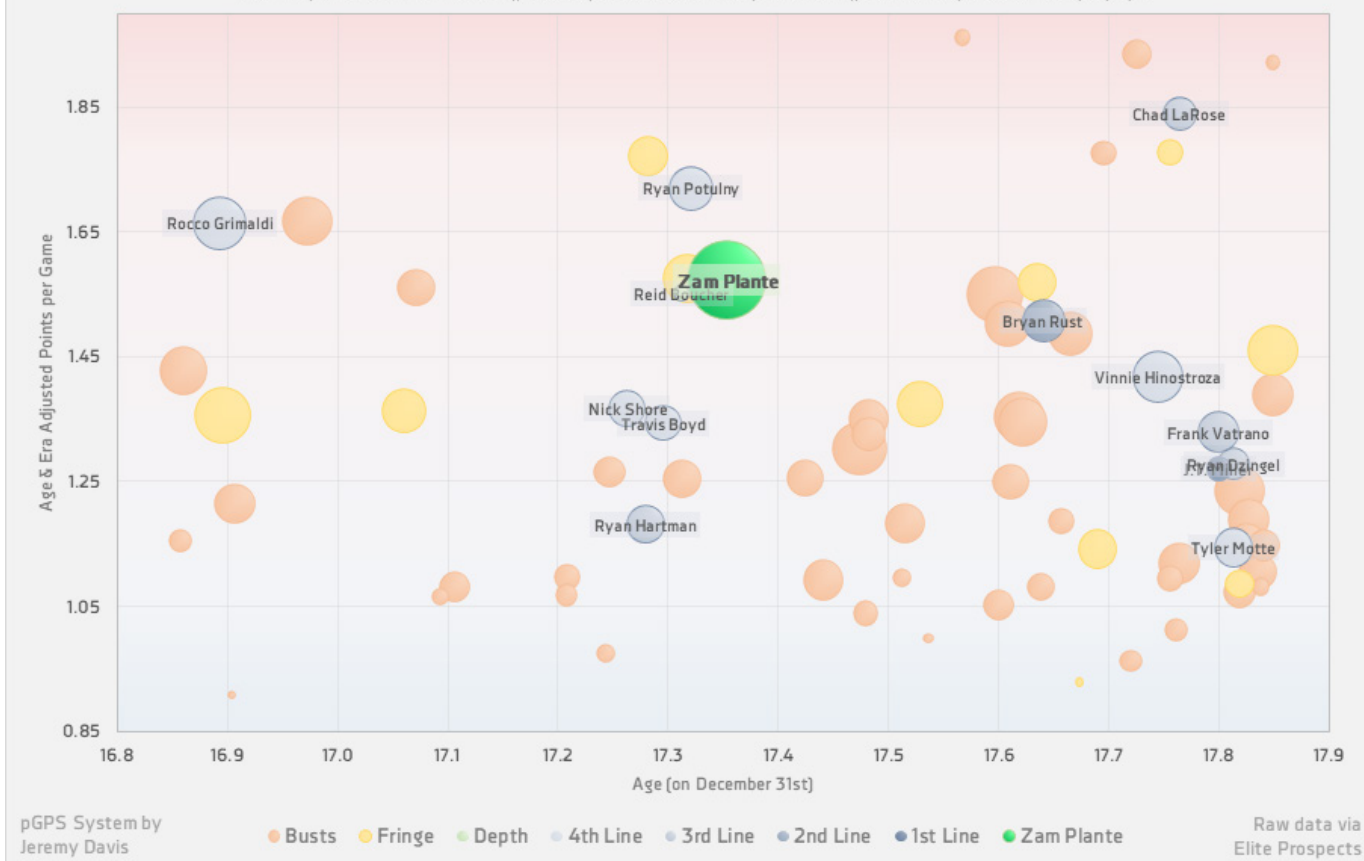
He was strongest in sustained pressure. Recorded an assist on a retrieval in the third. Plante's sense remains to be high -- great rotations into soft areas of coverage in the slot, body positioning to win retrievals -- a polished cyclist. In the first he rotated into a centering slot pass but was laid out in the crease attempting a spin off drawing a penalty. Anticipation was high as well. In the second, Plante read a backpass ring on the end boards, intercepted the puck and escaped up the far boards, feeding a wide open hash-mark planted teammate who somehow botched the chance. The peak of Plante's game came in the third; he pulled a rebound off the end boards, popping the pucks between his legs to get a shot on net. In the same sequence he took a pass on the near boards, rotated high, cut sharply through a lane in the middle of the slot and hammered a one-timer top shelf. Pretty eye-opening play. Is the shot translatable? He lacks some pretty crucial mechanics but the precision was bang on.

## Zam Plante 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 71 || Base XLS: 20% || Impact XLS: 3% || XPR: 33.6 || Drafted Pct: 35%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



A bit passive defensively in this one. He's generally a strong supporter but he needs to help create more stops. He's just behind on a lot of plays (sticks in lanes, body in lanes.)

Plante still looks like a candidate for our board. If he can make more transitional adjustments to counteract his poor shin-angled stride, he could be an exciting player. Right now the retrieval work and hockey sense are valuable to some degree. He looks so much better than he did early in the season for what it's worth.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Another standout playmaking performance from Plante. He quickly identifies teammates on the inside when along the boards, showing the skill off both the backhand and forehand to connect. Hook pass use and makes the one-pass-away play to start passing sequences (that led to his secondary assist). Forechecking remains impressive, as he applies non-stop pressure. Sometimes reaches, but his details are mostly sound. The skating and other mechanics require work. He could be an end-of-board type.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

The skating's pretty scary sometimes, but this was a complete performance from Plante. Now, he's passing. And the passes were awesome. He connected with a catch-and-release look-off cross-slot pass for a goal. Created more chances by winning battles and passing to the inside – including an assist where he was pinned to the boards with one-handed the puck to the inside. Several other creative plays. Weapon on the forecheck in this game, combining pressure and intelligence to great effect. Managed contact much better than in previous viewings, but his skating posture will limit its consistency. He's a capable off-the-pass shooter with some scoring instincts, and his shot will improve as the skating does. But he might just be too mechanically limited to make the end of the board. I wonder how much he improves next year with Chicago – probably significant. Does he get the Steel bump? Either way, he's an end-of-board type at best.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Plante scored by identifying the play to the slot (where most players stay behind the net to support) and firing directly off

the pass. The sequence started with him holding the blue line. His energy on the forecheck stood out in this game. His skating, but for the wrong reasons. It impacts his ability to gain the zone. He gets forced in these straight-line rushes that result in, (a) an outside lane rush with a low-percentage shot, (b) a dump-in, or (c) a turnover along the boards. He needs to change directions more, whether that's by cutting inside and across or making the cross-lane pass (like he does on the breakouts). He's a projectable scorer from his off-puck instincts and retrieval skills, but his mechanics (skating, shooting, handling) will be issues moving forward. Maybe an end-of-board type.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Plante had his gamely chance, picking off an interception and firing. Then, he set up another look by recovering his rebound and finding an open teammate. None of his passing flashes are notable; I see him strictly as a shooter with a questionable shot. He misses teammates in all three zones and rarely identifies the best play. The stride is bad. He doesn't bend his ankles enough, then leans over his toes. Heels kick, but he gets toe snap on many of his strides. The skating impacts his shot, where he tends to straighten his shooting leg, elevate his hips, and drops his torso toward the ice. It's a powerful shot that he has control over, but it's weird to watch. I wonder if it becomes a strength as his skating improves. Didn't see the same forechecking energy I've seen previously, but this was a fine performance for his first game back in the USHL.

**Daniel Gee:** December 4th, 2021

Hermantown High vs Hill-Murray - USHS-MN

Plante's second game back at the USHS-level, coming off a four point season-debut. Plante was productive once again, skating on a line that featured his 06-born brother Max -- it wasn't a dominant performance, but the details in his game rose above others in this game.

Plante put together a great two-way performance, especially in the neutral zone and offensive ends of the rink. Multiple breakout rejections, interceptions, and turnovers were generated through his proactive positioning and capitalization of mounting Hill-Murray mistakes. He was generally always first on pucks and won far too many retrievals that were essentially easy-out scenarios. Out of these turnovers, Plante's playmaking shone. Slip passes, layered cross-ice attempts, hooks, the skill is evident. On one shift in the first he intercepted a puck on the boards, calmly scanning and feeding a pass to the left-hand point cross ice. Later in that period,

he executed steals using stick lifts and pre-scans, working a couple of hope passes into the slot. Pressure doesn't really phase him at all -- actively spins off checkers, stringing passing play or further carries. He had a couple interesting power-play sequences in the second. The first had Plante complete a one-touch crosscrease pass from the farboards. The next had him send a very high-placed one-time shot that missed the net -- arm completely tucked but achieved synced release with his lower body. Probably the weakest part of his game in general -- Plante can become a bit static off-puck and could activate into more dangerous areas around the crease. Gifted forechecker for this level -- constant harassment throughout his shifts (great routes, independent and deliberate stick work).

In transition, Plante was more impactful. He executed two-touch passing plays and regularly broke out pucks for his defenders. Executed some give-and-go plays, defaulting to great lane filing off-puck. His best sequence was in the third. Plante drove the puck down the left-wing, popped the puck out to shuffle by a defender, wheeled the net and scored on the forehand wrap. He had a similar play in the first, but was able to cross a puck into the slot for a high-danger chance. Same great playmaking ability -- on one shift in the first, Plante stripped a pick on the near boards and executed a backhand pass through a layer to hit a teammate streaking on net. Handling habits were inconsistent in this game. Saw some hip-pocket protection that he strung into successful dekes, while in other sequences, he presented the puck in-front of his body, limiting the amount of protection he pushed. Handled into traffic too often. Skating is weak, even at the high-school level -- lacks knee bend, ankle flex, and proper posture. Not sure how translatable he will be in transition because of his deficiencies.

Obviously, as mentioned, Plante was fairly dominant defensively. He doesn't scan often, but he is rather good at clogging lanes, predicting opponent passes, and winning board battles/retrievals. Maybe he just doesn't shoulder-peak? Plante made a huge cross-ice pass interception in the second that would have resulted in a high-danger chance. Unsure how this will trend up to faster competition. Looks like a C-prospect who is far too good for the high-school circuit.

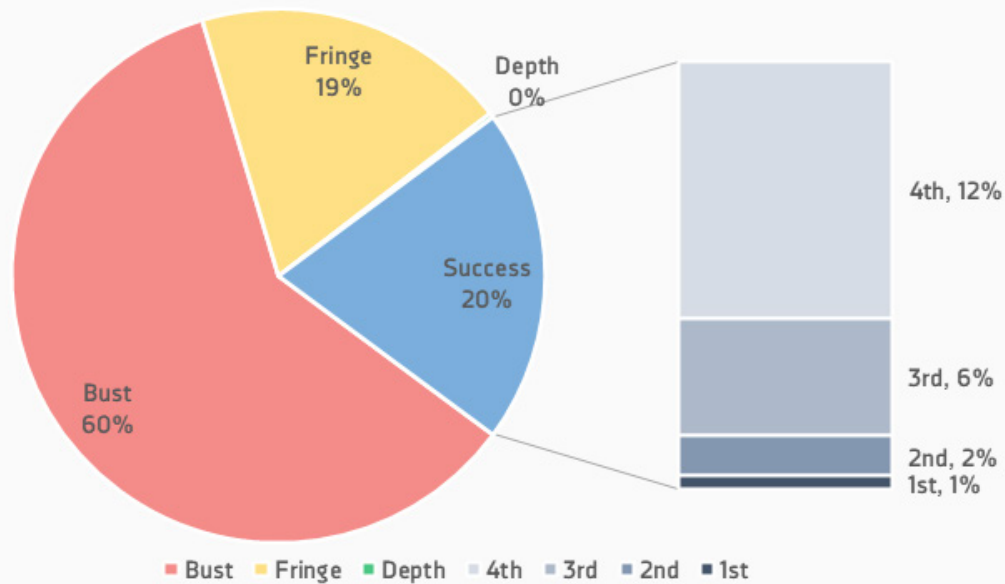
**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 13th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Pretty low activity rate from Plante; he wasn't a main facilitator of offense on his line, who spent plenty of time creating quality chances without him. He seems to have a good awareness of space on the ice, knowing where to activate off the puck and on one occasion exploiting the seam between the defenseman and the strong side winger before

## Zam Plante 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



firing off a good pass to the back door. There's some smarts and creativity, but he's seriously hampered by his skating. He's far too forward in his stance and puts a ton of weight in his toes, almost falling from stride to stride. Bland defensively too.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

The skating's definitely an issue: Plante bends too much at the hip, not enough at the ankles, and has a short, wide stride. But he's quite crafty with his speed – direct routes on the forecheck with some deceptive stick work, changes of pace when attacking defenders, and some off-puck ability to take pucks with speed. He's a weapon on the forecheck and a strong presence down low, but the skating will limit the latter at the next level because he'll lose the leverage battle. Scored with an outside lane net drive – not translatable but he went across the net so points for that. Turned a steal into a goal with a mechanically-sound inside leg shot off the pass reception. Likely a draft pick, with shooting skill, inside play, and forechecking ability. Probably closer to the end of the board than the second round.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

After yesterday's forechecking display, Plante showed plenty of puck skills in this one. I wouldn't say he's a true manipulator -- he can't even really weight shift to beat defenders. But he understands how his movements cause defenders to also move. He used that to gain the zone twice. He consistently changes directions and tries to gain the middle. Inconsistent

execution, but consistently involved his teammates and wasn't just a solo creator. Establishes body positioning on backpressure. Adapts his release to the pressure, either shortening the motion or pulling it closer to the feet to shoot around the defender. His acceleration's the exact same as his stride -- needs to narrow it. He lacks ankle flexion and collapses at the hip. He doesn't generate much power, but his pace is high. Looked like a mid-rounder in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Great night on the forecheck for Plante. He reads the feet and body of the puck carrier, angles his feet away like he's going to fly by, and then dips in for the puck. He doesn't get the steal, but he's consistently disruptive. One steal became a goal, with Plante passing and driving inside. Two whacks point-blank under heavy pressure to score. Skating requires work: High hips, not much ankle flexion, collapsed torso. His acceleration's just his stride (instead of narrower sprint), but he finishes many of his strides properly. He didn't show anything in the way of passing or transition skill. I'm intrigued but unsure.

**Daniel Gee:** August 8th, 2021

Slovakia U18 vs USA U18 - Hlinka Gretzky Cup

Plante's greatest contribution to this loss against Slovakia was the forechecking pressure he applied on opposing defenders. He was suffocating in his approach, upping his pace to force bad decisions, taking optimal routes to funnel pucks into weak sides of the ice, and disrupting transitional attempts.

**"The points speak to Plante's intelligence and awareness. Away from the puck, he's always moving to support plays and get open for off-the-pass shots. With it, he's a crafty, skilled distributor."**

In the third, Plante attacked the OZ near boards, intercepting a bobbled puck, instantly attacking the short side to get a shot off, and driving the net front to get another chance off a rebound. His support and work in the cycle, often born from his forechecking, created sustained pressure for the Americans. At the end of the first, he won a retrieval, pinning the puck on the boards; as a teammate helped poke the puck free from the double team attacking Plante, he continued to push pressure, eventually being able to poke a puck free, creating a turnover, and one-touching a puck to a teammate attacking down the half-wall. Off-puck, Plante struggled to break free of coverage, but made numerous attempts at setting up in backdoor positions. In the second, Plante was able to blend his plus passing ability, off-puck movement, and play within traffic to convert a goal. He actually attacked off the far boards, deking high into the slot, passing perfectly to the left-hand circle through the passing lane he created. He then shifted to the right of the net, crashing and jamming a puck in after a point shot squeaked through. I like his passing habits; he used eyeline manipulation, found difficult targets through layering, and was able to process turnover pucks into instant passing sequences to facilitate counter-attacks.

Defensively, Plante struggled out of the gate; on consecutive shifts he was on the ice for a sustained pressure and a transition goal. His shoulder-checks are almost non-existent and he is reactive in his approach. He had a concerning play on the transition goal where he rushed after the puck carrier, ignoring a more dangerous secondary threat. He works hard, backchecks furiously, but needs to develop his awareness.

Plante barely handled the puck in this game, and his

skating mechanics are a part of the reason why. Currently he collapses heavily at his hips to obtain a 90-degree knee bend, suggesting that his ankle flexion is poor (think Etem, Robertson). His shoulders bob violently in the crossover, but transitions between his forward stride are somewhat efficient in terms of being able to maintain speed. He heavily relies on his motor to make up for inefficiencies in his skating. He profiles as more of a bottom-six player, who possesses great forechecking and support habits with some passing value -- I am sure his current skill set will dominate USHS-MN again this season.

**J.D. Burke:** August 2nd, 2021

USA U18 vs. Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Plante picked up a goal by literally driving a loose puck that squeaked through the goaltender across the finish line with all of his body, throwing himself into the crease with reckless abandon and following the puck across the goal line and into the goalmouth for good measure. It was a snapshot into his elevated work rate on the night, one that kept going even as the game quickly got out of hand with the Slovaks jumping to a 4-0 lead by the end of the first period. Was a force on retrievals, with good angles and a knack for when to play the body. Made a great one-touch pass from about the offensive blue line to the opposite corner to set up a pretty damn good scoring chance. There were signs of plus-level hockey sense in this contest, which coupled with a high work rate could augur well for a bottom-of-the-lineup role at some point down the road. Skating form will need to improve to get there, though.

•P





97  
Rank

C  
Grade

5.5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

5.5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

3.5  
Physical

# GUSTAV KARLSSON

C | ÖREBRO HK J20

HEIGHT 6'1"  
WEIGHT 165

D.O.B. OCT. 31, 2003  
SHOOTS LEFT

18%	1%	0%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	41	31	17	48
SHL	2	0	0	0

## Scouting Report

As one of the 2022 NHL Draft's elder statesmen, Gustav Karlsson entered the J20 Nationell season with higher expectations than most of his first-time draft-eligible peers. And he delivered, scoring 48 points in 41 games for Örebro's J20 squad, good for sole possession of the team lead.

Karlsson was most effective at spotting gaps in coverage and abusing them this season, but we have some doubts about his ability to create offence in the same ways at the next level. While his speed was an advantage in the J20, his high-stance, wide recovery, and a heel-kick that punctuates the end of his stride limit the effectiveness of his skating

and his total output.

"He moves smartly down the right side and is good at delivering a shot or a pass at the right moment," Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin wrote in an April 10th game report. "His physical play is a big weakness. Probably a future SHLer though, but I like how his development is trending up fast"

For Karlsson's offence to come along for the ride to an NHL career, he'll have to integrate more playmaking elements, better deception, and improve the timing on his passes.

## Game Reports

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 10th, 2022

Rögle BK vs. Örebro HK - J20 Final four

Karlsson's skating is translatable to higher levels. He looks so slick and agile and when he times it right he can beat anybody. His passing game and shot are good weapons too. I would like to see him manipulate more at even strength and to take more control with his skills and drive the play more. He has a good support game and will make a smart play if you give him the puck. On the power play he moves smart down the right side and is good at delivering a shot or a pass at the right moment.

His wrist shot with his speed is his best weapon. His physical play is a big weakness. A mid round draft prospect who can become a top six forward if he adds better board

play and strength to take more control.

Probably a future SHLer though. I like how his development is trending up fast too.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 9th, 2022

Linköpings HC vs. Örebro HK - J20 Final four

I like how Karlsson is skating. He has a consistent pace and does not waste energy. He is quick, slick and agile but his acceleration technique could be better. His stride is slightly short in his first steps. Karlsson has an impressive and accurate shot. He moves the puck sideways to shoot and has a very quick release to surprise the goalie. He is slick with the puck and can slide through a defence when he has the upper hand in speed.

He reads the game quite well with the puck on his stick but is more of a transition player and gets caught playing on the outside when he needs to create space. He is more of a player who finds space rather than creating it. Karlsson's red flag is his physical game. He is thin built and plays soft. He can't retrieve pucks from battles. He needs to find ways to be more effective in those areas. Still, this a draftable prospect and with his upsides I would not be surprised to see him go in the mid rounds.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** March 6th, 2022

Örebro HK vs Rögle BK - J20 Nationell


A high-scoring game with eight goals in the first period and a 9-5 score at the end of it. Karlsson's line was flying and scored all of the six first goals for Örebro in the game. Karlsson had three goals and a helper. Karlsson shows strong awareness both with and without the puck. He scans the situation and is quick to act. He finds open spaces and seems to be able to see where the game is heading. He strikes me as an effective player. He has a dangerous wrist shot and good puck control.

His skating is also effective, he is quick and slick without using much energy. His stride is effective and he can play at high pace with soft hands and scan the ice at the same time. Karlsson is not a strong player or a particularly good puck protector so he beats the opponents mostly with a fast mind and quick skating. I would like to see him control pace and

### Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Johannes Tornberg YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY 97%	2 Johan Persson YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY 96%
3 Tomas Larsson YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY 96%	4 Anton Rodin YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 95%
5 Hampus Gustafsson YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 95%	6 Jens Holmstrom YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 94%
7 Henrik Thegel YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY 94%	8 Markus Nilsson YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 94%
9 Victor Olofsson YEAR: 2014 SIMILARITY 94%	10 Johan Skinnars YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY 94%

space more with his hands and become stronger physically to reach as far as the NHL with this style of play but I could see an effective SHL player in the future. Mid round draft pick for me. An offensive player who shows fast development and has both skating and hockey sense as his weapon. 

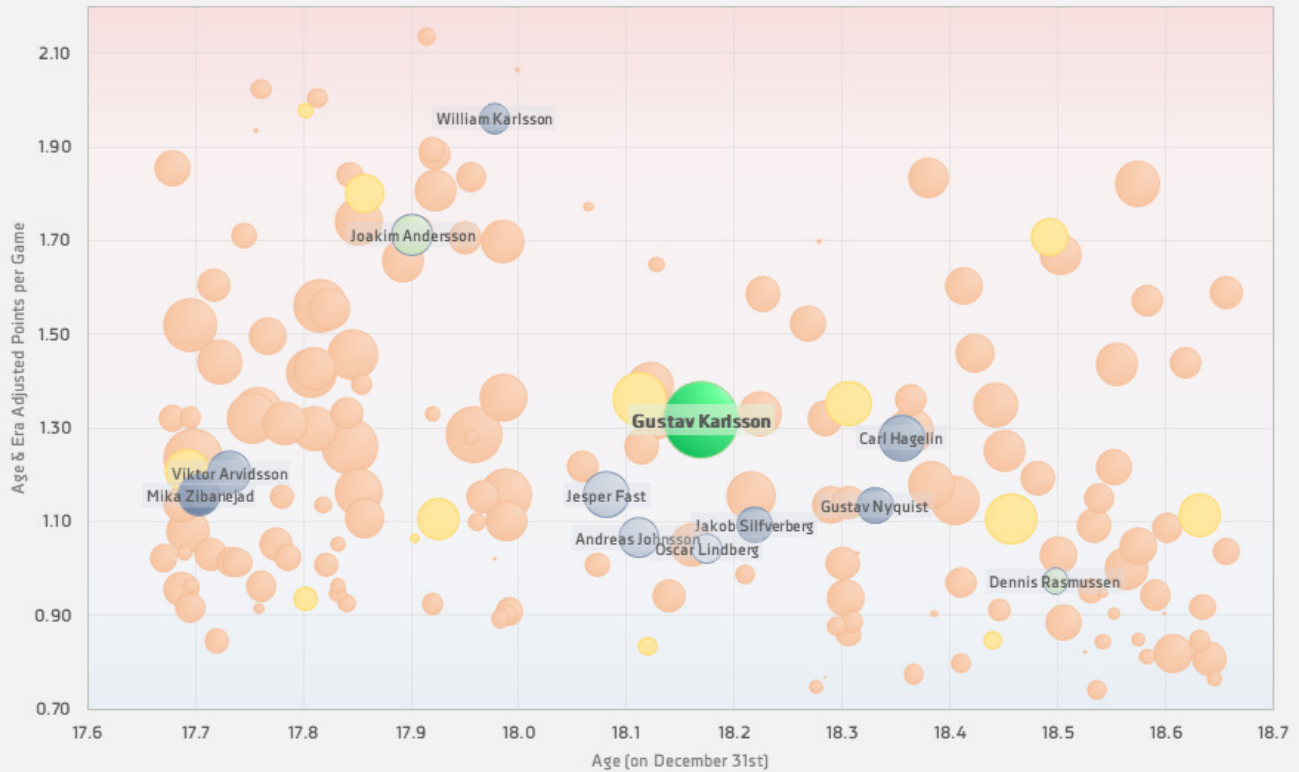


## Gustav Karlsson 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 168 || Base XLS: 7% || Impact XLS: 5% || XPR: 43.3 || Drafted Pct: 31%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



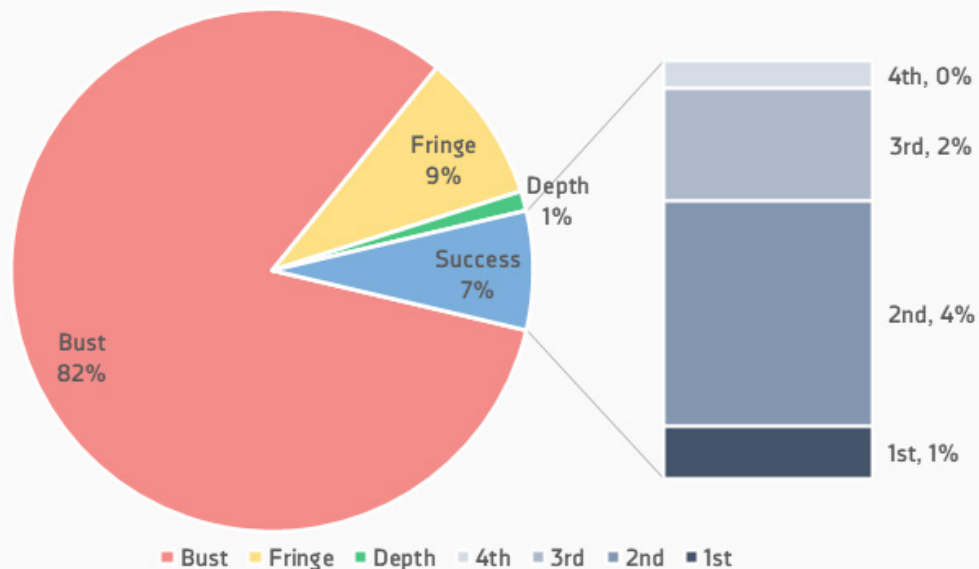
pGPS System by  
Jeremy Davis

● Busts ● Fringe ● Depth ● 4th Line ● 3rd Line ● 2nd Line ● 1st Line ● Gustav Karlsson

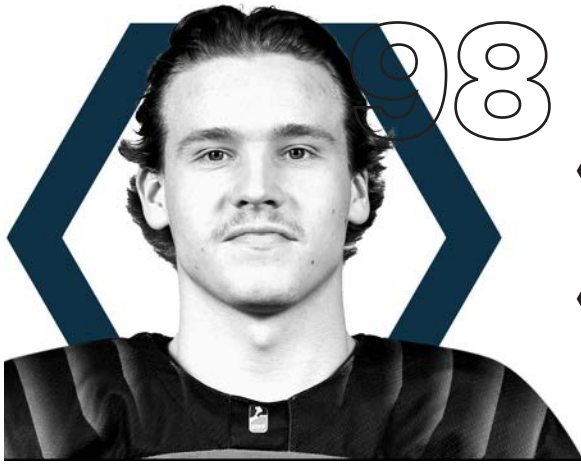
Raw data via  
Elite Prospects

## Gustav Karlsson 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



■ Bust ■ Fringe ■ Depth ■ 4th ■ 3rd ■ 2nd ■ 1st



98  
Rank

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

4.5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

**OTTO SALIN**  
D | HIFK

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAR. 7, 2004  
WEIGHT 192 SHOOTS RIGHT

51%	35%	35%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s.	11	4	8	12
Liiga	6	0	1	1
WJC-18	4	0	2	2

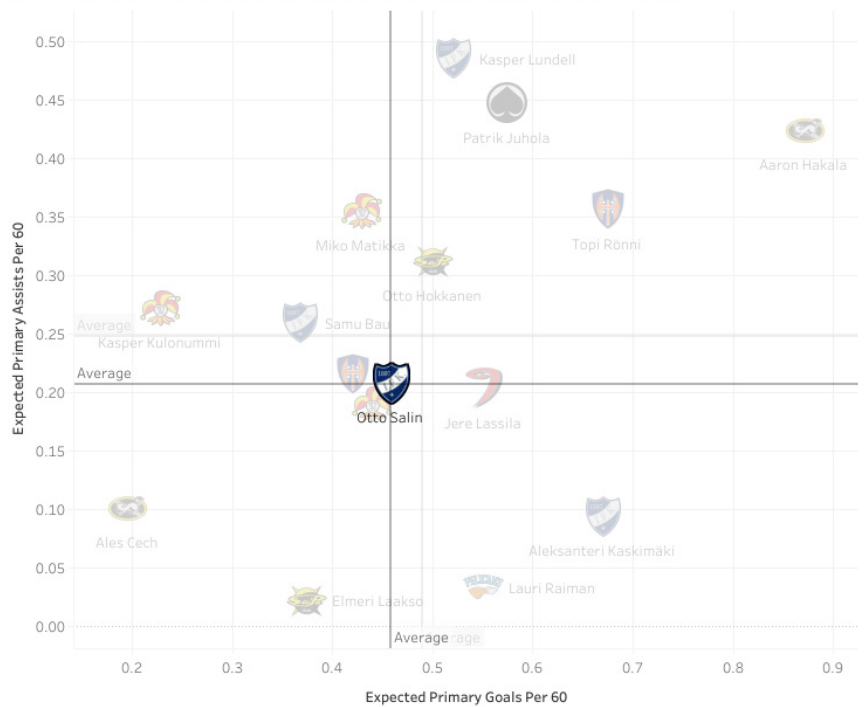
### Scouting Report

Everything was in place for Otto Salin to finish his draft year as a no-brainer pick in the second or third round of this year's draft. He started the scouting season off strong, playing a top-pair role on Finland's blue line at the Hlinka-Gretzky, and then followed that up with promising club play with HIFK's U20 SM-Sarja and Liiga clubs in September.

Then injuries reared their ugly head, and Salin's season fell off the rails a bit. The Finnish blueliner would miss all of October, November, and parts of December with a handful of different injuries and ailments biting into his season.

Even when Salin rejoined HIFK near the end of December, it was clear that he wasn't at 100 percent. And our staff isn't sure whether he ever got there this season, with his worst hockey of the year coming at the 2022 U18 World Hockey Championships in Germany that marked the unofficial end of the scouting season. "Talk about a disappointing tournament," Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen remarked in a post-U18 report on Salin. "Salin was clearly the biggest underperformer relative to expectations. He did miss the last two games, which makes me wonder if he played at 100 percent at any point (which would shock me considering how many injury/health problems he's had throughout the season). But in the games

U20 SM-sarja 2021-2022: Expected Primary Points (5v5 only)



that he played, he definitely didn't leave a positive mark."

Still, we couldn't quite quit Salin, banking on his exceptionally strong draft-minus-one season and work through August and September in this one. There's a pretty interesting player there when he's operating at 100 percent.

"He's a very active transition defenceman, always looking to activate into play in the neutral zone," Alanen wrote in his year-end report on Salin. "He has some deception on his breakouts, too. He's a capable rush defender and plays

rather physically for his size. He does lack pace with the puck, but he's a flashy handler who can be a bit hit-or-miss with his puck control, but can also pull off some impressive sequences. Skating projects as average, though the lack of pace is an issue. More of a shooter in the offensive zone, but I've seen playmaking flashes, too."

The hope is that Salin will return to the form that made

him such an exciting prospect coming into the season and a commanding presence on the Finnish blue line at the Hlinka, and that his work from about December onward this season was an aberration. With course correction and some improvement to his pace, you may be able to get a do-everything bottom-pairing defenceman out of Salin.

## Game Reports

**Lassi Alanen:** April 23th - May 1st, 2022 - U18s

Talk about a disappointing tournament. Salin was clearly the biggest underperformer compared to expectations. He did miss the last two games, which makes me wonder if he played at 100% at any point (which would shock me considering how many injury/health problems he's had throughout the season). But in the games that he played, he definitely didn't leave a positive mark. In transition - which usually should be his strongest suit - he was one of the worst performers. His pace was too slow, his passes were inaccurate and his dangle attempts ended up biting him and his team in the arse. He had some fine moments in terms of rush defence and physicality, but that's about it. In trouble in the defensive zone multiple times, didn't contribute too much on the offensive end.

**David St-Louis:** March 15, 2022

HIFK vs. Jokerit - U20 SM-sarja

Besides the activation patterns, the times where he drops behind teammates in the offensive zone, scissors with them to get the puck and attack down, I don't see much in Salin's game. Everything else is mostly average and quite bland. He recognizes offensive opportunities, but his pace is relatively low; it's a slow skate up ice -- and he's quite shot-focused in the offensive zone. His defensive game was relatively solid in this one, especially off the rush. He can push attackers to the boards and kill plays, but the particular foundation of his team, their 1-1-3 neutral-zone forecheck makes it a bit easier for him to stop attackers at the line. Tools are average and there are some interesting flashes.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 15, 2022

Lukko vs. HIFK - U20 SM-sarja

Not the best start to the game for Salin: mishandled the puck after the faceoff while not even being pressured and took a penalty after the following DZ sequence. After that, things started to get better and he was on the ice for many of HIFK's goals. He also managed to put the puck in the net once, making a cross-ice pass on the PP and moving to the net-front to tap-in the rebound. Salin's skill level is clearly high for this level, and sometimes it was to his detriment

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Esa Lindell YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 83%	2 Joonas Lehtivuor YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY 68%
3 Mikko Lehtonen YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 66%	4 Valtteri Viljanen YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 63%
5 Konsta Makinen YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 62%	6 Mikko Maenpaa YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 62%
7 Antti Weckstrom YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 61%	8 Jesse Jyrkkio YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY 60%

as he was forcing things off the rush and tried to out-skill multiple players in a row. He activated a lot in the OZ as usual and in the right system, he's going to thrive doing that. Comfortable passing in transition from either forehand or backhand aside from few mistakes. He tends to play with only one pace, though, and adding speed changes would make him even more dynamic. Off-puck defence needs a lot of work, but on-puck defence looked pretty solid in this one. Not a whole lot new compared to the earlier viewings.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 9th, 2022

Kiekko-Espoo vs. HIFK - U20 SM-sarja

The constant activation in the offensive zone and rushes was the highlight of Salin's game yet again. He clearly thrives in this kind of an environment, which also makes you question how will he look in a more strict structure since this is really what sets him apart from many others. Sometimes Salin just activates for the sake of it and without a clear purpose or a mission, but in this one, there were many situations where there was a clear intent behind it: to be a trailer off the rush or activating as the weak side D to create a possible cross-ice passing lane during OZ cycle. Salin amassed seven shot attempts with a few of them being scoring chances and also a few setups. Salin looked a bit better defensively, too. There were a few bigger mistakes with his routes and

awareness, but he was also killing plays early with more proactive engagement on rush defence compared to some of the recent other viewings.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 5th, 2022

HIFK vs. TPS - U20 SM-sarja

This was clearly a better performance from Salin compared to the two previous ones. His accuracy and reliability on the breakouts was a lot higher, completing a ton of successful controlled exits. There were multiple times when he was able to break up a play behind his net or at least come out of the scuffle with the puck and start a rush with a pass or by a carry. Salin's handling looked above-average in this one projection-wise, top hand was free from the hip and he was able to handle in a lot of difficult situations. Sure, he wasn't perfect transitionally but the improvement was very noticeable. Defensively, there's a lot of room for improvement but also good tools. He's got a stocky build and is able to use his body to separate forwards from the puck. Though he's got a decent instincts for 1-on-1 defence, his lack of pace counters that at times and his positional awareness could be improved. A bit more quiet game offensively, just a few point shots, though he was still involved deep in the zone during many shifts. The upside as a two-way transitional defenceman is still there, even if the projection is more difficult than I expected initially.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 4th, 2022

HIFK vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

These last few games just haven't been it from Salin. I don't know what has happened in the past few months, but he just haven't been putting up similar performances compared to the first half of the season. Defensive play was not ideal. He was committing hard on weird situations but then playing passively and with low pace in others. Very loose gap in transition, allowed a lot of clean entries without contesting. Tried to throw his body around a bit but it didn't really work that well. Transition play was another big issue. I counted five failed exits and only two successful when pressured. Kept the puck too long at times, tried to make his passes from glide and more often than not they were either intercepted for being inaccurate or he just turned it over under forechecking pressure. There were a few more typical Salin rushes where he combined crossovers and used the middle lane successfully, but the ratio was just plain bad. Offensively, he still managed to have his moments at 5-on-5, being his usual active self with and without the puck. This resulted in him scoring the game-winning OT goal from a rebound.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 2nd, 2022

HIFK vs. Kiekko-Espoo - U20 SM-sarja

One of the worst games I've seen from Salin this season. Did he do some good? For sure. Salin's super active playstyle always gets him some looks and breakouts, even in worse games. His success rate in transition was a lot lower than you'd want to see. Some of his passes were plain inaccurate, sometimes he just let himself get overwhelmed by the forecheck. Salin needs to start to utilize more quick d-to-d passes instead of always trying to make it happen by himself. Defensive game was an issue, too. His gap control was a lot more loose than ideal, giving a lot of controlled entries away that turned into scoring chances. There was also a weird sequence where Salin was at the OZ point and HIFK potentially turned the puck over and one of Kiekko-Espoo's forwards just skated past Salin who didn't react. Then there was a steal and an easy pass for a breakout.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 30th, 2021

HIFK vs. Sport - Liiga

This was probably the most complete performance with the puck from Salin so far this season in Liiga. He played with good pace, making quick little passes to advance the play. He can be a bit slow with the puck at times and get pressured if you get to him quickly, but that wasn't apparent in this game. He didn't do anything flashy, activating less than in previous games. That's probably partly due to the circumstances; HIFK was forced to defend a lot in the later half of the game with Salin on the ice. He can be a bit slow to react defensively, too, not always moving quickly enough to cover after a turnover, etc..

**Lassi Alanen:** December 27th, 2021

Ässät vs. HIFK - Liiga

Well, you certainly can't say that Salin lacks confidence. He had probably close to five different end-to-end attempts, mostly with limited success. He had some good sequences where he was able to weave through the neutral zone but continued trying to deke after gaining the zone and lost the puck in the process. Sometimes he caused a NZ turnover when failing to get past the forwards. I like the amount of activation with and without the puck, even if it definitely needs fine-tuning. You also have to consider the limited amount of games he's played this season (and it was only his second career Liiga regular season game). Some unforced errors on the breakouts with bad passing accuracy. Scanned on most of his retrievals. Good work on a pinch in the first shift of the game, kept the play alive in the OZ. Did a fine job defending against odd-man rushes (there were quite a

few of them), guarding the middle while giving instructions to backcheckers and intercepting one pass.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 26th, 2021

HIFK vs. Pelicans - Liiga

Salin was back on HIFK's Liiga team after getting a few games under his belt at the U20 level - they clearly believe he's a Liiga caliber player already, and I probably tend to agree. Salin's confidence still very much remains despite being injured in his two previous games against men. He had multiple sequences where he skated the puck up the ice, used crossovers to create separation and entered the zone. He's not a high-end playmaker at 5-on-5 yet, evident by missing some passing options during those entries, but he's got really strong activation habits that you can build upon. Salin can be a rather low-pace defender, missing some assignments by not being quick enough or not having his stick ready on the ice. I like how he uses his body, though, trying to establish body positioning during puck battles. Saw one shift on the power play, where his passing intentions looked good (trying to deceive and look off his target) but the execution was a bit rusty.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 18th, 2021

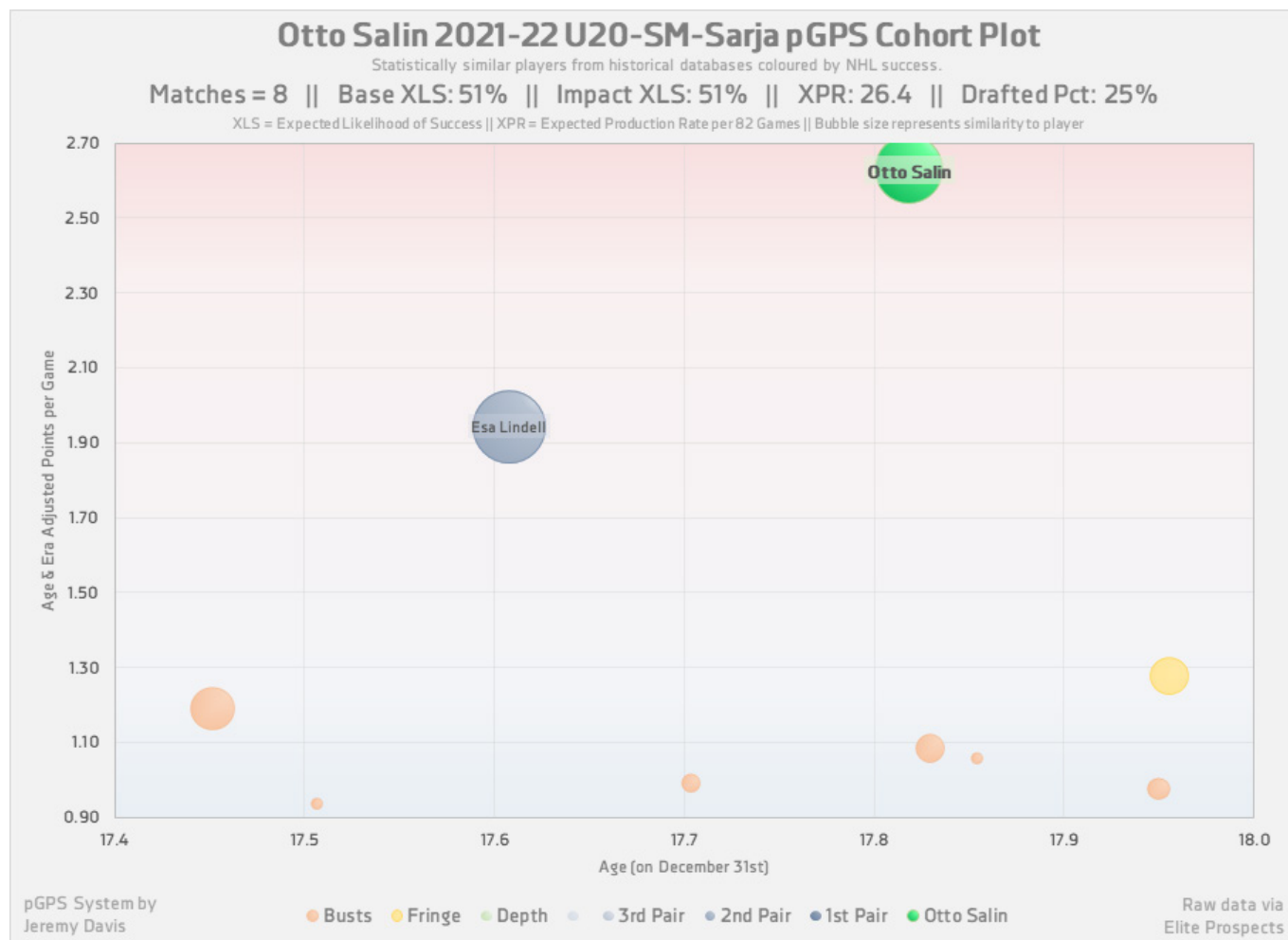
KalPa vs. HIFK - U20 SM-sarja

Salin was overwhelmingly active in the offensive zone and in transition. Probably one of the most productive game in terms of generating chances I've seen from a defenceman in the U20 league in the past few seasons. Salin was just all over KalPa, carrying the puck a ton to the zone and then playing a very free-flowing OZ style, taking advantage of every possible opening to activate down low or make a move on the weak side. Ended up getting a primary assist after a wrap-around attempt deflected to the back post. Vision looked above-average, was able to make cross-ice feeds off of the activations, even if his linemates weren't able to get good shots off of the passes. One terrible turnover on a cross-ice pass attempt in the DZ, resulting in a HD chance against - there seems to be at least one eyebrow raising play in a bad way per game. Fine game defensively for the most part otherwise. Could gap up more aggressively in the NZ.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 17th, 2021

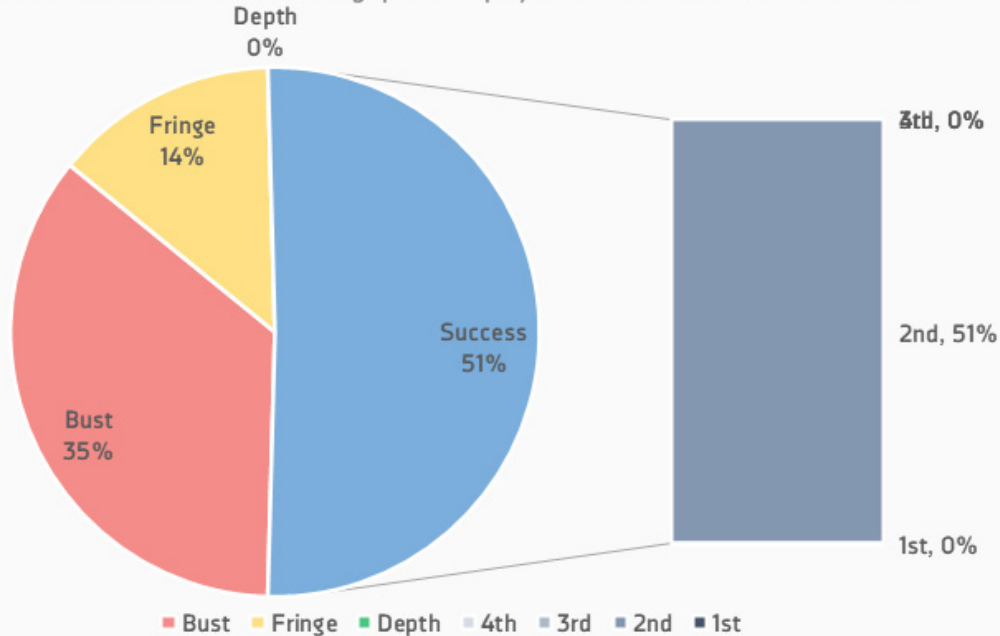
Kärpät vs. HIFK - U20 SM-sarja

This was Salin's first game since returning from an injury



## Otto Salin 2021-22 U20-SM-Sarja pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



he sustained at the start of the season. Straight away, he logged over 20 minutes of ice time in HIFK's win over Kärpät at the U20 level, recording a secondary assist in the process. It was quite clear that Salin was playing his first game in months. His puckhandling looked awkward especially at the start of the game, fumbling easy pucks while having little to no pressure around him, once turning the puck over after a retrieval where he lost at the slot for a HD chance against. His passing was also not as accurate as usual, but I liked some of the ideas I saw. Salin activates in the OZ more often than any other draft-eligible defender in the league. He's in constant motion, engaging in hand-offs and constantly being down low during cycles. He's also very active at activating into play. There was one rush defence sequence where he dispossessed the opponent and immediately skated up the ice. Though he didn't get the puck, the added pressure was enough for HIFK to score off the rush. Defensively, he is a decent on-puck defender who engages physically quite a bit and makes some well-timed pokechecks.

**Lassi Alanen:** August 20th, 2021

Tappara vs. HIFK - Liiga (pre-season)

Salin was skating on the third pairing on this one, but it seemed like HIFK was rotating seven defencemen pretty equally. He also got ice time on the second power play, playing on the left half wall. For the most part, Salin doesn't look out of place in Liiga. He has the patience and the poise to be effective with the puck. He scans well on retrievals and does make the solid first play most of the time. He found options on the wing but also hit his center with a couple of

nice passes. Salin isn't the most explosive skater and he still lacks depth in his stride, but it wasn't much of a problem in this one. He can get enough separation to make a play most of the time. There was one nice sequence where he broke up the play with a nice shuffle-step, not committing with crossovers on rush defence. Only really got burned once defensively. Offensively, there isn't much to write about. He logged a couple of point shots, but didn't get the puck that much.

**Lassi Alanen:** August 7th, 2021

Finland vs. Sweden - Hlinka Gretzky Cup 2021

Decent showing from Salin in this one. Breakouts were pretty clean for the most part and he demonstrated calmness under pressure on retrievals. He demonstrates some deception in his puck play, faking a D-to-D pass along the boards before going the other way instead. He hit some impressive outlets, creating 3-on-2 situations with Sweden pressing deep with three forwards. Salin activates into the play without hesitancy. His routes could be improved, but it's an encouraging sign and has been apparent in his play for a while now. Defensively, missed assignments here and there but didn't look out of place. Offensive game was rather limited in this one with not that many puck touches in the OZ.

**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

Finland U18 vs. Czech Rep. U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Really impressive showing from Salin in this contest. Has really strong habits as a puckhandler (free top hand, hands and feet operating independently) but lacks the creativity to



really make much of it. Just a lot of end-to-end rushes that lead to him being stapled to the perimeter, not creating much of anything besides zone entries and exits -- something to be said for the transition value, though. Made a couple of crafty, reach-adjusted passes to find the trailer on the rush in this contest. Sends a lot of false signals onto his first touch on puck retrievals to create skating lanes, and explodes into them. Looked like an exceptionally strong transition player in this contest, and his defensive zone work was mostly strong, too. Worth tracking as a potential mid-round pick.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 13th, 2020

Ässät vs. HIFK - U20 SM-sarja

Salin added a really nice primary assist in this one. He got a nice drop pass from his linemate and separated through the right half wall before finding a player in front of the net with a hard tape-to-tape pass for a tap-in -- impressive. As

a 2022 eligible, Salin's offensive game is superior compared to many of the 2021 eligible Finnish defencemen. He's got good poise on the point and he activates quite often into space to get his shots from better locations. Salin's lateral agility looks solid. His stride has a decent amount of ankle flexion, but he doesn't sink very deep into it, which is probably due to lack of leg strength and will likely improve. Salin's passing game on the breakout was a bit hit-and-miss. He has the ingredients you're looking for, including good amounts of deception with look-offs, but his passing accuracy just wasn't there. Defensively, Salin has a decent amount of physicality in his game despite smallish size, making a couple of breakups near the end boards with well-timed hits. He does need to establish body positioning more often since in stationary net-front battles he doesn't have the strength to win. Overall, Salin is looking like one of the better 2022 eligible defenders in Finland.



**"The hope is that Salin will return to the form that made him such an exciting prospect coming into the season and a commanding presence on the Finnish blue line at the Hlinka, and that his work from about December onward this season was an aberration."**

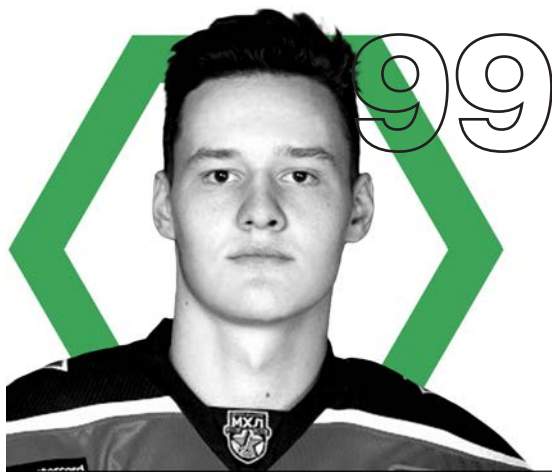
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99  
Rank

C  
Grade

3.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

6  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# KIRILL DOLZHENKOV

LW | KRASNAYA ARMIYA MOSKVA

HEIGHT 6'6" D.O.B. APR. 24, 2004  
WEIGHT 236 SHOOTS LEFT

0%	0%	0%	0.75
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
MHL	33	14	14	28

## Scouting Report

Kirill Dolzhenkov has a way of subverting expectations. You may be tricked by his Elite Prospects player page into thinking he's a physical player who puts up his point by driving the net, but there's so much more to his game than that.

The truth is that Dolzhenkov is a hard skill player with more emphasis on the latter part of that qualifier. His handling skills are his main creation tools on the ice. He can play keep away in tight spaces, beat defenders with between-the-legs moves off the rush, and feed teammates in open areas in a variety of ways, with saucer, backhand, slip, and hook feeds. His passes are well set up, too. Their deceptiveness often has the opposition covering the wrong option.

### Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** March 27th, 2022

Loko vs Kranaya Armiya - MHL

Dolzhenkov's game continues to hold up. Some errors and the skating is still worrisome, but overall, the skill and the processing speed are high enough that he is an NHL candidate down the line. He sees the best play, even if he can be quite individualistic, at times, probably because of the style of play of the league he plays in. Spin passes, one-hand passes, and two-touch passes...The arsenal of feeds is large. There is the inception of an effective puck protection game: reverse hits, abilities to bounce off check, and keep his body between the opponents and the puck. The issue is that he can't access his outside edges and can't separate in those one-on-one sequences. He gave up on a couple of

Dolzhenkov is capable of anticipating the rotations of teammates and of supporting them in a timely fashion. He showed us enough flashes of higher hockey sense for us to think that he can translate his game to, at the very least, the KHL.

His skating is the biggest limiter of his potential. The lack of knee and ankle flexion in his stride coupled with a heel kick on his extensions prevent him from winning races to pucks and beating defenders wide. Without substantial improvement to this part of his game, Dolzhenkov won't be able to sustain the pace of the NHL game.

races, knowing he didn't have the speed to compete.

**David St-Louis:** March 15th, 2022

MHC Spartak vs Kranaya Armiya - MHL

Only 10 minutes of ice-time and a quiet first period, but the skill appeared in the 2nd and 3rd frames. He dangled through the opposition multiple times, often pulling off his moves by the skin of his teeth. That's not what interest me in his game, however. The passing is more projectable, the deception and ability to hold on to the puck to let plays develop. He also has the inception of a puck protection game: establishes body positioning, separates others from the puck... He's definitely a pick for me, but a project.

**David St-Louis:** February 14th, 2022

SKA-Varyagi vs. Krasnaya Armiya - MHL

Dolzhenko has a long road to the NHL, but he has legitimate skill at his size, which is very interesting. His passing game, especially, stands out: backhands, slips, saucers...There is variety and directionality to his passing. Soft receptions, too. He can set up his passes, too, with deception and with his movement. He goes to the net, but he's more of a soft-skill player at this stage than a physical one -- at least this is what it looks like in this game. I saw glimpses of anticipation, foresight of the routes of teammates. The skating is a significantly below-average projection: high-stance, kicking feet, wide...Range compensates somewhat. He managed a few steals in this game.

**David St-Louis:** February 13th, 2022

SKA-Varyagi vs. Krasnaya Armiya - MHL

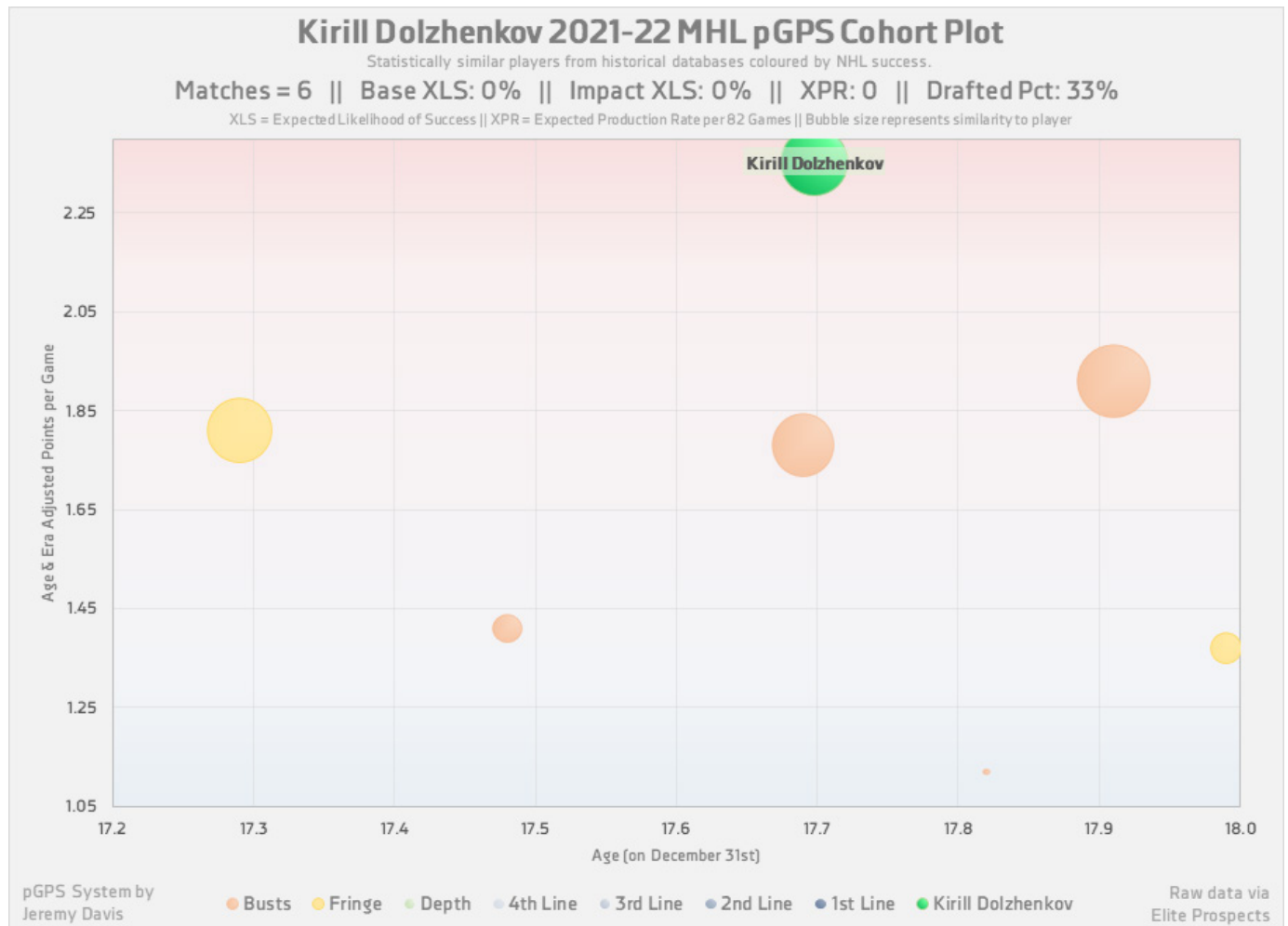
Dolzhenko scored with a Lacrosse goal in this game. The handling skill continues to shine quite massively, but he's not just a bigger guy with hands. The ideas are good, great

### Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Maxim Shalunov YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 88%	2 Nikolai Prokhorki YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 83%
3 Ignat Zemchenko YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 82%	4 Roman Lyubimov YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 69%
5 Vitali Popov YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 69%	6 Alexei Filippov YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 65%

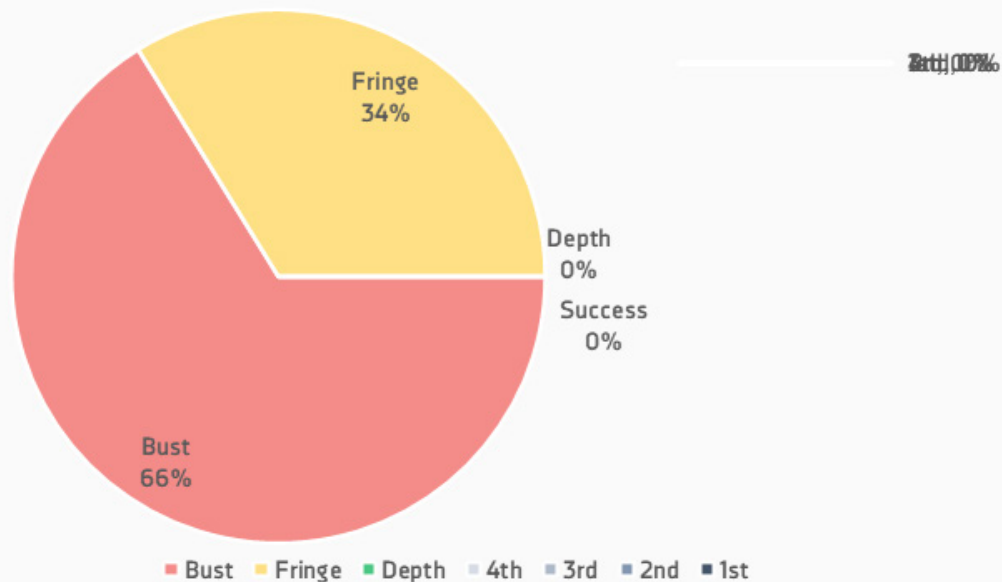
even. He links plays between teammates quite fast, and tries to include them, spots seams to the slot and gets inside, and attacks the net at the right time. The skating lags behind the rest of the skills but I could see it reach a slightly below NHL average.



"[Dolzhenkov's] skating is the biggest limiter of his potential. The lack of knee and ankle flexion in his stride coupled with a heel kick on his extensions prevent him from winning races to pucks and beating defenders wide."

### Kirill Dolzhenkov 2021-22 MHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



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100  
Rank

4.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# TOPI RÖNNI

C | TAPPARA

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. MAY 5, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS LEFT

16%	18%	9%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s.	30	11	18	29
Liiga	20	2	2	4
WJC-18	6	2	2	4

## Scouting Report

Topi Rönni's slow start to the season had us questioning his upside for a little while, but as his play picked up in the second half, we started to envision a path to the NHL for the Finnish forward.

In most shifts, Rönni is a supportive player; someone who provides timely passing options to teammates, especially in transition. He draws low arcs in the defensive zone to help his defencemen break out the puck and then initiates crisscrossing movements with his line-mates off the rush to create passing plays.

"He really distinguished himself in the defensive zone, with a great sense of timing and an active stick disrupting passing plays regularly," EP Rinkside Editor-in-Chief J.D Burke wrote in a report at the 2022 U18 World Hockey Championships. "Did some just phenomenal work on the penalty kill. If there's one takeaway from this game, it's that Rönni knows how to support the play exceptionally well."

Rönni is also a mechanically sound and quick handler who, in time, could leverage that technical ability to become a manipulative playmaker. He already routinely uses deception to beat defenders one-on-one, faking drop passes to make them hesitate and turn their skates.

These kinds of tricks help Rönni get around the offensive zone. They alleviate some of his speed and acceleration issues.

"Knee and ankle bend are both far from optimal, the stride length is very short for a player his size and he kicks his heels quite aggressively," Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen wrote in a report on December 4th, 2021. "It's a big red flag that needs to be kept in mind, even if Rönni has some other desirable qualities."

There are some interesting qualities in his game, even if he'll require significant development to leverage them for an NHL career.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Janne Laakkonen YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 95%	2 Eetu Qvist YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 93%	3 Markus Granlund YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 93%	4 Henri Ikonen YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 92%	5 Kristian Kuusela YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 91%
6 Sami Salminen YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 91%	7 Oskari Siiki YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 89%	8 Joonas Nattinen YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 88%	9 Ville Leskinen YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 87%	10 Jussi Jokinen YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 87%

**Lassi Alanen:** April 23th - May 1st, 2022 - U18s

Rönni had a pretty expected tournament, centering the second line and seeing ice time on both special teams. His off-puck work was as solid as I've come to expect. Killed off plays in the defensive end and supported his defencemen well down low. Also supported the play when his team had the puck and being one of the better transition players on the team. Where I would have wanted to see more was on the final third of the ice where his decision-making wasn't always optimal. Relatively low expected primary point output at 5-on-5. He did flash more handling skill than I've seen earlier this season. Probably raised his draft stock a bit in my eyes.

**David St-Louis** - April 28th, 2022

Finland vs Canada - WJ18

I liked Rönni in this tournament. Sure, he's a bit of an overdangler, but his handling skills clearly look above-average. The puck is glued to his stick inside his fake-drop passes and one-on-one dangles. He gets steps around defenders by faking them. He supports plays well, understands rush patterns (creates pockets of space for teammates), and even contributes defensively, at times. An interesting prospect of a prospect. The handling skill could become quite special, too, as he has the manipulation to back it up.

**J.D. Burke:** April 27th, 2022

Finland vs. Canada - U18s

I got a real appreciation for Rönni's off-puck reads at both ends of the ice in this hockey game. He really distinguished himself in the defensive zone, with a great sense of timing and an active stick disrupting passing plays regularly. Did some just phenomenal work on the penalty kill. If there's one takeaway from this game, it's that Rönni knows how to support the play exceptionally well.

I was far less enthusiastic with his work with the puck. Rönni's got a really bad case of tunnel vision. I can think of two examples off the top of my head where he settled for a low percentage shot with a linemate within reach of a quick pass for a Grade-A scoring chance. There might be something there as a late-round pick, but I have a hard time seeing much upside there.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Finland vs. Switzerland - U18s

Rönni goes to the right areas on the ice and supports plays well. He looks engaged. I'm not sure about the skating due to the high-stance and the fact that he wasn't moving all that fast.... He had trouble completing his own plays but he might be an NHLer just based on the intensity and net-front drives

and supporting element.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 22nd, 2022

Lukko vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Rönni scored a rebound goal after a bad turnover in Tappara's shootout loss to Lukko in the final regular season game in the U20 league. Once again, he was centering the top line and playing big minutes of both special teams. Rönni's skating form hasn't notably changed, but he definitely looked faster compared to the first half of the season, which is pleasant to see and makes his projection a bit safer. It's probably still below NHL-average, but even that is an improvement compared to the start of the season when it looked downright bad. Rönni's on-puck game wasn't super sharp and he mishandled the puck a few times in transition, but I was really liking his off-puck routes and decision-making in this one. He was smart with his body positioning and speed control, often putting himself into open positions, but his linemates just couldn't deliver him the puck. Still logged a few scoring chances off the rush. Provided the usual defensive value. Based on his improved play in the later half of the season, he's likely going to end up in the later half of our board.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 19th, 2022

Jokerit vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Rönni played a pivotal role in Tappara's comeback, first assisting a goal that narrowed Jokerit's lead and then redirecting the game-tying goal on the power play. Rönni had some very good moments off the cycle, especially by making nice small-area passes to activating defencemen, showcasing good OZ vision. Spent a lot of time killing penalties, which took away from his 5-on-5 ice time. A few nice plays off the rush, recognizing open space and utilizing it pretty well. Skating remains the biggest weakness, though it looked a bit better than usual, at least looking at his pace. Depth remains an issue.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 11th, 2021

Tappara vs. Kärpät - Liiga

Rönni had a two-goal performance in his fifth career Liiga game. He was in the right place at the right time in the first one, intercepting a loose puck in the slot with the opposing defender gifting him the pass under pressure. Rönni did a good job with a quick and accurate top-shelf release. The second goal came from Tappara having their goalie pulled and playing 6v5 for quite a while. Rönni circled the net and managed to sneak to the back post unheld, with his linemate recognizing the open pass and Rönni just had to hold the stick on the ice and tap it in. Other than that, there were no

## Topi Ronni 2021-22 U20-SM-Sarja pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 13 || Base XLS: 16% || Impact XLS: 4% || XPR: 34.6 || Drafted Pct: 38%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



memorable moments and he had one bad turnover trying to exit with a pass to the middle, resulting in a HD chance for Kärpät.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 4th, 2021

Tappara vs. Ilves - Liiga

Rönni recorded his first career Liiga points in Tappara's dominant win over Ilves in the second game of the weekend between the two teams. Rönni took advantage of a defender losing balance on a retrieval, quickly recovering the puck and feeding it to the slot for an open teammate – a very solid play. Later in the third period Rönni managed a secondary assist, touching the puck in a net-front battle, which eventually ended up going in. In the first two periods, Rönni was rather unnoticeable aside from a few recoveries + exits and dump-ins. We got a good glimpse at his current skating form on one occasion where he was backchecking with full effort. Spoiler alert: it hasn't changed. Knee and ankle bend are both far from optimal, the stride length is very short for a player his size and he kicks his heels quite aggressively. It's a big red flag that needs to be kept in mind, even if Rönni has some other desirable qualities.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 3rd, 2021

Ässät vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Rönni was showing a bit more skill than in my previous viewings. He's showed plus-level handling skills. Top hand is not glued to his hip but moves freely. Made some fancy dekes off the rush and made them work most of the time. Also one particularly notable backhand spin pass in the OZ, showcasing his creativity and vision. Supported the puck well. I'm not sure if he's a high-end creator, but he's got value as a two-way center with hands and positional awareness. Skating remains a concern.

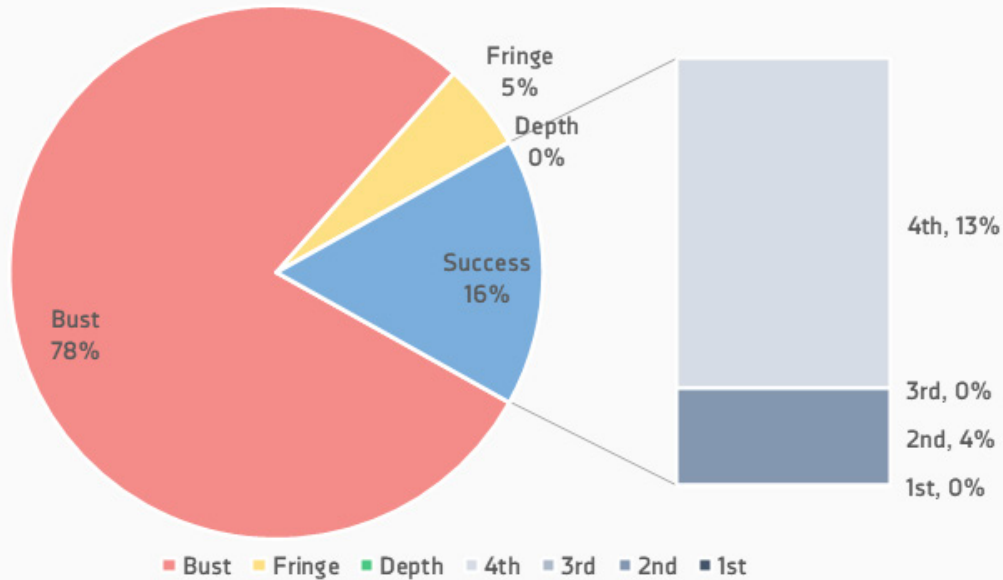
**Lassi Alanen:** November 19th, 2021

TPS vs. Tappara - Liiga

Just under nine minutes for Rönni in this one, playing on the fourth line. Not sure if there is anything to say about this. Lack of quickness and speed is an issue for Rönni and lack of strength in puck battles was pretty evident and not something he's necessarily used to. When he got the puck in the NZ, the play was always to dump the puck in, but none of them were recovered in this one. Puck handling looked a bit off.

## Topi Ronni 2021-22 U20-SM-Sarja pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**Lassi Alanen:** November 12th, 2021

U18 Five Nations, Switzerland

Rönni has started to heat up lately in the U20 league, and he was probably Finland's best forward outside of the first line in this tournament overall. Centering the second line, Rönni was consistently creating in the OZ. He made some great passes from below the net to the slot, showing creativity and craftiness as a passer. He made some plays off the rush, too, which has been a weak point at the U20 level. Defensively, he's going to win a good amount of battles with his diligence. Skating continues to be a red flag, though, and it's going to be that way for the entire season. Could he be a poor man's version of what Juuso Pärssinen has turned out to be in the past few seasons? I don't think he's as skilled, but there could be something there. It's going to require skating improvements, though.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 30th, 2021

Jukurit vs. Tappara - Liiga

Rönni played his first career regular season game with Tappara's Liiga team, though he only logged around six minutes of ice time. There were good moments on retrievals where Rönni was first to pucks and managed to sustain OZ pressure. He had one chance off the rush, shooting an outside leg wrister from the top of the circle that went over the net. There was one weird play where he received the puck in the middle of the ice in NZ, having a ton of open space to enter through the middle. Instead, he decided to pass to his winger who was way more contained than him and couldn't

gain the zone. Probably nerves.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 2nd, 2021

KalPa vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

This was probably the best game from Rönni I've seen this season this far. Especially in the first half of the game, he was dangerous offensively and created multiple opportunities for himself and his linemates. He made some steals along the boards, following them up with quick passes to open teammates. His puck protection game along the boards is strong, altering the puck position with his hands and utilizing his body to keep the puck out of reach for opponents. He made one sick play on the penalty kill, cutting middle off the rush and passing the puck back to the wing he came from with his backhand, perfectly slicing two defenders and creating a scoring chance, all without breaking a stride. He also scored the game-winning goal in OT, beating the goalie with a well-placed wrist shot. It looked like it really did him good as he had only one assist in six games before this, a really slow start. Rönni's skating still remains a big turn-off and it's going to be a big problem going forwards and it already limits him at this level. If he improves that aspect, he's a pretty solid prospect. If not, I'm not very optimistic about his chances.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 18th, 2021

Kärpät vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Rönni was centering Tappara's top line and he was getting minutes on the second power play unit, playing on the left half wall. He was held pointless, even though his line did



score a couple and he probably should have given a secondary assist on the first goal. Rönni's off-puck game continues to probably be his strongest element. He glues defenders to the boards on the forecheck, makes well-timed body contact, and steals the puck. He can get down deep in the defensive zone and help his defenders. Improved skating could make him an even greater threat, as he would be able to change his direction with more ease. Rönni's skating stance is very upright, and he doesn't bend at the knees that much, limiting his mobility and speed. Projects as a below-average NHL skater. I saw good playmaking flashes. He's able to identify targets quickly and make the passes firmly.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 7th, 2020

Lukko vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Let's start with the positives. I like Rönni's defensive awareness and he was regularly used on the penalty kill. He likes to help his defenders down low and comes out of puck battles as the winner a solid number of times and that number will only increase once he starts to build more lower-body strength. Other than that, it was a pretty bleak showing. Rönni had major struggles in transition, failing all four of his zone exit attempts and turning the puck over at the blue line in at least a couple of them. Things weren't much better in terms of entries. In the offensive zone, he tried to connect with some cute passes from time to time and flashed good vision, but the execution was lacking. He could also be pressured into making overly quick and very high-risk passes towards the slot.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 4th, 2020

Ilves vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Rönni logged two assists in his first career regular season game at the U20 level. He received quite a nasty blow to the head area in the second period, but continued playing after taking a couple of shifts off. Rönni's smarts stood out on a couple of occasions. His positional play was pretty sound overall and he dished out creative passes, even though he couldn't connect on some of them. Rönni has some noticeable skating deficiencies, could it be because of lack of strength?



"Topi Rönni's slow start to the season had us questioning his upside for a little while, but as his play picked up in the second half, we started to envision a path to the NHL for the Finnish forward."



101  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

4.5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

4  
Physical

# LUDWIG PERSSON

C/LW | FRÖLUNDA HC

HEIGHT 6'0"  
WEIGHT 179

D.O.B. OCT. 8, 2003  
SHOOTS LEFT

"He's a really skilled player, but I wonder about how he'll stand up to NHL level physical play. He put up a lot of points in the junior league."

- Eastern Conference Executive in May 2022

8%	18%	4%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	41	25	36	61
SHL	10	0	0	0

## Scouting Report

Our staff came into the season with hopes for Ludwig Persson as a pick in the first two rounds of this year's draft – someone who had the potential to be a productive NHL forward somewhere down the line.

To his credit, Persson put up decent numbers in the J20 Nationell, but ultimately, the doubts we shared about his game kept him from that part of our board.

Persson's hockey sense is his best attribute. The Frölunda forward consistently displays an understanding of positioning and spacing on the ice and of how to open up gaps in the opposing coverage with his skating, especially off of the rush. He's also an effective playmaker, using manipulation in the form of look-offs and body feints to open up passing lanes to find his teammates.

"Persson's puck skills are, all-in-all, average, but he is a

good playmaker from the outside," Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin wrote in a January game report. "He likes to use the whole offensive zone and can make good crossover passes and find an open teammate in the middle."

The transition to an SHL role shouldn't be too hard for him when the time comes, though he'll start next year on loan with BIK Karlskoga in the HockeyAllsvenskan. Persson already showed that he can position himself well at both ends of the ice and support teammates in limited action with Frölunda in his draft year.

And with time, the pace, defensive engagement, and passing ability present in Persson's game could earn him a bottom-six role in the NHL. For that future to materialize, Persson will have to develop the necessary physical skills to engage opponents and win pucks from them.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Johan Skinnars YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY 95%	2 Carl Hagelin YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY 94%	3 Anton Rodin YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 94%	4 Christofer Lofberg YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY 94%	5 David Laudius YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY 94%
6 Filip Sandberg YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 94%	7 Joakim Hogberg YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 94%	8 Andre Pettersson YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 94%	9 Martin Gudmundsson YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY 94%	10 Christopher Thorn YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY 93%

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 16th, 2022

Sweden U19 vs Czechia U19 - U19 4 Nations

It is not always a good sign when a player looks like the same player in every game. Persson skates, skates, skates and when he has the puck he is not able to open space. This game went to overtime and even in 3 on 3 he did not find a way to create space. The opponents kept him on the outside when he transported the puck and the play died behind the goal. His productivity in junior is not based on the skill and hockey sense that is required to be productive at higher levels. His work ethics, checking habits and speed will translate well though. Maybe he is an effective bottom six player without being tough physically. He is good at finding space and does not shy away from skating into traffic without the puck.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 14th, 2022

Sweden U19 vs Slovakia U19 - U19 4 Nations

A two goal game with the national team for Persson. Both goals were scored on a one-timer being alone by the edge of the crease. Persson saw an open spot and skated to that area and got the pass. This is the best hockey sense asset of Persson's game. He sees open spots and is quick to get himself or the puck there. With his speed and at junior level he is very effective in taking advantage of these opportunities. He had a hard checking game where used his speed to put pressure on the opponents. With the puck, he did not create much and was mostly pushed to the outside. He still lacks the ability to open up space. North-to-south skating with a short range of puck handling will not do the trick.

**David St-Louis:** March 25th, 2022

Frölunda U20 vs.Sodertalje U20 - J20 Nationell

I'm starting to see what Jimmy said about Persson. There is a limit to his offensive upside, a lack of creativity and high-end tools that would have him project more as an off-puck player, offensively and defensively, than a playmaker. This is a bit of a problem as, without a grittier side, something he doesn't possess, it's hard to envision a productive NHL career for Persson. Can he leverage his hockey sense, his positioning and anticipation to score enough to warrant a spot? Is the slightly above-average speed and the off-puck game enough to earn him a spot? He has a foundation to develop his game, but there is more uncertainty with his future role. It's more probable that he creates a career for himself in the SHL.

**David St-Louis:** March 13th, 2022

Frölunda U20 vs.Sodertalje U20 - J20 Nationell

I liked Persson's passing decisions, how quick his puck movements were, the picks he made for his teammates, the deceptive moves on retrievals, and his off-puck spacing to keep gaps and pockets of space open for himself. He scored with a wrap around after finding the puck back near the net. In transition, he picked up pucks in movement. A lot of good habits and smart plays, but not really enough to make up for the perceived limited tools and skills.

**David St-Louis:** February 11th, 2022

Malmö vs Frölunda - SHL

Not much ice-time for Persson but this game allowed me to see his skating versus professional. It holds up. The pace is no problem for him and I underestimated his flexion capabilities and acceleration. He was angling attackers to the boards and pressuring the opposition, but struggled to create anything meaningful with his puck touches. They were all in difficult positions, however.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 9th, 2022

Timrå U20 vs Frölunda U20 - J20 Nationell

Ludwig plays on the top line and gets a lot of ice-time in the game. He had a goal and an assist and was involved in almost every key situation in the game. His team lacked discipline so it was much more PK-time than PP in this one.

He skates with strong technique and with the ability to separate from opponents. His stride is powerful in his first steps and he can keep his pace over distance. He rarely separates to create though and his skating is not used as the weapon it could be used. The pattern I see that explains that is that he rarely attacks on the inside. He has been a good skater growing up and could then easily attack the middle with avoiding contact. Now, the space for him shrinks in the middle when he enters the offensive zone and the room for him to be creative is on the outside. It is not that he is shying away from physical contact or to attack the middle, he simply lacks the puck skills to open up the space needed to attack there, his pure speed and will is not enough and with the space he gets on the outside he slows down the play. He did not create any chances on the rush in this game.

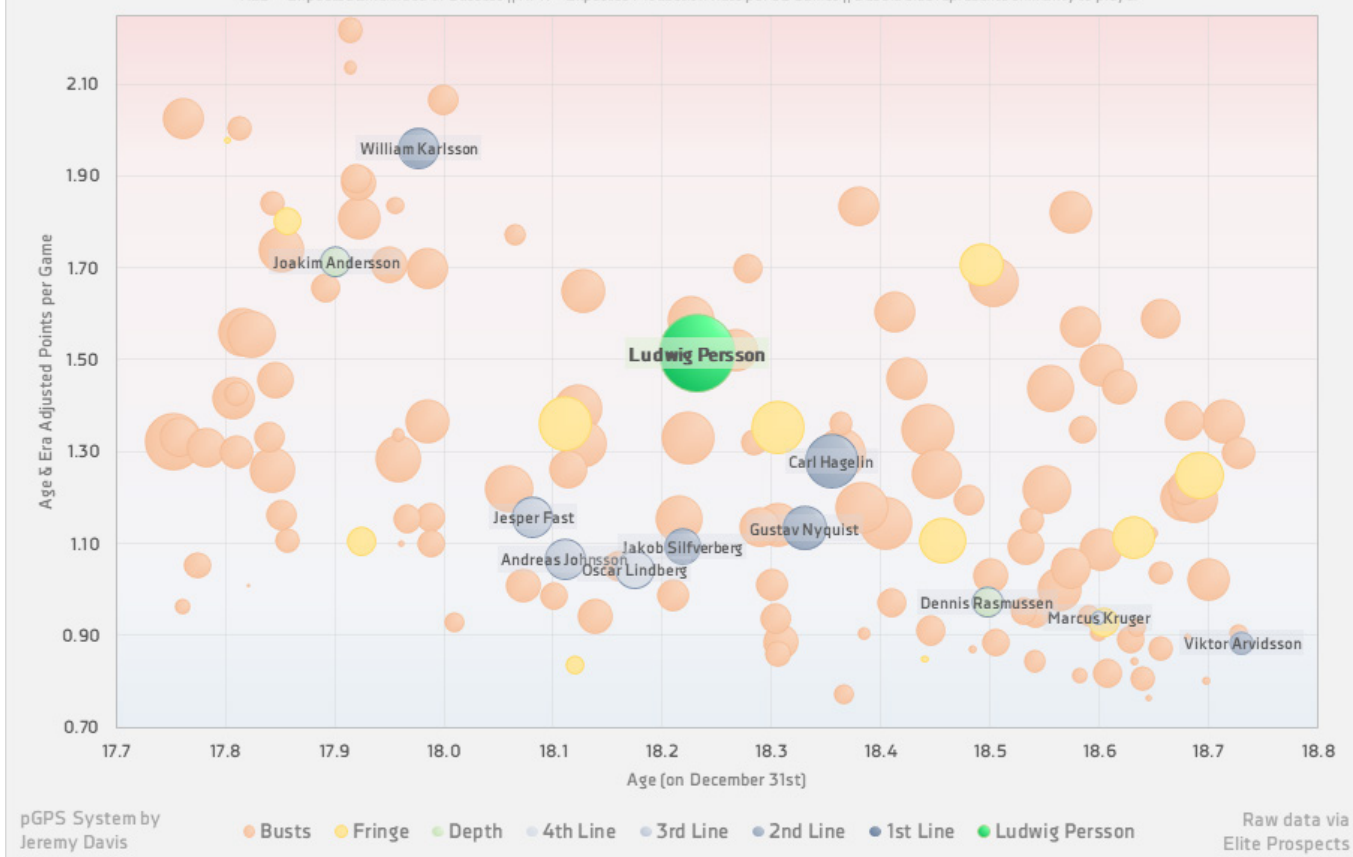
Persson's puck skills are all-in-all average, but he is a good playmaker from the outside. He likes to use the whole offensive zone and can make good cross-over passes and find an open teammate in the middle. His shot is not dangerous from outside the slot and he needs space and room to score which is not a good combination. With space in the slot, he is a dangerous finisher. He protects the puck well and can

## Ludwig Persson 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 141 || Base XLS: 8% || Impact XLS: 5% || XPR: 40.1 || Drafted Pct: 27%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



slow down the play to create long pressure and is good at keeping it in the offensive zone.

Away from the puck, I like Persson's game. He forechecks in smart lanes and is good at shrinking the space for the opponents. His work ethics on the ice are strong and he competes well. He could show more aggression and be more relentless though. He has strong balance and can hold off opponents easily while having the puck. He is tough to knock off the puck.

To summarize, Ludwig Persson has been a top player in his age group in Sweden but his development has not been trending up over the last few years. He has offense and produces points at this level but he does not have NHL caliber offense in his game and so the usefulness with him as an NHL player would be as a bottom six forward with his speed, work ethics and defensive reliability with ability to sustain offensive pressure. As of this date, he is consolidated ranked #32 on Elite Prospects and I can not see a top round player in him. I would not even select him in the second round either as the ceiling is low.

**Daniel Gee:** November 17th, 2021

Rogle U20 vs Frolunda U20 - J20 Nationell

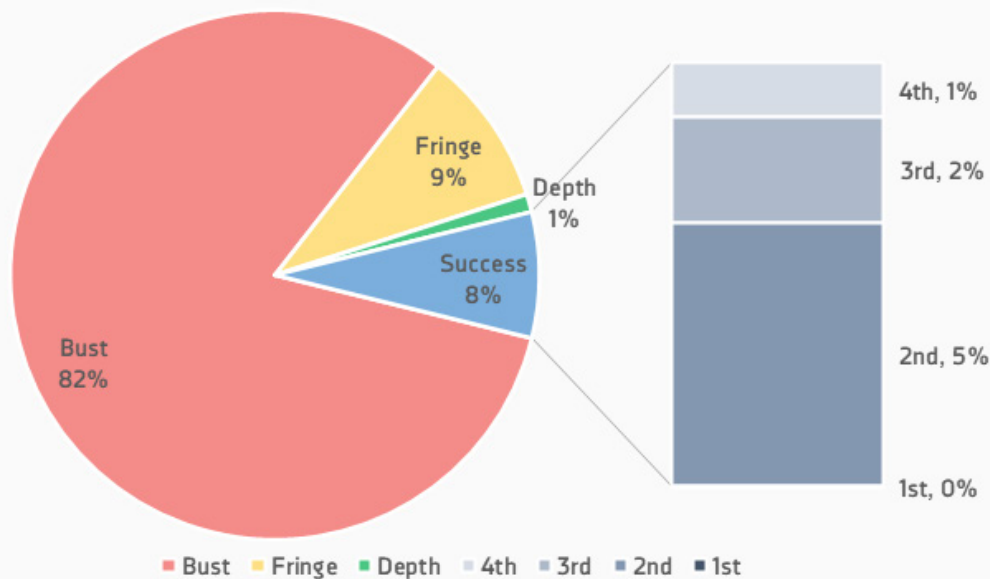
A very peculiar player in terms of his mix of skill, tools,

and habits. Persson was impactful in this one, but is there more he can offer?

Persson's stride looks mechanically sound, knee and ankle flex, clean extensions, ability to separate from nearly stopped positions with his crossover use; his pace, however, waivers throughout his shifts. No better example of the leverages he can create than in the first. After intercepting a slot pass in his own zone, he used high-paced crossovers to separate through the neutral zone, cutting into the dotted lines on the entry and passing off his backhand to a teammate following up the play -- essentially a tap in that was botched. The leveraging continued in the second and third. On one shift Persson took a hook pass, instantly stringing a backhand deke and a cut into the slot, losing control momentarily before sending a dangerous slider on net as he recovered the puck. On the same shift he re-corralled the puck high, filed down the LW, and placed another dangerous shot 5-hole. Persson even scored on an off-puck transitional play, a sequence in which he slipped coverage and unleashed a weak one-timer on net. The skill is ever apparent. There's some spacing issues (bunching up with teammates) but the instincts in general are high end. Persson's problem solving under pressure is hilariously advanced at the J20 level; one one shift he walked off the right-hand circle, popped a puck into the slot, and

## Ludwig Persson 2021-22 J20-Nationell pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



in one motion took a shot for a high danger chance. Super inside-oriented.

In sustained pressure, Persson was pushing a lot of manipulation; one on shift he faked a shot on the left-hand point, strung that into a deke to manipulate the high pressure, and then feeded a pass into the hash marks for a teammate to one-time the puck on net. Pace issues mostly permeate in the defensive zone. While he is proactive and gets his stick and body into lanes, born out of early scanning, he sometimes floats, not even activating into a posture that can make an impact.

Through all the good, I found him to be fairly disengaged at times throughout this viewing. Needs to be on-puck to activate a lot of his skill (regardless of his off-puck goal). Underestimated the full breadth of high-danger chances Persson created when going over my notes but in general this was an average viewing when you factor in engagement issues. Needs physical development -- wonder about his effectiveness he is naturally afforded with less touches at higher levels.

**Cam Robinson:** November 6th, 2021

Frölunda vs Skelleftea AIK - SHL

Only around 6 minutes of ice for Persson in this one, but

his pace and intelligence was evident throughout. Skating on the 4th line, he was playing a smart and responsible game. He made a very nice read in the NZ to jump into space and intercept a pass to gain possession and turn the play the other way. He took really strong forecheck routes - twice causing disruption and turnovers, one of which led to sustained pressure from his mates and a tough angle shot on goal. His defensive positioning was strong. He was reading switches and staying/clogging up lanes - twice blocking point shots or forcing the pass. His pace is excellent - his feet are moving at warp speed when he's attacking pressure or carrying the puck. His first shift gave a long extended look at his stride mechanics and they're pretty darn clean. Long extension, good recovery - maybe just a bit wide but not by much, excellent knee bend. The waist bend might be a touch exaggerated but I'm splitting hairs. He moves around quickly and has good top end speed.

This is a player who has nuanced defensive habits, is a pacey, quick skater, and knows how to attack routes. No real chance to see offensive upside in this one, but his skillset lends itself to translating to the NHL in a bottom six role. Minus the physicality, which was nearly void despite having several opportunities to finish checks.





102  
Rank

4.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

4.5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

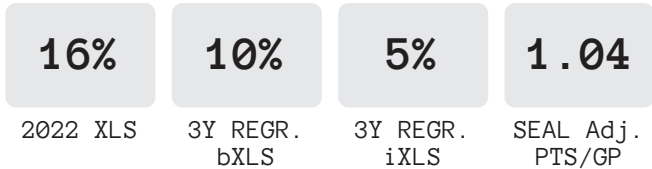
4.5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

# REID SCHAEFER

LW | SEATTLE THUNDERBIRDS

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. SEP. 21, 2003  
WEIGHT 214 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	66	32	26	58

## Scouting Report

The appeal of Reid Schaefer isn't hard to understand. 6-foot-3 goal-scorers are rare, especially when they're avid hitters with nifty mitts. Simply put, he fits the archetype of what most NHL teams desire on their third line.

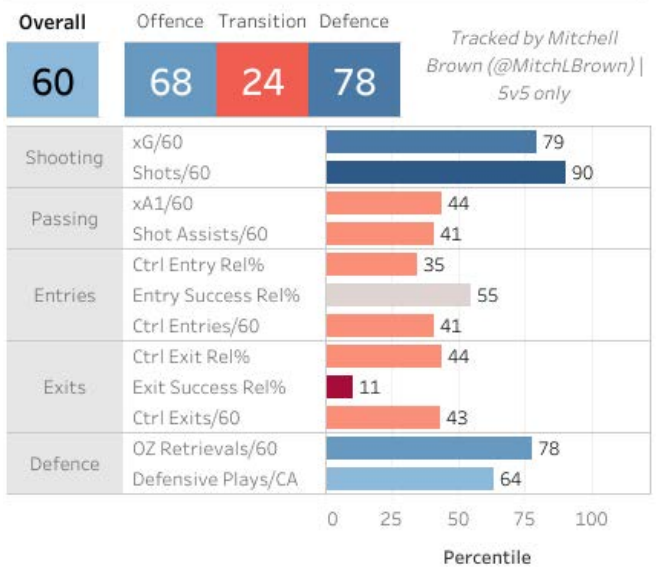
Schaefer scores with equal parts finesse and mechanical ability. He receives pucks directly into his shooting pocket, using the weight of the puck to transfer his weight and load his stick. When acting as the stationary net-front presence, he shows quick hands in-tight and pulls off the odd high-skill shot. If he's providing support, he's getting open just outside the slot for catch-and-release wristers and one-timers.

While Schaefer throws plenty of hits, that's only a small part of the physical game in the NHL. Rather, the physical game in the NHL requires body positioning, leverage, and puck protection. Schaefer's still developing those skills.

"His board game is almost non-existent," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote. "He doesn't get low, shoulder players to create space, or cut back."

Instead, Schaefer plays more of a finesse game, relying on handling skill inside a glide to navigate pressure. It often fails. Despite his stature, he rarely completes plays from the boards to the middle and turns low-percentage shots into scoring chances – two key skills for NHL players with his archetype. While he has passing skills, his straight-line, deke-focused

Games Tracked: 12 | Minutes Tracked: 174.0



rushes and shoot-first style limited their appearances.

While Schaefer's board skills are behind the curve, his defence is ahead of it. He's an intelligent defender, often getting above the play, anticipating rotations, and eliminating off-puck threats.

If Schaefer's board skills and playmaking improve, he could become a third or fourth-liner who brings a unique element. Without it, he's likely an AHL scorer. Expect to see his name off the board far earlier than this ranking.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Brian Sutherby YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 98%	2 Burke Gallimore YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 98%	3 Drayson Bowman YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY 97%	4 Justin Keller YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY 97%	5 Jeff Lucky YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 97%
6 Jimmy Bubnick YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 97%	7 Cole Uilly YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 96%	8 Dustin Johner YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 96%	9 Justin Bernhardt YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY 96%	10 Ryan Keller YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY 96%

**Mitchell Brown:** May 24th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Schaefer hit some people and then turned the puck over a bunch. He's quite physical, but doesn't translate his physical game into puck protection or board play. Misses opportunities to establish body positioning, whether that's in open-ice, in front of the net, or down-low. With the puck, he's the classic straight-line deker. Low pace and no quickness, and doesn't make plays off his outside edges. His attempts fail or he aborts and throws the puck into the zone. Misses opportunities to start the breakout because he flings the puck off the glass with options. Some proactive defence and awareness, but also didn't anticipate breakout passes and ended up on the wrong side of the play. Off-puck offence is standing in front of the net. He's a fourth-line projection.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 15th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

If the physical game in the NHL was dictated by just size and willingness to throw low-speed hits, Schaefer would score highly. But it's not. It's about leverage, timing, and awareness. His board game is almost non-existent. He doesn't get low, shoulder players to create space, or cut back. Instead, he relies solely on handling inside a glide. In transition, he usually chips or dekes. If given enough space, he'll skate until the defender gets close, then take a low-percentage shot. Doesn't lean on defenders or try to cut inside. While he's a legitimate NHL shooter off-the-pass who finds soft spaces around the outer slot, his inner-slot game is planting himself in front of the net, even if another teammate is there. He has some NHL qualities, but I don't see much upside. Maybe a fourth-liner if he learns how to use his teammates and play an NHL-style board game.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Schaefer still hasn't moved the needle in my viewings. He's tall with hands. That's always overvalued in the draft. He had a fun deke off a pass reception that he turned into a net drive. One-timer on the powerplay from the bumper position. Ineffective in transition because he's game so centred

on beating players up the boards. Skating is lumbering with a pronounce heel kick and limited push off power. Doesn't read the feet of defenders, let alone manipulate. If he makes it, it's probably as a bottom-line winger. And that's a big if, dependent on adding playmaking, puck protection, and defensive ability. Doubt he makes our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 4th, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Schaefer has an NHL shot, especially off the pass. He receives passes directly into his hip pocket while transferring his weight to his outside leg. Keeps his chest up, shoulders square, and pushes off his back leg to power through the shot. Some understanding of how to get open and use it, although he defaults to the net front and skates into his teammates' space regularly. Takes the shots he's given; he doesn't seek to improve his shooting position first. With the puck, he tries dekes or chip-ins. Both usually fail. No playmaking; rarely even looks to pass in transition. He can't manipulate opponents. Usually glued to the outside lane. He doesn't have a board game, even though he's big and hits. I don't see much upside. Maybe a fourth-liner for his physical tools.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 20th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

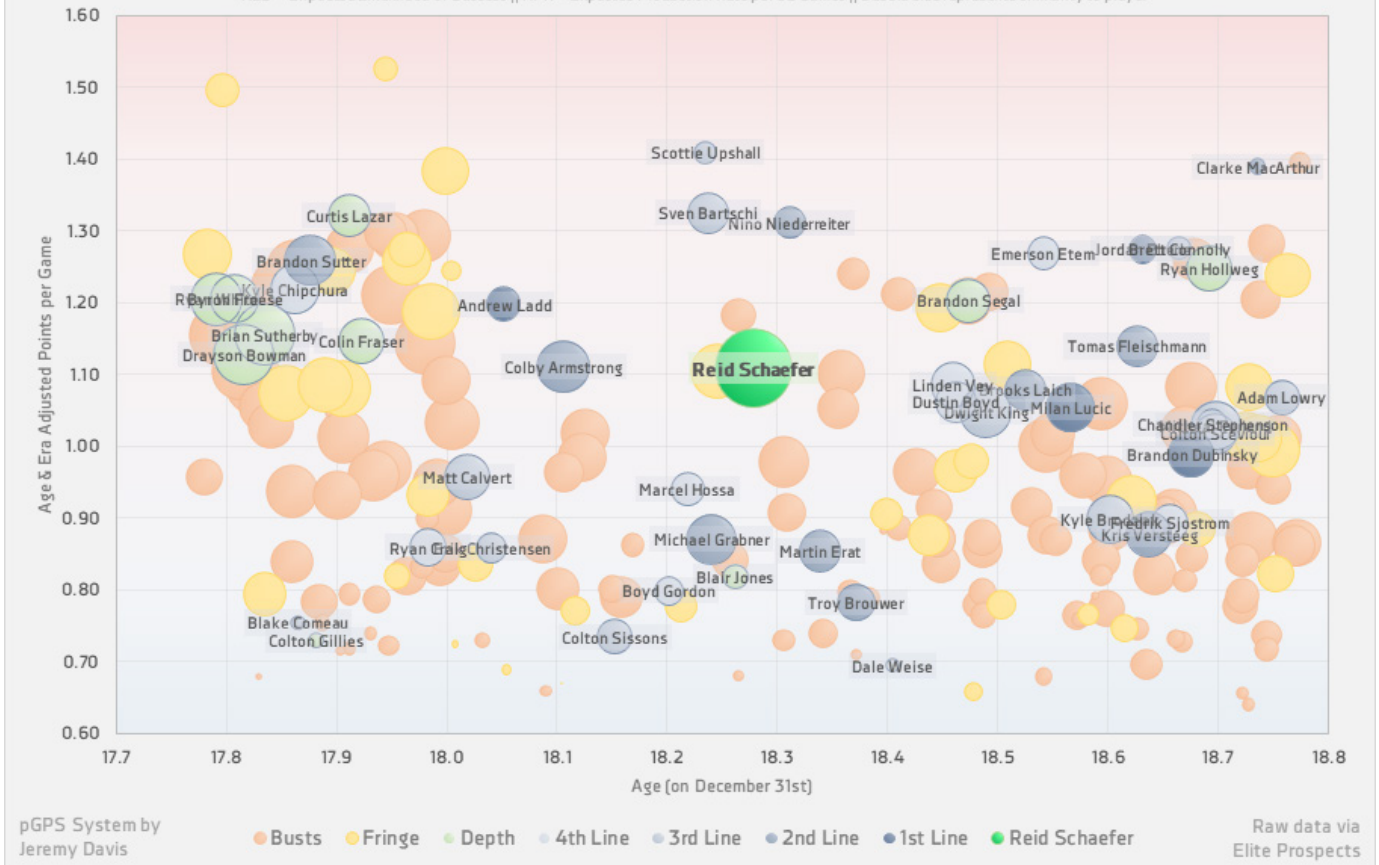
It's been a while since I've seen a playmaking performance from Schaefer, and it was a welcome sight. Looked for teammates on the inside in the offensive zone, cutback instead of taking the low-percentage shot, and turned retrievals into net-front chances. It didn't translate to transition, where all seven of his entry attempts failed. He's an interesting split of too focused on using his handling skill and too easily pressured into dump-ins. Both issues originate from poor rush patterns. All straight-line attacks with no changes of pace because he's so focused on outracing side pressure. Similarly, he doesn't read the feet of defenders. If they pivot to follow, he doesn't cut inside. Once he moves to his backhand, he's usually stuck there. He has some fun moments with the puck, but I don't see how any of them translate to the NHL. Probably not a pick for us.

## Reid Schaefer 2021-22 WHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 214 || Base XLS: 16% || Impact XLS: 7% || XPR: 34.3 || Drafted Pct: 72%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Absolutely nothing from Schaefer in this game. Tries to outrace defenders. It never works. If he had a delay game, perhaps his touches would result in more. Instead, he tries to play a finesse game that doesn't align with his strengths. One pass for a scoring chance, opting to distribute instead of shoot. Some defensive value, but not enough to offset the other limitations in his game. I didn't see a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Spokane Chiefs vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Schaefer had tunnel vision in this game. In one sequence, he pulled the trigger after his teammate initiated a short give-and-go. He took the LD shot instead of the impossible-to-miss HD pass. Stride's almost there mechanically, but his crossovers lack push off, depth, and consistency. Struggles generating speed with his crossovers at times. I think his shot's an NHL average projection, but his ability to use the shot is mostly limited to his off-the-pass shots from the outer slot and counterattack wristers after outracing defenders – two plays that he won't consistently get in the NHL. The hands are a plus, but his crossovers and rush patterns prevent him using them at this level regularly. Tough projection. If he had more

playmaking skill and a give-and-go mindset, it'd be easy to how see how a player with a projectable stride, hands, and shot could be a third-liner. Without them, I'm not sure what his role will be.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 29th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Big shooting performance from Schaefer, taking nine at 5-on-5. Not all were great – it's hard to shoot that much without leaving value on the table. But in general, it was a solid outing. He's still mostly a big guy with soft hands. Turned a pass reception into a deke to gain the middle, then used a backhand between-the-legs move to get a MD backhand shot. The stride and handling form are both projectable NHL tools. There's the odd pass or off-puck play that suggest there's more skill here, too. He's not manipulation opponents or even out-pacing them. He's mostly out-skilling defenders with superior reaction speed, but he's not especially fast or explosive. Without additional layers, his role in the NHL will probably be an occasionally flashy bottom-of-the-lineup player. He might be an interesting end-of-board type.



**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

Like Gustafson, Schaefer's pretty consistent in demonstrating his skills. There are moments, like a backhand cross-slot pass for a chance, a slick NZ deke, or some off-puck shooting ability. Consistently looks to the inside for options before taking the low percentage shot, and he generally knows to move pucks from the boards to the inside for his teammates moving up the ice with speed. He's mostly a secondary player with the tools to become a play-driver in a year or two. Overall, it might not quite be worth a spot on our board, but a team will definitely take him.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 15th, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Four primary points for Schaefer in this outing. Quick hands in front of the net led to a PP goal, and he also grabbed an empty netter. Whiffed on a scoring chance, but pre-scanned before throwing the puck into the slot for an assist. Shot comes with some mechanical quirks, but he's capable shooter under duress. Two-touch shot looked like the best of the arsenal, going backhand-forehand off a pass reception. Some transition turnovers, but mostly on solid ideas. He steps inside, waits for the defender to crossover, then attacks the outside lane. It's very scripted, which leads to him missing better plays in the process. Consistent defender who occupies the right space, cuts off the top with purpose, and eliminates potential shots. Put it altogether, and it's unclear what his NHL dimension will be. Still, he has tools to become a projectable, versatile creator. It'll come down to development. Perhaps an end-of-bard type.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 14th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Quiet game from Schaefer despite Seattle running through Tri-City. He's a big guy with hands, which NHL teams love. The actual execution of his plays is concerning: handling into traffic with no obvious end-goal and poorly set-up moves to beat pressure. Perhaps some off-puck value through his retrieval and defensive acumen. He's not a stalwart, but he cuts off the top and jumps into lanes at the right times. Very limited in what he does if he's not deking with the puck. I don't see an NHL draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 3rd, 2021

Victoria Royals vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Schaefer was looking to deke all game long. Some of them were good, waiting for the defender to commit before cutting back to the middle, slick toe-drags around sticks, and odd

deceptive set up. He also deked inside without a plan and deked when he should've passed. The stride's projectable but he has a significant heel kick and I didn't see the same level of refinement in this game that I saw previously. Inefficient attacker, rarely able to turn his handling and inside attacks into offence. Didn't see a draft pick, but I suspect NHL teams will value him.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Schaefer's big, has some shooting skill, and isn't an awful skater -- he's getting picked, but I doubt he makes our board at this stage. Right now, Schaefer's mostly an off-puck attacker without notable movement, timing, or off-the-pass shooting ability. Finishes his off-puck routes and drives the inside. With the puck, he identifies space and attacks it, plays somewhat of a passing focused game, but often misses opportunities to make controlled plays. In OZP, he cuts inside off the cycle but doesn't distribute or even identify options with consistency. Stride has a near-adequate amount of depth, highlighted by ankle flexion. Finishes most strides properly and recovers under his shoulders, but lacks some quickness and power skating details. I don't think he's a pick for us, probably not quite enough upside.

**Daniel Gee:** October 8th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs Spokane Chiefs - WHL

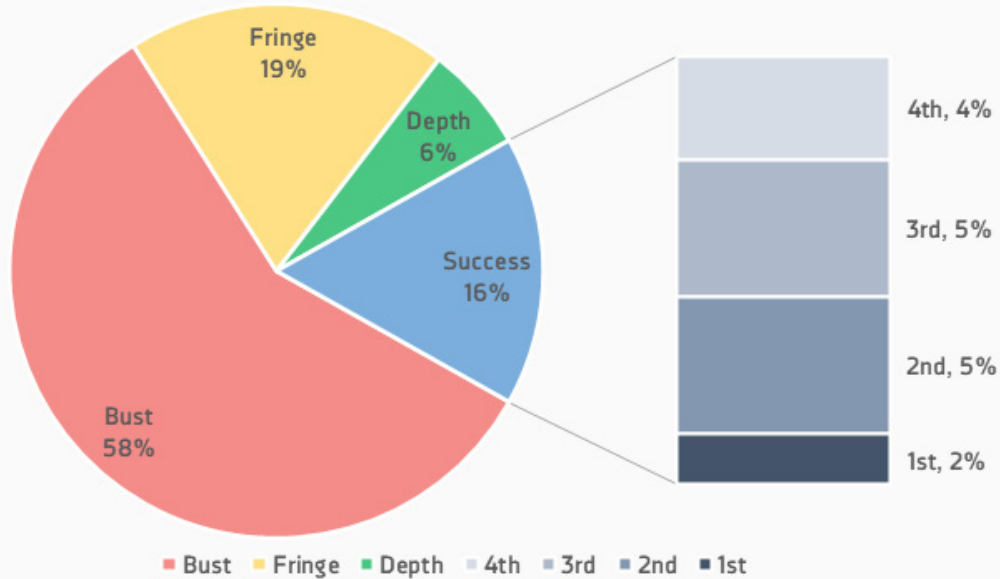
Schaefer had an impactful game against Spokane, but overall, his average pace and lack of individual skill limits the totality of his impact given the opportunity of minutes and scenarios he's afforded.

There's a level of inefficiency with Schaefer's game, especially in transitional scenarios. He doesn't manipulate with the puck, struggling immensely to keep control. There were at least four instances where a Thunderbirds' attack died on Schaefer's stick after he failed to protect the puck, took a predictable route, and ultimately lost control as he faced pressure.

Even in perimeter focused attacks, Schaefer often struggled to push inward, caught with no room in the corner, leading to a blocked hook pass attempt to the middle. His simplistic approach works at some level in WHL action. He has good net-driving habits, and by good fortune he often ends up with pucks in small-area situations around the crease. In the second, he lost control attacking into pressure on a 1-on-2, but drove the net, allowing a trailing teammate to bounce a puck through -- he ended up with a weak backhand attempt in the crease. Later in the period, off a broken Spokane breakout, Schaefer filed the slot with his stick set, and leveraged his

## Reid Schaefer 2021-22 WHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



rather powerful shot between the circles to squeak a puck through Spokane's goaltender for a goal. Mechanically, Schaefer opts to keep his right arm flared out and up, leveraging a ton of down force -- the bend of his stick was apparent. I'm unsure about placement habits -- shooting through goaltenders is not an ideal scoring habit (just doesn't happen in the NHL much). Schaefer's sustained game is pretty simplistic as well. He pushed a tonne of forechecking pressure and legitimately kept some cycle plays alive. He had a wonderful skate-to-stick handle out of the right-hand circle to move into the slot, but backhanded the puck wide as he executed a deke. I wouldn't say his small-are game is separating -- it's actually limiting in a sense; he flubbed too many chances in tight. Schaefer was primarily used as a net-front and below-the-goal line presence

on the powerplay -- not much success this game

Reactivity is the name of Schaefer's game in sustained scenarios. He moves well enough (not enough upper-body integration) to push pressure and is used as a primary penalty killer, but really struggles to read plays proactively. He doesn't scan, shoulder peak, or head check at all. I quite liked some of his backchecking habits -- he helped guide and absolutely level a puck-carrier entering his defensive zone (force physically all game). Generally trying to make a difference.

Not sure he's a pick due to how vanilla his skillset is and the lack of translatable scanning habits. Should be impactful as a WHLer this season regardless. Need to see if he can leverage his shot into more of a separating threat and if his transition game can improve to an acceptable level. P

**"I think [Schaefer] goes top 50. He's big, strong, and he plays big boy hockey. Watch the NHL playoffs. He is the type of player that teams are missing."**

*Eastern Conference executive, May 2022*



103  
Rank

C  
Grade

5  
Skating

4.5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

4.5  
Puckhandling

4.5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# DANIIL DAVYDOV

C/LW | MHK DYNAMO ST. PETERSBURG

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAR. 6, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS LEFT

1%	0%	0%	0.72
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
MHL	54	10	21	31

## Scouting Report

Most prospects grab the attention of scouts with their offensive skills, but Daniil Davydov kept us coming back this season because of his defensive ability.

“Davydov looks to be a solid two-way player at this level,” Elite Prospects Russia regional scout Dylan Griffing wrote in one of his game reports. “His application of heavy back-pressure, defensive zone scanning, and pure speed make him an effective turnover creator.”

The Russian Junior hockey league is more offensive than the North American ones. Attackers have a lot of ice to show their skills, to make passing plays and attack down the wing to fire on net, but not when Davydov is on the ice. Shift

after shift, he closes down their space and removes them from the play. He wins back pucks and then speeds toward the opposing zone.

His skating is his best and only offensive weapon. There is a lack of diversity in how he attacks. If he can't beat defenders in straight lines, he often finds himself unable to make a play. Although, the occasional perfectly set up pass to a teammate in the middle of the ice still gives hope that he will develop a better playmaking game down the line.

Overall, if a team takes a chance on Davydov, it will be more for his potential as a shutdown threat than as an offensive creator.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** March 12th, 2022

MHK Dynamo St. Petersburg vs. Dynamo SPb - MHL

Like Mitch Brown sometimes says, this is a performance that makes me want to shake Davydov's hand. He puts in the effort, offensively and defensively, running his routes at full speed to assist teammates and try his best to shutdown the opposition. I like the engagement, but the skill, not so much. He struggles to make and link plays at this level. The skating is probably his best attribute.

**Dylan Griffing:** December 26th, 2021

SKA-1946 St. Petersburg vs. MHK Dynamo St. Peters. - MHL  
Davydov looks to be a solid two-way player at this level. His

application of heavy back-pressure, defensive zone scanning, and pure speed make him an effective turnover creator, then he uses that speed to turn the other way and drive offense. Hands and patience let him wait for lanes to open, then he used his vision and passing to attack them and he created a handful of chances for his team in this one. Skates quick, but kicks his feet back hard, struggles controlling his weight, and lacks consistency in his strides.

**Dylan Griffing:** December 12th, 2021

MHK Dynamo St. Petersburg vs. SKA-Varyagi - MHL

It's clear that Davydov's offensive game is a major work in progress. He has an over-reliance on trying to burn

defenders on the outside lane using his speed and no real other dimension is present. There was a lot of volume, high danger passing in this one. Rushing himself to make a pass rather than scanning his options and realizing that there's absolutely nobody in the slot to receive the pass in question. This happened quite a few times, looking off open players at the point or behind the net to hurl a pass into a dangerous area where he had no teammates available. Clearly some tunnel vision involved, watching him try to pass through and shoot through defenders who were down on one knee to block the lane was hard to watch. That said, his play away from the puck was promising. His speed is a weapon on defense; heavy back-pressure, closing down space, and supporting his defenders. Really effective on the forecheck, as well, and it really comes down to how he anticipates plays and comes at the puck carrier with his full pace. I don't think the upside with Davydov is special, probably just a checking line, two-way centerman, but he has shown that his offensive toolkit isn't too shabby, this was just a rough game on that side of things.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 6th, 2021


MHK Dynamo St. Petersburg vs. Krylya Sovetov - MHL

It's a real tale of two halves with Daniil Davydov. Off the puck, he is hyper aggressive and always ready to throw the body. Despite being listed at 5'11" 157, he can really take down his target. Offensively, he becomes a more controlled player and much less aggressive. He can cut through the neutral zone like butter, but he has an overreliance on taking the outside lane and skating into the corner. He lacks the

### Closest pGPS Comparables

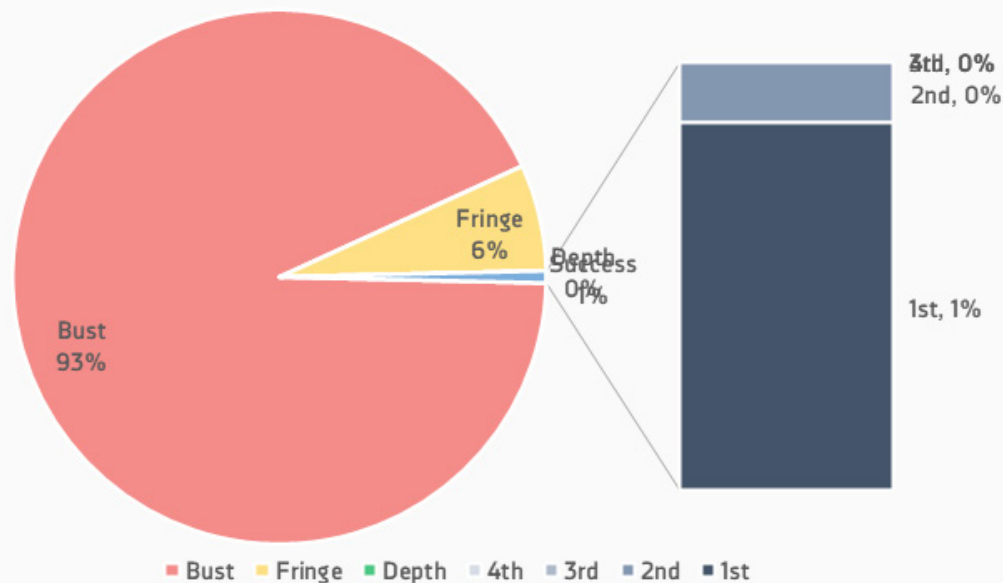
pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Vitali Popov YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 93%	2 Viktor Komarov YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 93%
3 Dmitri Mikhailov YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 93%	4 Pavel Varfolomeyev YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 92%
5 Roman Lyubimov YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 92%	6 Daniil Apalkov YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 92%
7 Damir Zhafyarov YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 91%	8 Kirill Shmurygin YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 90%
9 Nikita Shatsky YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 90%	10 Leonid Avtomov YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 90%

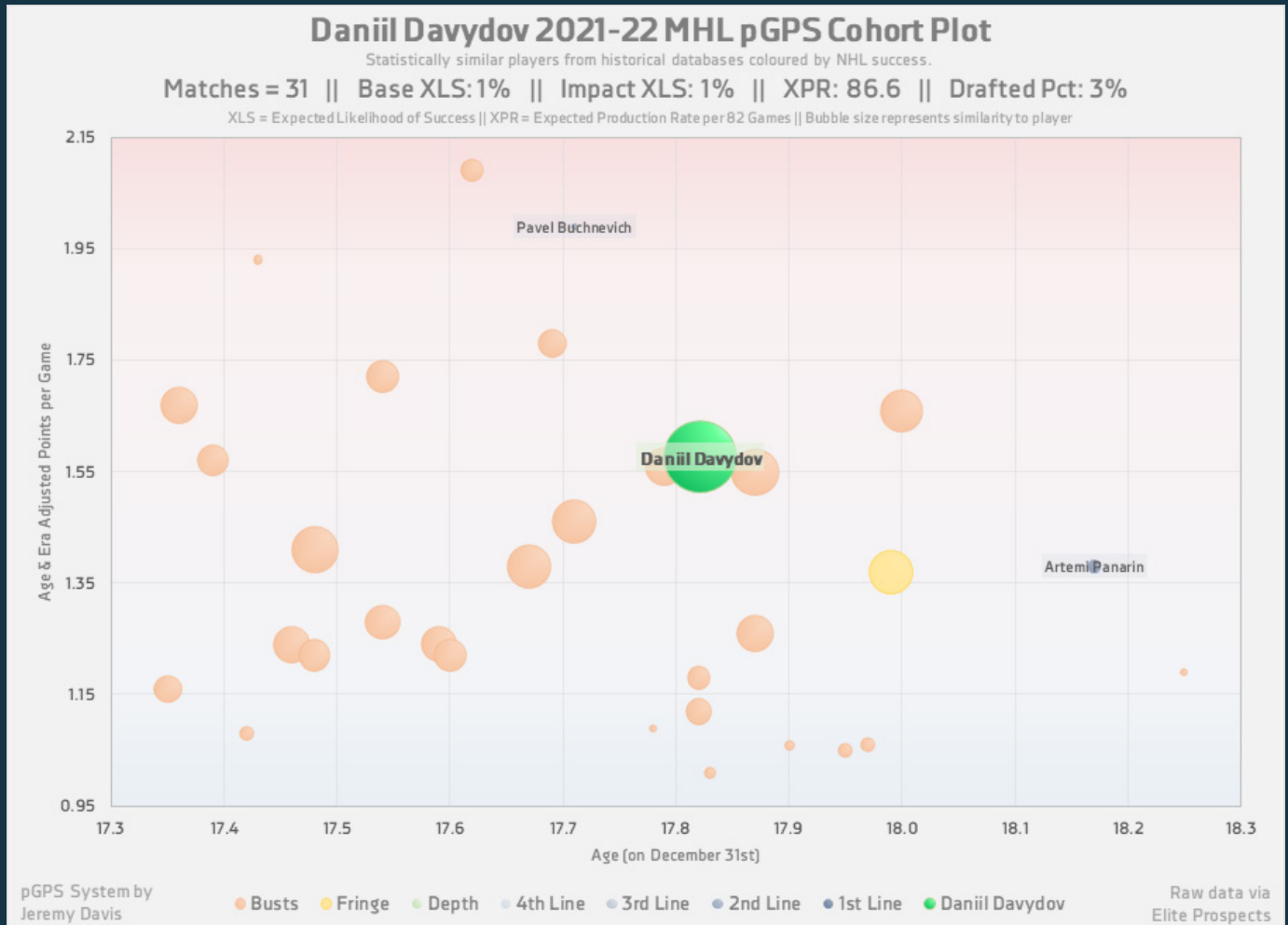
stickhandling and deception to be able to take players on 1v1, so he detours to less dangerous areas of the ice. However, he is a really smart passer and was finding teammates the slot with accurate passes from the flanks. He has good close quarters stickhandling and the physicality to play with pressure. Above average skater with fluid strides and good footwork, but didn't see much explosiveness. 

### Daniil Davydov 2021-22 MHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



"If a team takes a chance on Davydov, it will be more for his potential as a shutdown threat than as an offensive creator."



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104  
Rank

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

6  
Passing

C  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

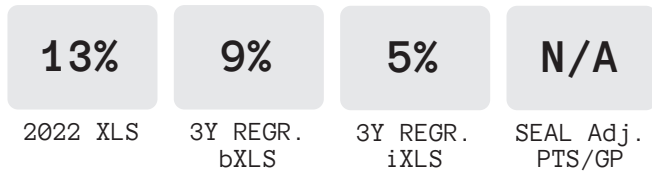
5.5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# KIRILL KUDRYAVTSEV

D | SOO GREYHOUNDS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. FEB. 5, 2004  
WEIGHT 201 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	5	34	39

## Scouting Report

While some of Kirill Kudryavtsev's lustre wore off this season, the once top prospect still provides a high-upside bet for prospective teams.

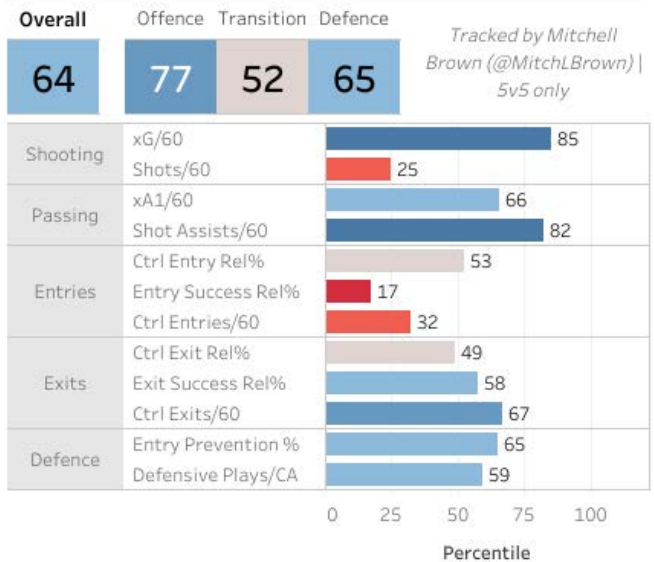
One of the smartest activators in the draft class, Kudryavtsev's upside comes from both supporting the offence and creating it. He anticipates hand-offs along the boards, using that space to shoot. The give-and-go from the point features heavily in his game, often used to create a shot for himself or a set-up a teammate across the slot. When he's on the weak side, he consistently identifies seams, then fills them without exposing his team to risk.

A combination of both details and skills makes Kudryavtsev's activation projectable to the NHL. Along the boards, he establishes body positioning before touching the puck, creating a lane to the inside. Where most players get stuck, he finds a teammate with a backhand pass. He moves through passes and pass receptions to beat defenders into space. And he draws defenders toward himself before passing to create space for his recipient.

Kudryavtsev's low pace of operation is the biggest limiter, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown details: "Kudryavtsev is slow to react to just about everything. He's late on pivots, his check, pinches, and late to identify passing lanes." Often, he has the right idea for a play, but by the time the puck leaves his stick, the lane has already closed. It's visible on breakouts, where if he's not late to execute, he's overly dependent on simple plays.

Defensively, Kudryavtsev's game suffers from the same

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 140.2



issues, as Brown explains: "using few crossovers, rarely over-extending, deep knees over toes posture, and he takes away the middle early. But his gap's so passive. He only gets stops when players walk into his space; he's rarely actively eliminating the puck carrier's options." While he's physical and capable in battles in the defensive end, his processing speed is low: "When the threat is obvious, he eliminates them in an emphatic fashion. If not, he glides around and looks, but never seems to engage fast enough."

To make the NHL, Kudryavtsev must up the pace and take a proactive approach to the game outside the offensive end. Considering his skills, the natural path is improving breakouts by adding a delay game, which works by drawing

pressure, then cutting back and hitting an open teammate, and a head-on manipulation game, where he skates at an incoming forechecker, fakes a play in one direction, then passes in the other. Developing his outside edges will help

him find more space, too.

With those improvements, Kudryavtsev could become an NHL regular with power play ability. If not, he's probably AHL depth.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Beau Schmitz YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 92%	2 Geoff Schemitsch YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 91%	3 Nick Ebert YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 91%	4 Chris Eade YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 91%	5 Brendan Bell YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 91%
6 Lukas Krajicek YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 91%	7 Slater Koekkoek YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 90%	8 Mark Katic YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY 90%	9 Ryan O'Connor YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 90%	10 Patrick McNeill YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY 90%

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Eighth viewing and I'm still a bit unsure of Kudryavtsev. The activation game from the point has details in it that top prospects can learn from. He establishes body positioning before touching pucks, takes passes in motion, anticipates hand-offs, proactively fills space on the weak side, and starts give-and-gos. Does he do much with it? Usually no. He sees the best play, but he can't connect because he's not deceptive or patient enough. It's largely the same theme on breakouts. He wins pucks because he gets low and establishes positioning. He scans. But he rarely cuts back into space or challenges it head-on. But there were moments. It's there, but he's too low pace and lacking the skills to play at a low pace right now. Defensive projection remains unchanged. He has fundamentals, but he's passive and reactive. Solid along the boards, prone to getting beat in open-ice. He's a candidate for the end of our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 13th, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Kudryavtsev's still one of the most fascinating prospects in the OHL. The pace is often poor. The breakout decisions are often awful. The gap's too loose. But he's intelligent and skilled. Continually uses space before shooting, complemented with interesting activation patterns and crafty reads. Where most players pick up the puck skating along the boards, he cuts back inside his pass reception to get the defender on his back. When he joins the rush, he looks for high-value targets. Does he connect? Rarely. But his breadth of skills suggests that he could become a more deceptive, manipulative player in the future. Despite his stride posture, he's not exactly quick out there. It's visible in his defensive skating, where he assumes proper posture with sound defensive skating technique, but still gets burned because he's (a) late

to recognize the need to pivot, and (b) the pivot lacks power. With a bit more pace, he'd be a second-rounder. I think he'd be a fine addition to the end of our board considering his activation and skill.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Kudryavtsev started out this game creating offence. He managed space, drawing defenders towards him before passing. He activated, often in advanced ways, and once there, he stayed. Showed handling skill, playmaking, and manipulation potential. Turns off the boards, then turns his back to the incoming defender. Waits for contact before making the next play. Anticipates hand offs, activates back door, and sometimes down the middle. Retrievals looked much better this game: pre-scanning, establishing positioning, and making quick decisions. Defence remains unchanged: he has details like using few crossovers, rarely overextending, taking away the middle, but he's too passive. Pace comes and goes, which makes him quite limited on breakouts still. If he managed forechecking pressure better, whether that was by cutting back to break it or trying to manipulate it head-on, he'd be a top-two rounds candidate. Instead, he's probably an end-of-board candidate, hoping that he develops pace, defence, and aggression with the puck.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Windsor Spitfires vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

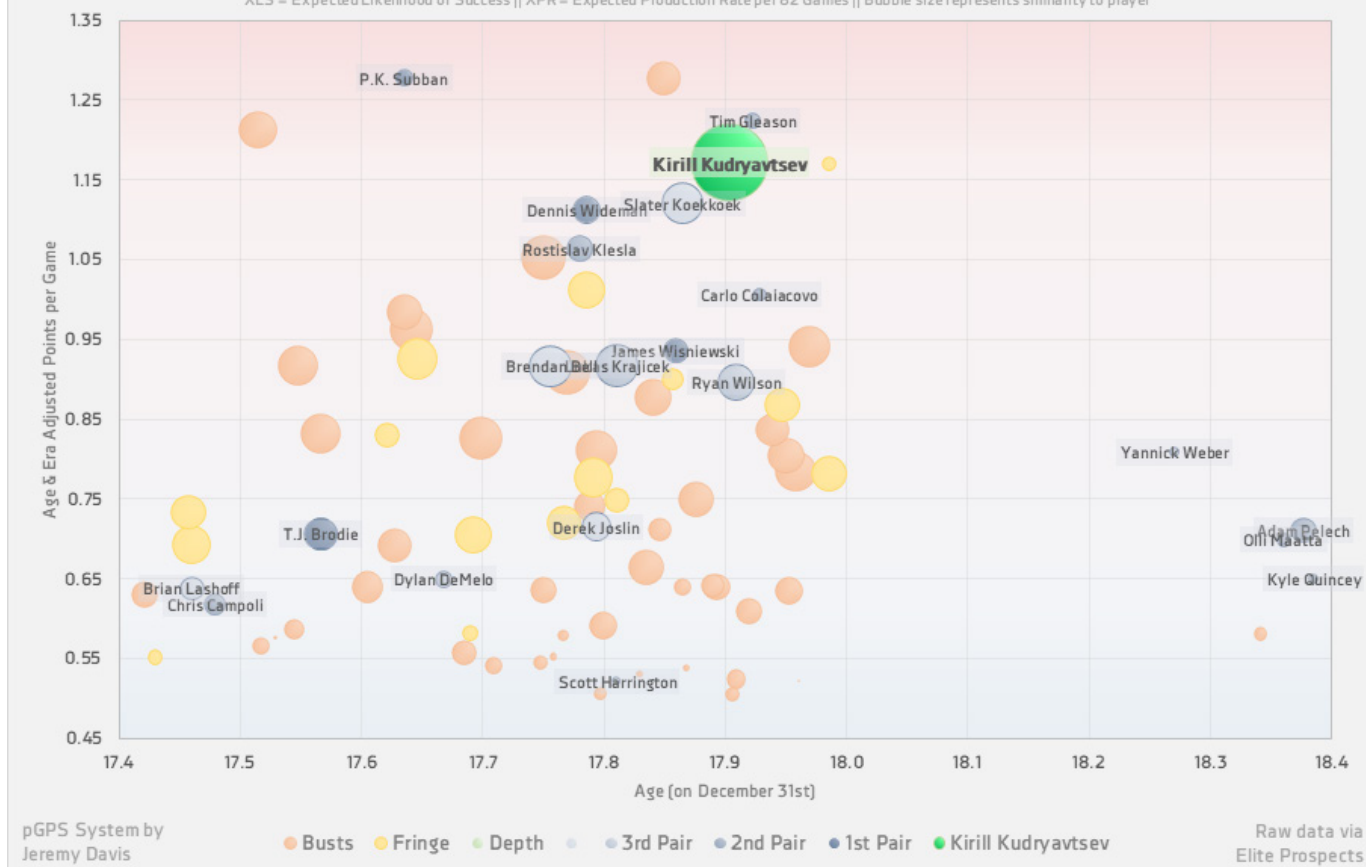
Kudryavtsev could be something with a bit more pace. Right now, the pace limits his solid ideas significantly. He'll activate with a give-and-go, identify a teammate cross-ice, but wait too long before passing. In transition, he identifies give-and-go opportunities, but misses the first pass. Many of his ideas are uncommon for players at this stage: give-and-go, dip behind the defender, cutback around pressure

## Kirill Kudryavtsev 2021-22 OHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 79 || Base XLS: 13% || Impact XLS: 8% || XPR: 27.8 || Drafted Pct: 63%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



before passing back inside. And he's a projectable skater with a deep, nearly-perfect stride. Defensive details have improved significantly throughout the season: using few crossovers, rarely over-extending, deep knees over toes posture, and he takes away the middle early. But his gap's so passive. He only gets stops when players walk into his space; he's rarely actively eliminating the puck carrier's options. I don't have many answers for how to project. Maybe as an end-of-board player solely based on the ideas, stride, and skill.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 12th, 2022

Kitchener Rangers vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Kudryavtsev is slow to react to just about everything. He's late on pivots, his check, pinches, and late to identify passing lanes. It's especially noticeable on retrievals, where he does the establishes positioning, prepares space, etc. but still ends up without the puck. Defensively, he has range, timing, and proper posture. Even he shows advanced defensive skating for this level, but his gap's too passive to be effective. Stride's projectable: knees over toes, hips engaged, chest up. But he's always gliding and reacting. The skill level was high in previous viewings, but he didn't show skill or ideas in this one. Not a pick based on this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 15th, 2021

Owen Sound Attack vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Kudryavtsev lacks pace – that much is clear. He takes too long to identify options and threats on both sides of the puck and he defers on breakouts when he should stretch the ice. Equally as clear is his playmaking ability. He activates at the right times to join the rush or become a weak side threat in OZP. Exchanges with his forwards and attacks space in more complex activation sequences. Grabbed a scoring chance by jumping down the weak side and firing after letting the puck come across his body. Earlier to gap up than in previous viewings, showing better awareness of off-puck threats and backpedalling routes. There are moments of first-round skill, but he's probably more of a mid-rounder at this stage.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

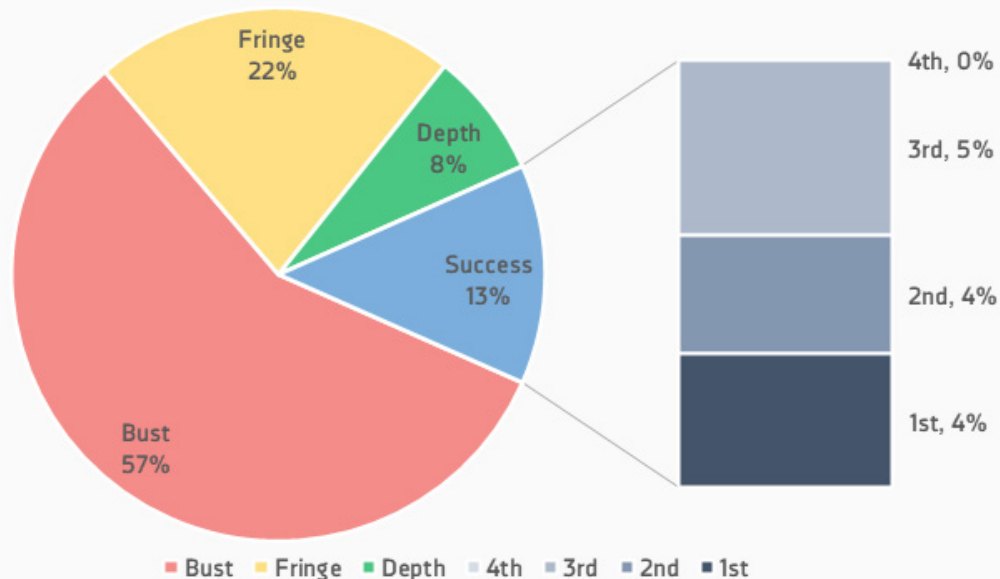
Guelph Storm vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Kudryavtsev's has a ton of passing skill: backhand, slip, hook, in-motion, look-offs. When given a bit of space, he keeps forecheckers out of his desired lane with deception and movement. When not, he's a mess. He's inaccurate, hurried into poor decisions, and got swiped on the fore-



## Kirill Kudryavtsev 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



check. I like many of the ideas driving his plays, but his pace (physical and mental) isn't OHL-calibre right now. He's consistently too late when executing, virtually across the board -- activation, retrievals, passing decisions, defensive engagement. Had one excellent activation sequence when he skated straight down the middle from the blue line and fired off a mechanically-sound, but weak wrister. Defensively, the pace is crippling. While many of his misplays appear to be low effort, I think they're more processing-related. When the threat is obvious, he eliminates them in an emphatic fashion. If not, he glides around and looks, but never seems to engage fast enough. The passing skill and activation might be first-round-worthy, but he has get to OHL speed first.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 23rd, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

I have no idea what to make of Kudryavtsev's skating in this game. The form didn't stand out one way or the other, but that's because he was never pushed. He never really skated hard, even when joining or leading the rush. Given space on the breakout, he plays this very glide-heavy, deception-focused game. He uses the middle, tries to draw pressure towards him, and then passes on their heels to set up a teammate. From the point, he looks for passing options first, one time spotting a high-value target through layers. But he takes too long to believe the puck or throws it at their heels. And that's really the biggest issue right

now. He plays too slow; his pace seems way below the OHL average. I'm honestly impressive it only resulted in four transition turnovers. Defensively, he's late and reactive. He seems to understand how to close space, but he doesn't have the urgency to kill the play. The skill's clearly first-round-worthy, but the pace, urgency, and timing isn't even close at this stage.

**Dylan Griffing:** August 2nd, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Finland U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

There is nary a time when Kirill Kudryavtsev is not activated. He spent this game using his skating and vision to his advantage, being a strong playmaking threat from the back end. There was a lack of control with his passing at times, but he recovers from his errors and makes the most out of bad situations. He uses a combination of smooth footwork, manipulation, and puck protection to skate through all three zones and then hold up play while he waits for his teammates to catch up to the rush, so he can find them with a pass and get back closer to where he should be playing. He adapted well to the pressure he faced in the offensive zone, passing out of danger or using quick turns of self bank passes to mitigate pressure on the boards. Defensively, he isn't very technical, but his footwork provides a good base for what he'll develop on throughout this season. Body positioning wasn't ideal for most of this game and he tends to over-extend to try to break up plays early, only to get turned around.



105  
Rank

4  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

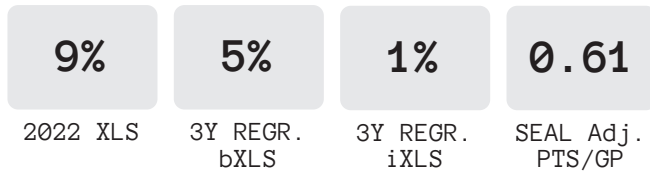
5.5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

# GARRETT BROWN

D | SIOUX CITY MUSKETEERS

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. APR. 4, 2004  
WEIGHT 179 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	62	4	12	16

## Scouting Report

It was the keen eye of EP Rinkside Editor-in-Chief J.D. Burke at the USHL Fall Classic who put Garrett Brown on our radar. His ice-time was limited, and his production non-existent, but something was there.

Standing at 6-foot-2 with just 16 points in 62 games, his profile fits that of a defensive defenceman. That couldn't be further from the truth. Brown's all offence, all the time, point totals only held back by his limited role.

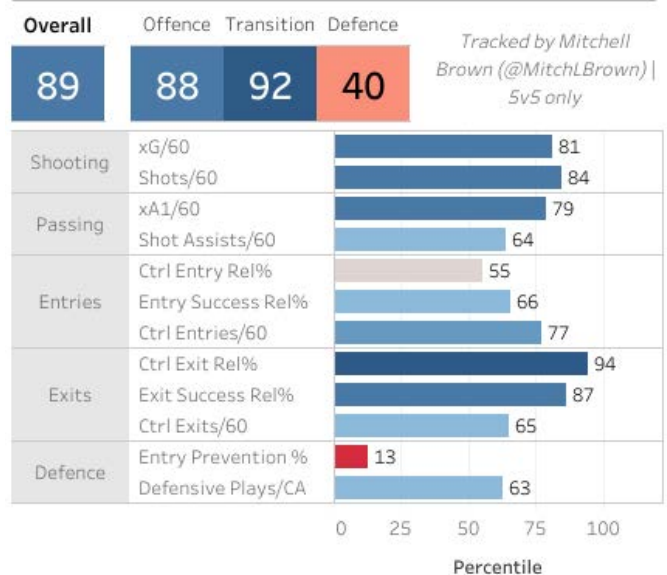
Every time Brown steps on the ice, he's looking to create. On breakouts, he has the details and habits that top breakout artists in the NHL rely on – slow down, then speed up. He attacks the middle to draw forechecking pressure, then either fakes them out with a quick handle or passes through them to an open teammate.

If Brown's not leading the rush, he's joining it. He sprints up the weak side to either divert defenders toward him or become a wide-open target.

That activation and creation-focused game translates to the offensive end. Brown regularly uses space before shooting. If he can't get space, he looks to create it. He steps inside, waits for the defender to chase, then pushes off in the other direction. Some of his playmaking flashes land at the top of the draft class, combining in-motion pass receptions, handling skill, and deception to get inside and turn a scoring chance into a tap-in.

Just as the data tracked by Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown speaks to Brown's impact with the puck, it also highlights the major flaw in his game

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 111.5



– Defence. His upright stance limits the power he generates when skating backwards, pivoting, and crossing over. Instead of managing risk, he steps up against fast-moving attackers or jumps to the outside lane too early to meet them along the boards. Crafty attackers pick him apart, often deking around him and gaining the middle without much friction. Because of the skating limitations, once he's beat, he can't recover.

The good news for Brown is he already shows defensive instincts. He keeps a tight off-puck gap, times his stick checks with the incoming pass, and angles out the cycle before killing the play.

Given the flaws and limited role, Brown's an uncertain

projection. His skating impacts every part of his game, from defence to offence. Without improvement, he's unlikely to make the NHL. But if he gets his skating close to the NHL average, he could become a modern-day No. 5 defenceman.

## Game Reports

**Daniel Gee:** May 7th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

Brown was a ridiculously strong transitional defender in the first two-thirds of this game. Multiple stops born out of steady feet, stick guiding, and almost no overcommitment. His defensive skating is very limited and faster attackers will destroy his gap, but against USHL attackers, he forced an inordinate amount of dump-ins and turnovers. In the third, things came off the rails. Brown was spun around too often, presenting awful body positioning. Uncontrolled and reaching pokechecks were ineffective, and he was deked to the inside too often -- needs heel-push integration. In sustained pressure, he fought off physicality well along the boards, but almost always just rang the puck to his defensive partner out of retrievals. His stop/start is really rough and his knees aren't engaged often, which hurts him laterally and in the cycle. He can become passive because of this, contained to his area of the ice so he can at least recover and stay in lanes.

In transition he has some ability. He recorded an assist off of a DZ intercept. Brown grabbed the loose puck and one-touched a puck to a teammate in stride who scored on a two-on-one. Other than that it seems like he lacks confidence and is risk-averse to a fault. Not much OZ play in this one -- disappointing. He moves pucks to the middle of the ice but he rarely activated from his point positioning.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

All the usual stuff from Brown: activation, playmaking, middle-lane use, deception, and more. But this was the tightest defensive performance I've seen. The usual timing of engagements was there; he attacks the recipient of passes as the puck comes in. But he actually dictating the actions of attackers on a couple of rush sequences. He angled attacks wide. Normally, he pivots early and concedes the middle. When his forwards were beaten in the neutral zone, he well-gapped and manage speed differentials without much issue. This gives me a bit more confidence in his projection. He's a candidate for the 60-80 range of our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

Brown's game remains messy, largely from his skating. But there's still a lot to like. Uses space before shooting. Steps

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Kody Mintenko YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 95%	2 Daniel Heath YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY 95%
3 Travis Walsh YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 95%	4 Brandon Carlson YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 94%
5 Cody Blanshan YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY 94%	6 Chad Morin YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY 94%
7 Cody Lampl YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY 94%	8 Jesse Lane YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 94%
9 Raymond Eichenlaub YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY 94%	10 Luke Shippo YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 93%

to the inside to draw pressure, then looks for teammates on the perimeter. If not, he draws pressure along the boards then looks for a pass up the middle or on the weak side. He's a very advantage-focused decision-maker. Sometimes, it leads to turnovers. His skating prevents him recovering, and sometimes, prevents him from accessing the best play (he tries, regardless). He's a pick, but lots of development required.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Fargo Force - USHL

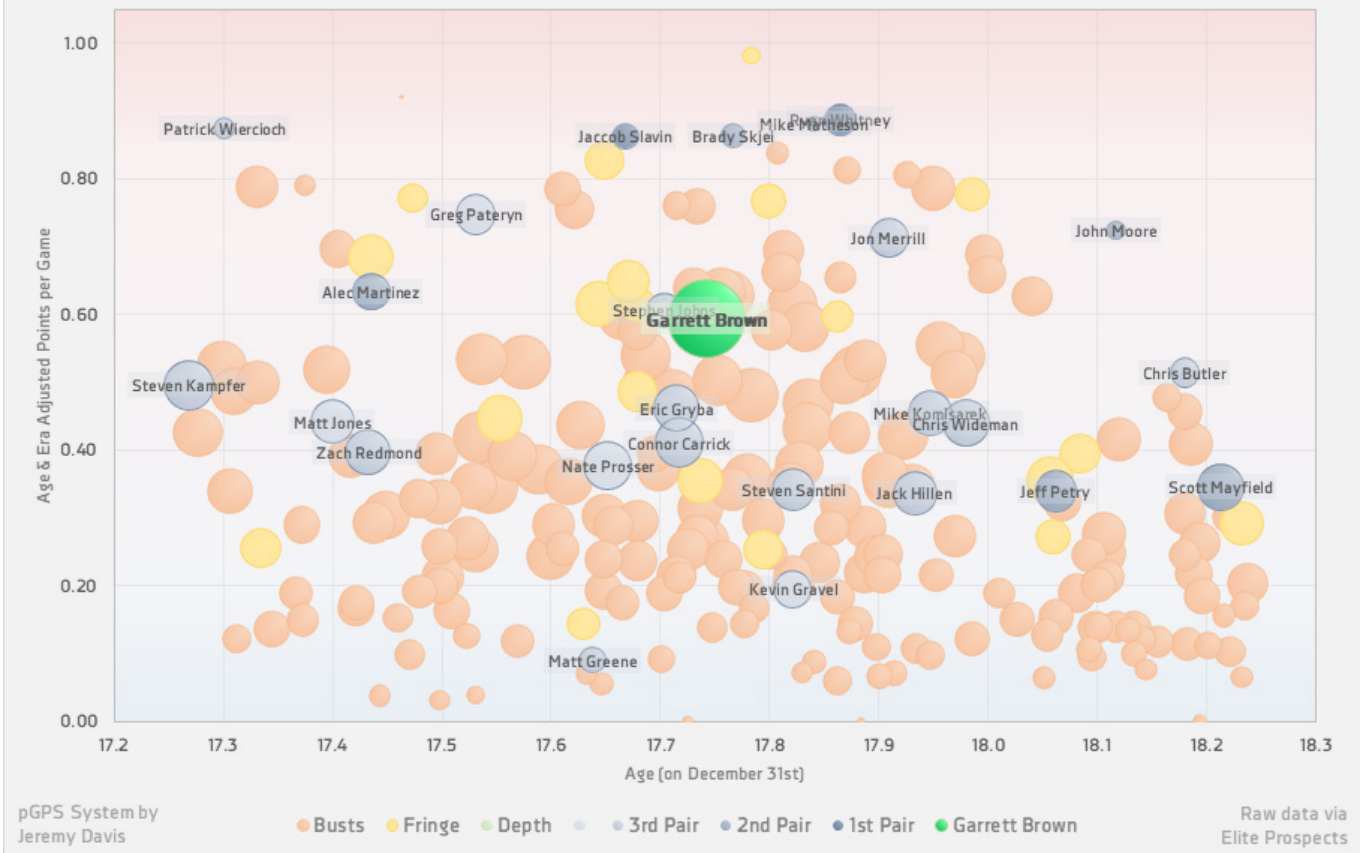
In these games, it's not easy to see why Brown doesn't have a big role. For one, many of the Sioux City defencemen do the same things as him, but better, and they don't have the same defensive skating issues. He's a liability off the rush. He pivots way too early and gets beat up the middle. His pivots and backwards skating prevent him from building backwards momentum and recovering when necessary. In the defensive zone, he shows instincts and awareness. Defensive posture lacks some knee bend, but he scans and leans on players at the right times. The core of his projection is still activation and offence. He's a capable distributor in all three zones: uses the middle, draws pressure, deceptive, and prefers to build the play over forcing plays to the net. He misses the odd high-skill pass from the point, but that's a lot to ask for from a guy playing under 13 minutes per game. I'd pick him for sure. Could be a late-second or mid-third on the board.

## Garrett Brown 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 234 || Base XLS: 9% || Impact XLS: 2% || XPR: 19.9 || Drafted Pct: 29%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



### Mitchell Brown: January 22nd, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Wished Brown played more. There's a lot to like here. In all three zones, he delays upon receiving the puck to wait for pressure to arrive. Then, he speeds up. Fast, then slow. Some tricks that he uses inside that loop: stutter steps, c-steps, and handling fakes. Uses the inside in transition, activates regularly, and uses space before shooting. Not all ideas are great, and he misread pressure, conceding a chance. Mostly, his issues are defensive. Particularly skating. He's upright and on his heels. The backpedalling suffers as a result. He commits to the outside too early and struggles to recover on pivots. Often unaware of off-puck threats. Still, his offensive mind and skill level definitely warrants a pick.

### Mitchell Brown: January 2nd, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

Brown's defensive skating is nightmare fuel. Doesn't load his pivots at all – just opens his hips and falls onto his outside leg. Easily beaten. But he plays extremely aggressively. Sometimes, it results in projectable stops by timing his stick check with the pass. But mostly, it leaves him pivoting to the outside and getting burned up the middle or vice-versa. It's a shame, because the rest of his game is exciting. When

he activates, he commits. Used a give-and-go to develop a scoring chance (right after denying entry into his zone). It's not mindless activation; he understands when and where to sprint to maximize his impact on the play. He could be a fun third-rounder. Not many players in this draft class with his combination of playmaking and activation.

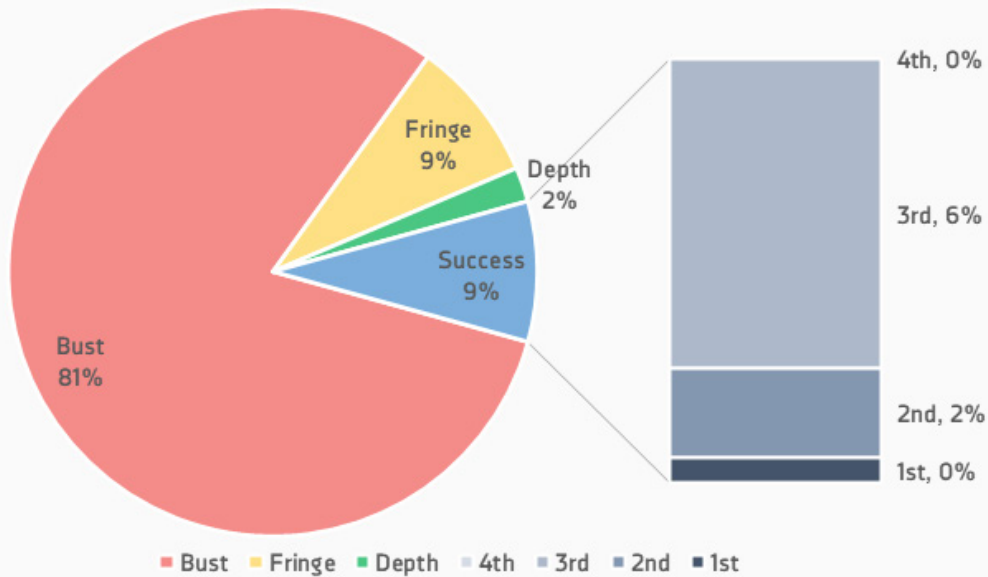
### Mitchell Brown: December 28th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

The best draft-eligible in this game by a large margin. Brown finally got minutes and made the most of them. He activated into every play, firing off three scoring chances and setting up a few more. Timed his passes to catch his target in motion. Give-and-go in the OZ became a pass from the boards into the slot for a HD look – one of the better sequences I've seen from a defensive prospect this season. Tried some advanced ideas that didn't work, but he's clearly a projectable thinker. In transition, he plans and manipulates. He draws pressure, passes through it, then joins the play. Understands how to create advantages. Always uses the inside when it's an option, and sometimes, creates the lane to the middle. In-motion passes and pass receptions. Projectable NHL wrister, elevating his top arm elbow and he drops his weight over his stick – narrow profile with potential to add

## Garrett Brown 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



new shooting skills. Builds speed before entering his desired space off-puck, which led to most of his best looks. The odd low-percentage shot, along with some handling issues suggested mechanical limitations. Killed some rushes, but his pivots and recovery skating needs work. His aggression is key to his defensive success, but right now, he's gambling instead of dictating. Perhaps a fun second-rounder. I don't really care that he's not scoring, given the confidence, details, and intelligence.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 17th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Ugly game from Brown. He took a few point shots, threw possession away under pressure, and looked away defending the rush. He doesn't have any defensive skating ability. He just plants his feet and waits, then pivots and tries to win the race. He never does. Doesn't load his pivots at all. In the defensive zone, he's actually a somewhat intelligent defender who eliminates threats and gets the odd stop. Even then, his skating limitations combined with his tendency to overextend mean that he's gambling on every engagement. Didn't look like a draft pick, but there moments of deception with the puck.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 20th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Brown hardly plays, and he hardly did anything with the eight minutes or so he had. Beat on a couple of zone entries and threw possession away under pressure on the breakout a few times. Looked inside on a play, then lost the puck. Missed opportunities to advance the puck and activate into

the play. Didn't see anything to suggest draft interest, but he played just eight minutes.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 16th, 2021

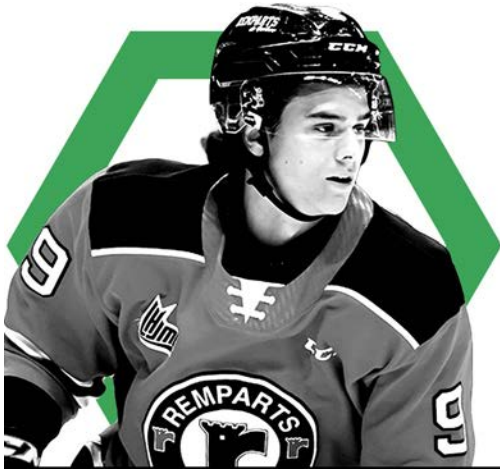
Sioux City Musketeers vs. Omaha Lancers - USHL

Brown had some moments, mostly with the puck. His game is mostly ideas at the moment: using space before shooting, attacking the F1 before passing cross-lane, and delay to draw pressure towards him to pass through it. Skilled, adaptable handler, combining his hands with skating skills to misguide defenders. Stride and defensive skating could be significant issues. Lacks depth. Doesn't generate any lateral (push off) power. No power through his pivots. Better attackers will exploit his defensive skating. Could be an interesting late-rounder as a prospect with advanced ideas and flashes of execution.

**J.D. Burke:** September 25th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. USNTDP U18 - USHL

If Brown's physical tools ever catch up with his sense and his attack-first mentality, then this kid could be a real menace. I'm not even sure that his physical tools are that bad either. His skating concerns me. It looked fine on some shifts and downright abominable on others. I need to circle back on that one. Showed some four-way mobility in this contest -- that much was self-evidently a strong point. Made some good pinches to sustain offensive zone possession. Joined the rush at every opportunity. Really deceptive manoeuvring with the puck on his stick at the point to create space. Can problem-solve through forechecking pressure to get the puck up ice. He just might warrant a pick in the middle of the draft.



106  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

6.5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

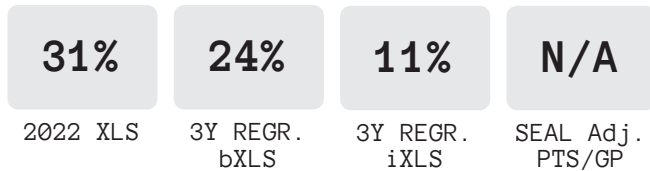
5.5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

# THÉO ROCHETTE

C | QUÉBEC REMPARTS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. FEB. 20, 2002  
WEIGHT 168 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	66	33	66	99

## Scouting Report

Is this the year Théo Rochette finally hears his name called at the NHL Entry Draft? Maybe the third time's the charm for the QMJHL forward.

Certainly, we remain true believers. This will be Rochette's third appearance in an Elite Prospects draft guide after placing 77th in 2020 and 91st in 2021 respectively.

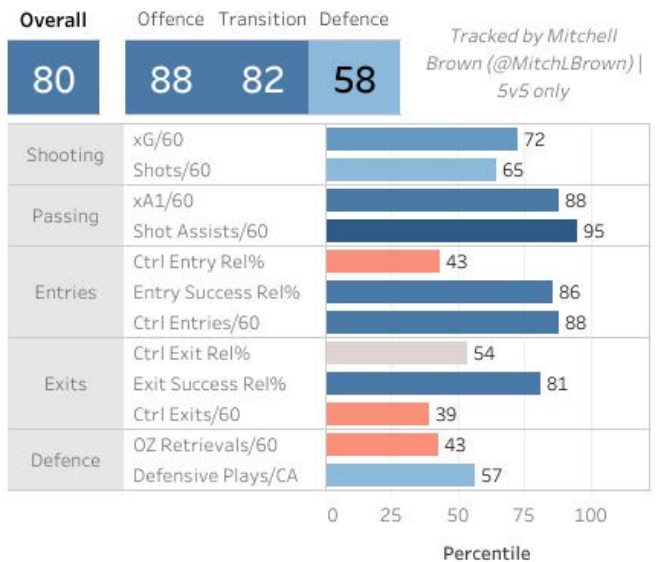
Now, is that stubbornness on our parts? Perhaps, but it's also an indication that his play has warranted NHL interest in each of the last three seasons, by our reckoning. The NHL may not share that assessment, but we're never one to shy away from our own evaluations because of it.

This season may have been Rochette's best, too. He scored 99 points in 66 contests, more than doubling his previous QMJHL career-high in a single season. Some might suggest that this jump in production was the byproduct of playing alongside Zachary Bolduc, but our work on the two suggested it was more of a mutually beneficial partnership than anything. It's not likely that Bolduc would've hit 50 goals away from Rochette's setup skills, anyway.

That playmaking looked even more refined this season -- more manipulative, calculated, and frequent. Rochette's transition game and setup ability were one of the main reasons behind the success of the Québec Remparts.

"I really like his ability to scan inside his movements, to grab info on his teammates and drag defenders away from

Games Tracked: 6 | Minutes Tracked: 106.7



their paths to feed them pucks," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in February. "The added physicality and the passing game could make him a decent wall-play in the pros, too."

Rochette's improved puck protection mechanics and his newfound scoring game -- he managed 33 goals this season -- could entice NHL teams in July. Otherwise, it's another rain check on the Canadian-Swiss centreman who is moving to Lausanne HC in the Swiss NL in 2022-23. He could still find his way back to the NHL in the future.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Dominic Forget YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 95%	2 Marc-Antoine Pouliot YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY 95%	3 Joel Perrault YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY 94%	4 Mathieu Perreault YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY 93%	5 Brent Aubin YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY 93%
6 Charles Linglet YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY 93%	7 Dany Roussin YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY 92%	8 Sven Andrighetto YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 92%	9 Maxime Talbot YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY 92%	10 Michael Ryder YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 92%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 15th, 2022

Québec Remparts vs Moncton Wildcats - QMJHL

What a performance for Rochette. He's the same player, but a much better version of himself, with a little bit of inefficiencies still. He's much more physical; he drives the net and seals the puck from opponents. Not sure he will be able to do that at higher levels, however, due to his lighter build, but he is applying the right techniques. He buys time for teammates and makes deceptive passes with great timing, as lane opens. He's still pass first, but it doesn't matter as much anymore as he has Zachary Bolduc on his wing to finish most of his feeds. Rochette is heading to Europe next season and, while that won't favor his physical development, and might reinforce some of his bad habits, the professional competition will also test him. I'd draft Rochette in the mid-rounds of the draft.

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Québec Remparts vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Dominant performance from Rochette. One of best games I've seen from him. He's more physical, more net-driven, and an even better play connector, who can breakout pucks with precise passes under stick and rush to the other end to finish chances. His skill is still average overall, but his passing and playmaking game could lead him to score good totals in the AHL and even feature in an NHL bottom-six if all breaks right. I really like his ability to scan inside his movements, to grab info on his teammates and drag defenders away from their paths to feed them pucks. The added physicality and the passing game could make him a decent wall-play in the pros, too. He's a pick this year for me again, around the same range.

**David St-Louis:** December 4th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Rochette played more of a periphery game tonight. He remains a delay playmaker first and foremost, one who attacks the wide lane and then plants himself to look for passes inside. He does rush through the middle, but only to kick

the puck wide. There is no desire for contact in his game or ability to stay net-front. Although he is scoring (finally) in the QMJHL, he is a uni-dimensional player and that will make it hard for him to score in the NHL.

**David St-Louis:** November 4th, 2021

Saint John Seadogs vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

Rochetter was again the best player on the ice. He didn't touch the puck as much as in my viewing last week, but every time he did, the smart play was made. He manipulates in subtle ways, but much more often than in years past, and his patience with the puck is unmatched inside this team, even with players like Bolduc and Gaucher. He just knows the time he has to make plays and he anticipates a couple of steps ahead, leveraging good scoring chances (shots) into great ones (cross-ice passes or cross-slot passes). Rochette also positions well defensively and he tries in rotations, but he lacks engaging potential. That poor physicality and uni-dimensional offence might still limit his NHL upside, but he will again be on our board for sure.

**David St-Louis:** October 28th, 2021

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

Rochetter makes a ton of plays on first touches: passes and dangles. He plans some offensive sequences, especially on the powerplay. In fact, he seems to be the one guy on the Remparts's powerplay who really knows how to create scoring chances with a couple of moves. He did fire some uncharacteristic low percentage shots in this game, but at least he's shooting, no? His one-timer lacks power. Rochette is still mostly a playmaker. The difference is that he is now fitted with much more talent and the other team has to think about not just shutting his line down, but also the entire top-9 of Québec. Good defensive engagement, but he did miss a costly switch defensively.

**David St-Louis:** October 1st, 2021

Drummondville V. vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

Rochetter scored on a 2-on-1. He shot. He shot! It was by

far the best play to make, but the Rochette of two seasons ago would probably have found a way to force a pass above or around the sliding middle defender. But Rochetter saw the open runway, he manipulated the goalie into thinking he was passing with a head and shoulder fake and fired top-corner short-side, displaying the great release mechanics he always had, but rarely used. It was the highlight of the game. Otherwise, Rochetter was a bit nonchalant and late defensively and offensively on some early shifts. I expected a more complete performance from the now veteran and captain of the Remparts. I'm still looking at him as a potential draft pick in his D+2.

**David St-Louis:** May 9th, 2021

Québec Remparts vs. Chicoutimi Saguenéens - QMJHL

Rochette continues to impress me. He is still not scoring a lot, but I don't think his team is setting him up to do so. Rochette is a complementary playmaker; he can be the defence element on your line and connect plays, but he needs shooters capable of getting open. He doesn't have that too. Not really. He needs more pace, skating pace, but he can ID teammates very quickly and chain moves to reach them with the puck rapidly, too. He always builds scoring chances (but rarely gets the puck back) and plays a good pass and reposition style. Some skilled plays there, too. Combining stick lifts into a dangle into a pass. Patient offensively. He could be a mid-round pick. Still, the more likely outcome for him is European pro.

**David St-Louis:** February 16th, 2021

Rimouski Océanic vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Not much to note for Rochette this game, but his pace and speed definitely improved. That pace is clearly higher than the QMJHL and looks closer to pro-level, which is a great sign for his projection. He finds passing targets under pressure very quickly and uses his body a bit more, resisting shoves easily. His skating posture could allow for some explosive cutbacks to create separation down the line. Rochette reads open spaces with and without the puck. I would draft him this season, maybe in the third round. One of the better Q prospects.

**David St-Louis:** February 13th, 2021

Olympiques Gatineau vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

What a performance from Rochette. He made one of the best plays I have seen this season. On a zone entry, the puck got sent his way and bounced on the wall. He put on the brakes, spun, caught the disc and slammed it inside that spin toward a teammate accelerating in the middle, in a

perfect position for that teammate to shoot in stride. Goal. High-awareness and passing execution. Rochette's skating looks better. He sits back on his skates a bit too much, but there isn't any major flaw anywhere. Plus, he uses crossovers to separate. I think he is at least an NHL average skater in a few years. Does he have the offensive kit to be more than a quad-A player? Not sure yet, but he is definitely worth a pick. His head is always up, scanning for passing targets and the puck is at his hip. He can dangle and slide it through skates as he makes his way to the offensive zone, set up by this deceptive stance. Rochette's game has more pace overall this game and his defensive play is still effective, right place, right time generally. One more thing: a bit more physicality, going shoulder with shoulder with opponents on the boards to push them off track on retrievals. But Rochette isn't a strong, physical forward by any means.

**David St-Louis:** February 2nd, 2021

Québec Remparts vs. Rimouski Océanic - QMJHL

Rochette shows more hard skill this season, establishing body positioning and making plays in tight, absorbing contact to make passes. His pace is slightly higher -- I already mentioned that in other reports. He didn't create much this game overall, but rarely got good conditions to do so -- no support, no space, and outnumbered on his puck touches. He still aims passes to the slot at a high rate and looks for give-and-gos. I'm surprised how quick he moves the puck when he gets it, very aware of his options.

**David St-Louis:** January 24th, 2021

Québec Remparts vs. Rimouski Oceanic - QMJHL

Rochette lacked some urgency this game, both offensively and defensively. Not getting open and not following his check all that closely. He really needs to establish a two-way, more energy identity to get drafted this year as his offensive game alone isn't strong enough. I like some of the new elements he added this year, however, like the reverse hits. He establishes contact before retrievals to create a pocket of space. He won't be able to do that at the professional level, but it can be a mechanic that involves into something more, a better puck protection game overall that uses the momentum of opponents against them. Rochette scored from a screened wrist-shot on the powerplay. He moved behind the line of defence and fired right as the goalie's vision of the puck was cut.

**David St-Louis:** November 25th, 2020

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Québec Remparts- QMJHL

Another strong showing for Rochette this season. He is the

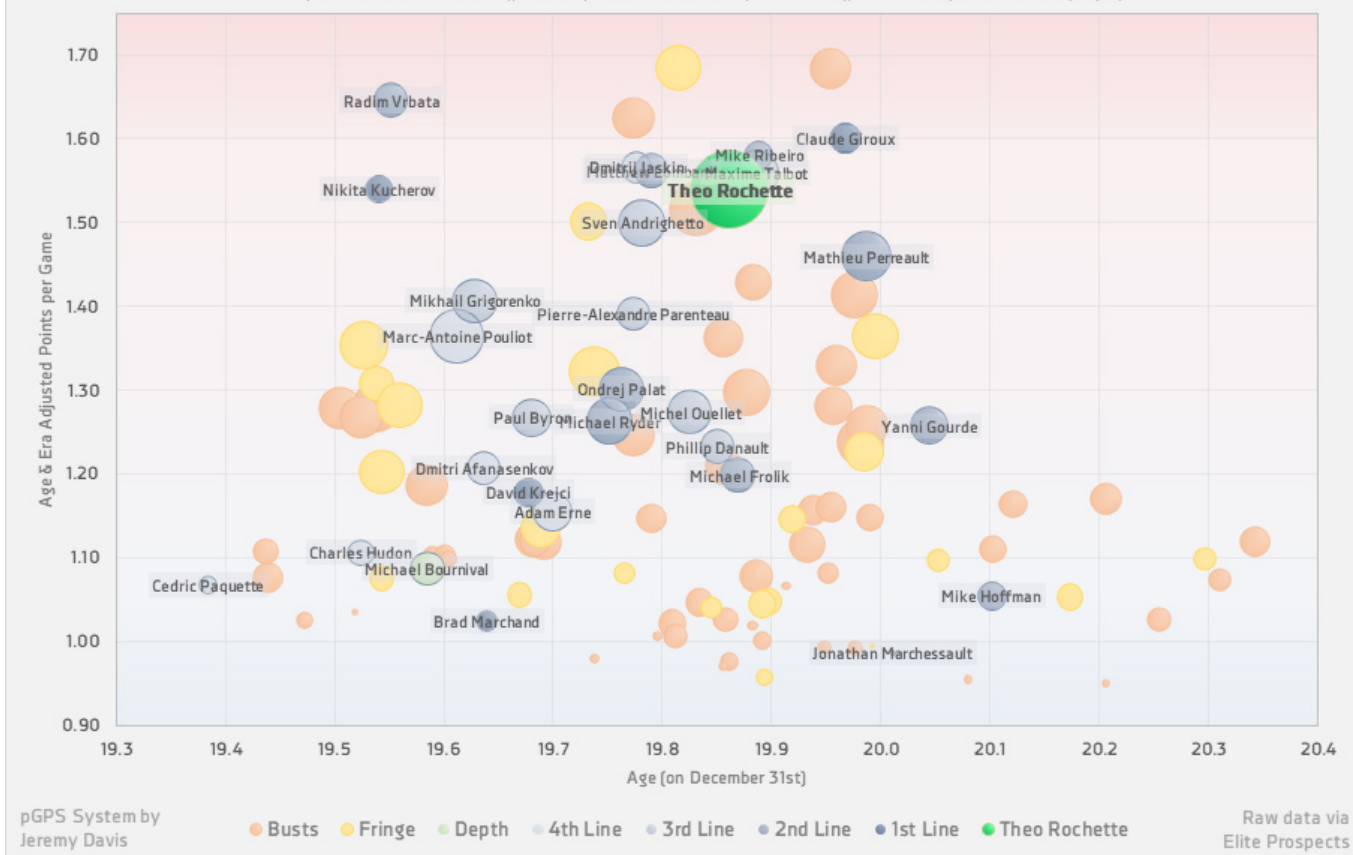


## Theo Rochette 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 105 || Base XLS: 31% || Impact XLS: 14% || XPR: 46.5 || Drafted Pct: 60%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



same player as last year, but everything is a bit better. It's rare in Junior hockey to see players purposely slow down and find open ice on breakouts to get the puck and then carry it up ice, making give-and-gos with teammates. Rochette consistently involves everyone on the ice and he looks to connect plays. His passing ability helps him achieve that -- he makes passes ahead of them with his backhand, with lobs, with slips...Name it, he does it. His tempo is a bit quicker this season, too. And finally, he is showing more promise as a shooter: popping open for one-timers and timing himself to attack the net at 45 degree angles. He always had the shot mechanics -- now he is making use of it. He is definitely a player to keep in mind as a re-entry.

**David St-Louis:** February 22th, 2020

Quebec Remparts vs. Chicoutimi Sagueniens - QMJHL

One of the better games I've seen from Rochette this season, even if he didn't score. On his very first shift, he made a backhand lob pass to a teammate ahead of him off the rush and then turned on the jets to skate past the defenders standing between him and a potential 2-on-1. He finally got the puck alone versus the goalie, but couldn't dangle him. Rochette seemed to play with a vengeance in this first period (he was recently traded from Chicoutimi). At the end of the

first, he battled with a much bigger opposing centreman to keep the puck; he won inside positioning and then used rapid cuts to shake him off until he found an outlet. Rochette displayed a ton more energy this game, which gives me a flash of what could have been his season if he hadn't suffered from Mononucleosis.

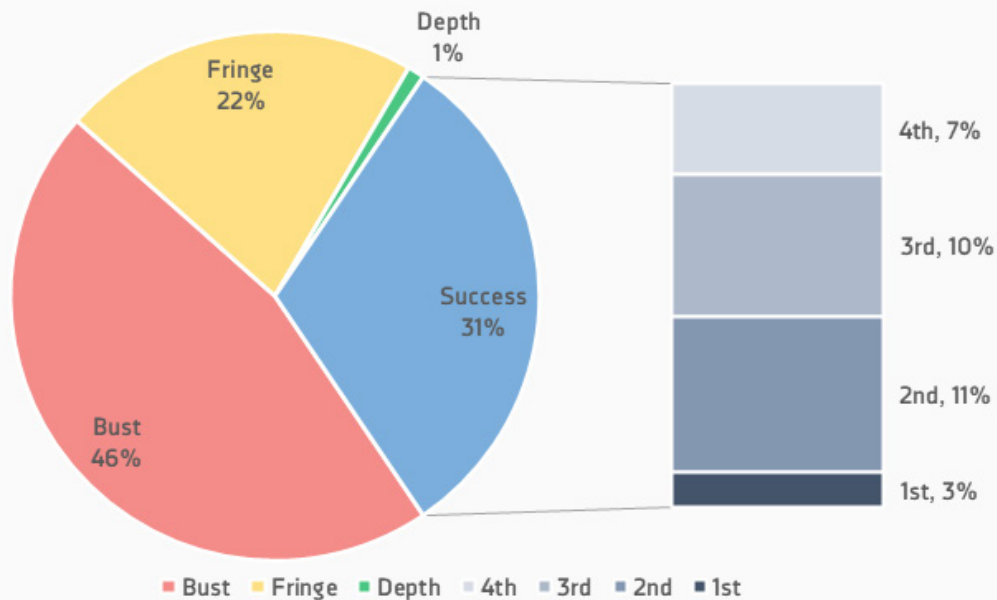
**David St-Louis:** February 18th, 2020

Quebec Remparts vs. Baie-Comeau Drakkar- QMJHL

Rochette has better shot mechanics than most of his Junior peers -- but he rarely displays them. It's due in part to his playmaking mentality, but also due to an inability to set up as a shooter; Rochette doesn't always see plays develop one-pass ahead to move to the slot as a shooter. This game was different. Rochette took advantage of the loose defence of the Drakkar to attack the slot away from the puck, but he also did so with great timing, at least on his first goal; he didn't sit in the slot, he moved behind a defender, entered the high-danger area, got the puck and offloaded it on net to score -- all of that in about a second. On his second goal, he posted himself just a little bit higher in the slot to remain out of checking range. The second release was a real one-timer; the first one, Rochette had to reposition the puck, and it became a two-touch shot -- the forward hasn't shown

## Theo Rochette 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



a talent to shoot off bad passes by quickly switching his feet.

Apart from his two goals, Rochette found multiple teammates behind defenders, either with cross-ice passes or from below the goal-line. He also battled harder than I remembered for pucks on the wall, accelerating to squeak in front of opponents and win the inside lane on the retrieval. He lacks strength, but his motor looked better this game.

**David St-Louis:** February 18th, 2020

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

One of the better showings from Rochette. He supported teammates in timely ways tonight in puck retrievals to avoid it escaping the grasp of his team offensively. He also took the puck to the net and used the back of it to create a couple of dangerous chances. Rochette sometimes gets too fixated on a play, which closes passing lanes on him. He doesn't force passes, but the play can die on his stick when he fails to move the puck quickly enough. Rochette has started integrating more deceptive passing into his play, however, which improves his completion rate. I appreciate how he always aims to stay above the puck. He strides hard on the forecheck/backcheck.

**David St-Louis:** February 9th, 2020

Moncton Wildcats vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

I keep looking for signs of life from Théo Rochette. Usually, I don't find many during a game. But Sunday was one of Rochette's better performances this season. He had a great shift in the 2nd period. He reached a teammate with a high lob-pass that flew above two defenders to create a break-

away, and then himself sprung ahead of the play to get his own chance alone versus the goalie. He beat the net-minder by elevating the puck above his shoulder. The main issue with Rochette is one of environment now. He was sick. He came back. He's likely a diminished player, but he's also a diminished player trying his best to stand out with a very weak supporting cast. When I watch Rochette, I sometimes think of Ryan Francis. Rochette clearly has the mind for the game, the ability to connect plays that would allow him to produce next to two players like Yegor Sokolov and Shawn Boudrias. His passing ability would shine a lot more. I don't know if he's as quick and as good of a handler as Francis, but Rochette deserves a boost in the ranking simply because of what he could do. There are sparks. The motor is not churning, but you can see that it will in future seasons with a player like Malatesta on his line and help coming from the outside. I think he stays a third-rounder for me, and shouldn't fall further. Not convinced yet, still. Plenty more viewings of him coming up.

**David St-Louis:** January 11th, 2020

Val-d'Or Foreurs vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

Flashes, but not much else. Rochette set a goal in a beautiful way by moving the puck behind his back and between his legs, beating a defender and cutting to the net -- but, arguably, it wasn't the best play to make in the sequence. His move brought the puck off-side and the goal was disallowed. More than that, his teammate had a lane to the net without the need for the elaborate move. That said, Rochette can hit those simple but effective play. He won't make an impact by trying

## "This will be Rochette's third appearance in an Elite Prospects draft guide after placing 77th in 2020 and 91st in 2021 respectively."

to out-skill his opposition, but by consistently advancing the play in such ways -- not unlike the player he was traded for: Félix Bibeau. Again, it's all projection for Rochette.

**David St-Louis:** January 3rd, 2020

Quebec Remparts vs. Blainville-B. Armada - QMJHL

Rochette continues to disappoint. Besides a powerplay sequence where he showed passing and deceptive abilities, he created nothing truly interesting tonight. He is the kind of player who could complement a high-skill line in the QMJHL quite well, but he is tasked to be the main driver of his trio, he doesn't seem to be able to do it. His skill and skating look about average, but there aren't the flashes of creativity and manipulation that he showed last year. He takes what the defence gives him, and his motor fails him at times.

It might be the effect of the mononucleosis, but I wouldn't take the risk of drafting him before the 3rd round, most likely -- unless he shows massive improvements in the second half.

**David St-Louis:** January 3rd, 2019

Chicoutimi Saguenéens vs. Drummondville V. - QMJHL

Rochette's rushing play was the best part of his game. I like his footwork to open lanes for teammates; on a three-on-three rush, he moved laterally to force the defender facing him to do the same, which opened up the wide-lane for a teammate. Rochette then fed him the puck, enabling him to skate across the offensive blue-line. On another occasion, the neutral-zone was completely clogged, but one of his teammates had managed to skate behind the defensive line. So Rochette analyzed the situation and creatively bounced the puck on the boards up to that teammate, bypassing the defence. The pass was indirect, but incredibly precise. Rochette looks like a potential average to slightly above average NHL skater down the line. He needs to add strength, but his mechanics (knee-bend, back angle, shin angle...) all look sound.

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107  
Rank

5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

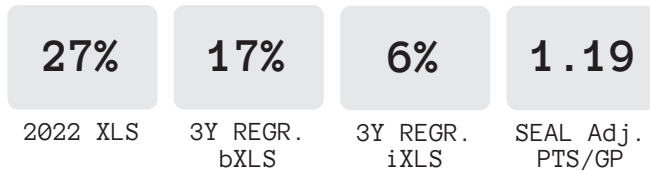
4.5  
Hockey Sense

5.5  
Physical

# ZAKARY LAVOIE

RW | MISSISSAUGA STEELHEADS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAR. 13, 2004  
WEIGHT 170 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	64	23	21	44

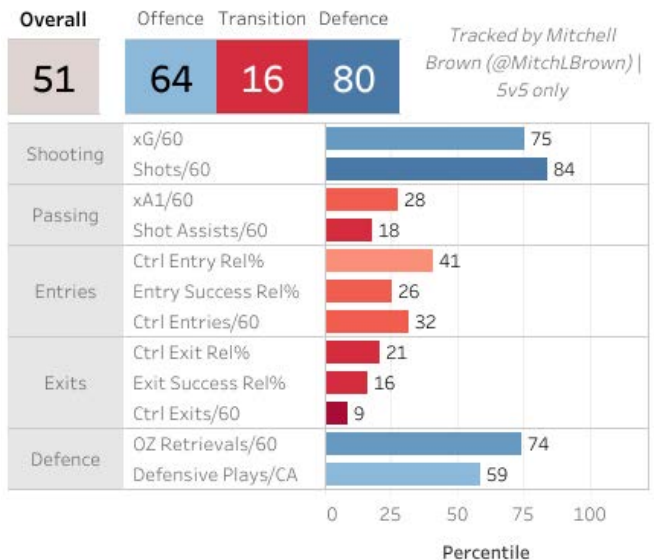
## Scouting Report

With the OHL losing the 2020-21 season, it's no surprise that many former top prospects struggled to find their way this year. That also creates an opportunity for players to exceed their draft position as they become more comfortable. Zakary Lavoie, the seventh overall pick in the 2020 OHL Draft, is a prime candidate.

There's no doubt that Lavoie has the skill to become a big-time OHL scorer. He projects as an NHL-calibre shooter with a powerful one-timer and the know-how to get open. And just when the defenders are convinced a shot's coming, he turns the shot into a pass. Along the boards, he combines body positioning with backhand passing skill to connect with teammates in the slot. Even with a defender leaning on him, his hands and creative solutions carve through pressure and create opportunities. In flashes, he fakes the outside dash, then cuts to the inside.

Using these skills consistently has been the greatest limiter in Lavoie's game. Elite Prospects OHL scout Lauren Kelly explained the source of these inconsistencies: "poor scanning, struggles to manipulate defenders, and doesn't take the puck to the net but would rather force it down below

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 111.5



the goal line instead."

Increased scanning and better rush patterns will help Lavoie create a better stat-line in the OHL while improving his NHL odds. His shooting and forechecking could make him a capable fourth-liner, and any playmaking and transition improvement will only increase his upside.

of skill to get inside. In one sequence, he faked the outside, using that momentum to cut inside across the defender before firing a shot off the post. His ability along the boards,

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: April 9th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Lavoie's a bit of a perimeter shooter, but he shows flashes

particularly in transition, helps him kick out pucks to the inside, usually to Beck. But he's not much of a transition threat himself - he tends to slow down and invite pressure, but he isn't intentionally drawing pressure to make plays through it. Game is relatively simple one. And I don't see the playmaking to help offset the rest of deficiencies. Maybe an end-of-board type because he has some ideas and shooting ability.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 3rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

This was probably Lavoie's best game of the season. He was near-dominant on some shifts and an asset on the penalty kill, which I hadn't previously noticed until this game. Speed was an asset on the power play too, including good hustle on the backcheck to disrupt an odd-man rush that had gone the other way. Picked off multiple passes to create turnovers and scoring chances, worked hard in his own end in battles and made the right reads and put himself in good areas to transition play back up the ice. His two most notable plays came on the fourth and fifth goals - on the fourth, he stole the puck shorthanded and took it up the ice before shooting, following up for a rebound chance before Beck finally buried it. The fifth was excellent, a tape-to-tape outlet pass from below his own blueline to Hardie for a breakaway goal that put the game out of reach. If Lavoie had played like this all season, I'd have no doubts about him being a second or third round pick. But it's the consistency between shifts in viewings of other games that are holding back my excitement for him a bit. I'm still not sure how he projects long-term, especially in a potential NHL role.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Lavoie clearly has skill. He dekes through and around players, even when they're leaning on him. He's a mechanically sound shooter who can turn a shot into a pass. He often has sound ideas with the puck, especially along the boards. But he's not always aware of his teammates, suggesting scanning limitations. He gets locked to the boards in transition, which leads to either a failed entry or a low-percentage shot. Lacks adaptability, and he's certainly not manipulating defenders. I don't see enough to earn a spot on our board, but I think a team will pick him. He's likely just a generic skill CHLer.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 24th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Lavoie was invisible through two periods (his one notable play was fanning on a dump-in...) before finding a new gear in the third as the Steelheads mounted a comeback. Scored

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Lucas Lessio

YEAR: 2011

SIMILARITY 97%

2 Brett Ritchie

YEAR: 2011

SIMILARITY 96%

3 Jarrod Maidens

YEAR: 2012

SIMILARITY 96%

4 Sergei Tolchinsky

YEAR: 2013

SIMILARITY 96%

5 John Hecimovic

YEAR: 2002

SIMILARITY 96%

6 A.J. Jenks

YEAR: 2008

SIMILARITY 96%

7 Jamie McGinn

YEAR: 2006

SIMILARITY 96%

8 Colt King

YEAR: 2001

SIMILARITY 96%

9 Jay McClement

YEAR: 2001

SIMILARITY 96%

10 Cory Stillman

YEAR: 2001

SIMILARITY 96%

his first goal on a harmless looking shot from the half-wall that deflected off a defender in front. His second tied the game, a one-timer in tight after he backed up from the top of the crease to give himself more room to work with. It's a weird performance to evaluate on... because he was a large reason why his team got back into this game and won, but one of his goals came off a lucky bounce and other than the production, he struggled in the first two periods to generate much of anything and wasn't really affecting play positively in the defensive zone either. My gut tells me that he is a pick, but he needs to impact play more consistently. I'd love to see him play more minutes - that might happen next season, but if he can only play a bottom-six role in his draft year, he's got to find a way to stand out more.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 21st, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

I liked Lavoie a lot in this game. Put in good work down low in battles, played with intensity and kept up with the pace, good speed carrying the puck into the offensive zone. I think he needs to keep moving his feet when he gets the puck in the neutral zone, because often he's at a stand still and then needs to kick up the power when it's too late, a defender is already closing him off. Scored the tying goal late with a ridiculous release that beat the goalie top shelf. There's no questioning his skills, but there are habits to his game that are affecting how much of an offensive contributor he is at this level - poor scanning, struggles to manipulate

defenders, doesn't take the puck to the net but would rather force it down below the goal line instead. The shot is legit, though. I wonder if this is a case of him not having played last season, or if this is just the player he is.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 12th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Lavoie's puck rushing abilities are questionable at best. He likes to carry the puck up the ice to start the rush, but every single time an opposing defender closes him off along the boards, he loses possession. Where someone like Owen Beck will try to deke around them, Lavoie's MO seems to be to try and skate right through defenders, which given his lack of strength and smaller build, is very ineffective. It was getting to the point where he was better off letting someone else carry the puck up the ice, because he was turning the puck over so often. He had a couple of good plays where he forced turnovers himself, including one where he picked off a pass in the slot and fired a shot on goal, but there was a pretty brutal giveaway where he tried to send the puck across the ice and it was picked off pretty easily. But overall I felt like he really struggled to make anything happen in this game. I wouldn't draft him based on this one.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 8th, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Lavoie's fascinating from a development standpoint. He's clearly highly skilled and has quick reactions. He cuts through and around defenders, easily beating them with hand speed. He's also a strong forechecker. Passing ideas are consistently impressive, but he struggles to connect because of poor scanning habits. Give him a bit of space, and things seem to get worse. He doesn't understand how to manipulate defenders, opting to enter and glide and continue down the boards hoping they'll crossover. If he used more crossovers, that's instantly improve his effectiveness. Didn't impact the game through shooting, defence, and off-puck abilities. Not sure if he's a pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 30th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Lavoie was playing all over the lineup in this game and as a result, I didn't see him really settled in on any line that he played on. I felt like he was struggling to constantly adjust to new linemates and didn't know exactly what he should be doing or what role to play. He didn't touch the puck all that often either. Not much to glean from in this one.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Lavoie provided the partial screen on Mississauga's second goal and was working well within spaces and made good reads to get open. Most of his scoring chances were low danger opportunities from the perimeters, and he bounced between the second and third lines in this game. I didn't really feel like he established any offensive impact in this game, but adjusting to a new role and different linemates could be a reason for it, because he was moved off his usual line with Beck pretty early on. Hoping it's a one-off showing.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 20th, 2022

Oshawa Generals vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

This was an overall positive performance from Lavoie, as he was creating way more scoring chances with the puck in this viewing. There was a nice centering pass from behind the net to a teammate in the slot, along with a cross-crease pass on the powerplay that nearly resulted in a goal. He also tried to go between his legs and around a defender while on the rush, which didn't go so well as he was knocked off the puck pretty easily. Strength will need to get better, as he can still struggle in board battles. He also had a good chance to end the game in overtime by ringing a shot off the crossbar. I think there's enough in his game to warrant a draft pick, but I still find myself wanting more from him when I watch.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Impressive performance from Lavoie, especially as a playmaker. His scanning habits remain inconsistent, and he panics under pressure, but he identified teammates driving the net, showed a number of different ways to connect with teammates, and connected with a tricky pass through two defenders. He found space off-puck, which directly lead to his goal, and he linked that off-puck movement with his playmaking. Mississauga's forecheck was hot, and Lavoie was a big reason why. If he wasn't first on a puck, he forced a poor decision by keeping the pressure on. He's not a play-driver, and he's still an inefficient creator, but his game looks far more polished than earlier in the season. Could be a fine late-rounder with hopes that improved scanning habits and skating will make a top playmaker in the OHL.

**Lauren Kelly:** December 17th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Lavoie started the game on the top line with Luca DelBel-Belluz and James Hardie, but that lasted about one period. His speed and pace finally looks like it's caught up to the

OHL level, but he overskated a lot of the passes sent in his direction and it's almost like his reads or anticipation is still slightly off. He had one nice rush with the puck where he chipped it around the defender back to himself, but a shot from the outside was stopped. Lavoie had six shots on goal in this game, including a prime breakaway chance. He looked a lot better and more comfortable back on the second line with Owen Beck and Aidan Prueter.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 5th, 2021

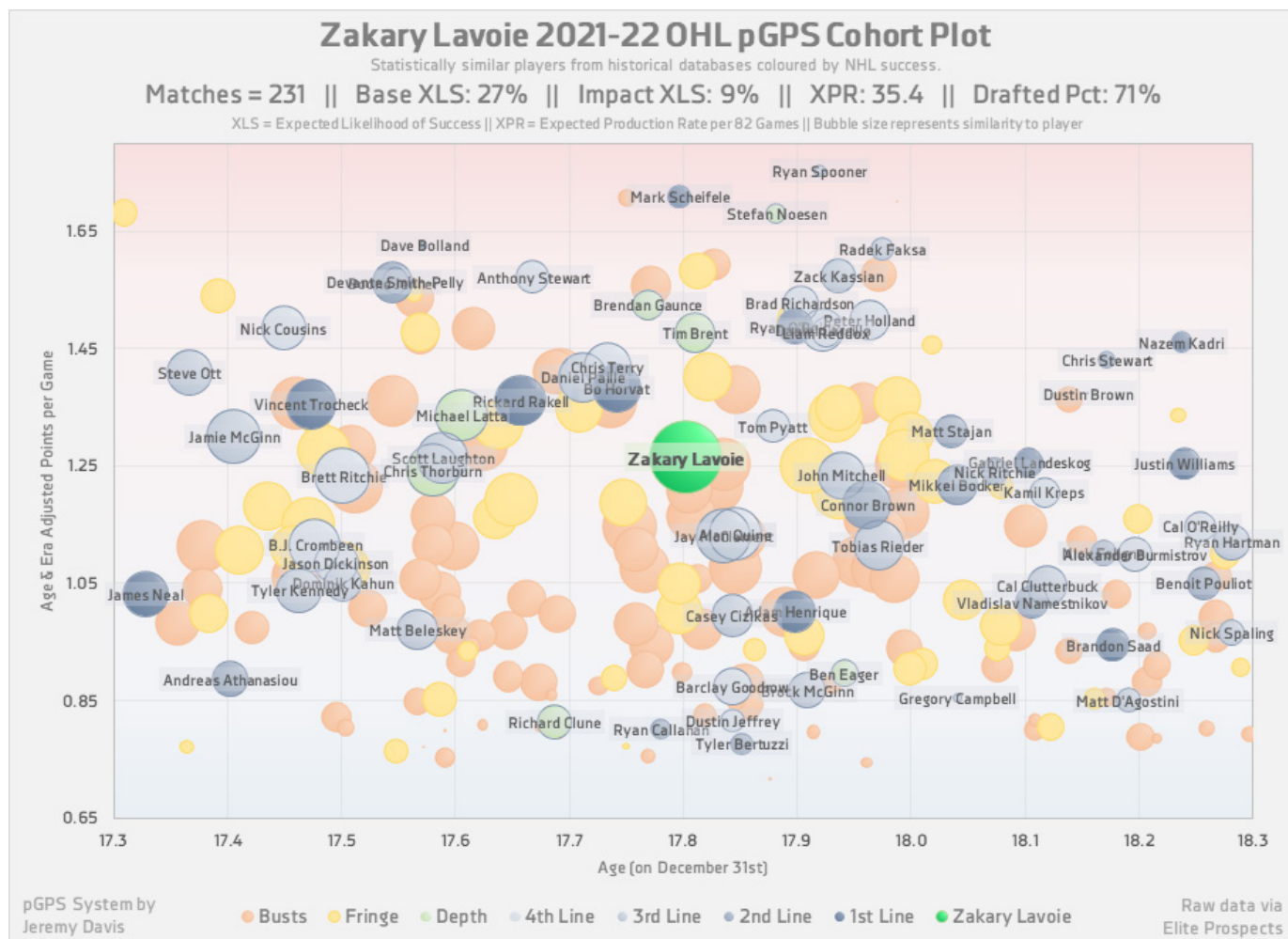
Oshawa Generals vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Lavoie's clearly has skill, visible in his puck control, passing skill, and the ideas driving his decisions. He's comfortable on the backhand, has the skill to connect with teammates, and some ability to fire get inside and fire off scoring chances. Active defensively, especially in pursuit. He continually disrupted the breakout and grabbed a few steals in the NZ. The issue with his game is the lack of patience and scanning. He throws pucks blindly into areas where he expected teammates to be. They often aren't. And if they are, he's way off regardless. It impacts his ability to break the puck out, gain the zone, and set-up teammates. Not a draft pick, based on this game.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 28th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

For the first time this season, I thought Lavoie finally turned a corner. His recent offensive outburst seems to have been a big boost for him, because he looked like a completely different player in this one. He was confident and assertive on the ice and complemented and fed off his linemates well. He could've had a couple of goals in this game - he was stopped point-blank on a one-timer in the slot, and robbed again on the doorstep. He also made a strong drive from the boards, cutting across and through defenders to take the puck to the net. He was constantly moving in the offensive zone, an engaged defender, and making good reads. He did fan on one pass in the slot, but he picked up an assist after switching spots with Bjorgvik-Holm, firing a one-timer from the point wide that let Bjorgvik-Holm bury the rebound from down low (and it probably wasn't intentional, but it was so well-executed that it looked like a set play, at least in person). This was a really encouraging game for Lavoie, but I want to see if he can keep it up.



**Lauren Kelly:** November 13th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

It's early in the season, but I'm still struggling to understand Lavoie's game. He makes an effort to be involved, but he would bobble easy passes or whiff on shots in tight. With that being said, he still had four shots on goal according to the scoresheet (which seems high, honestly). Lavoie is engaged in battles but sort of useless in them - he uses his body to pin players to the boards, but relies on a teammate to dig the puck out and makes no effort to use his stick whatsoever. He was way too casual on a defensive zone entry on Kingston's second goal. He picked up a primary assist on Mississauga's fourth goal, but it was more a result of him accidentally touching the puck before Owen Beck scored. He had one rush up the ice with the puck but was separated from it after he was pushed to the boards. There's a lack of awareness and issues reading the play at both ends of the ice for him right now. It might take him a lot longer to adjust to the OHL than originally thought.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Lavoie's a pretty confounding player, and I'm not convinced it's entirely because the OHL didn't play last season. He occupies the right areas, but doesn't seem to have a greater understanding of how to get open or become an option. Give him a bit of space, and he'll change pace and hit a team-

mate or speed up before firing. Take it away, and he rushes decisions, fails to spot options, and misses teammates. His understanding of puck protection, forechecking, and defence aren't exactly OHL-calibre right now, even if he makes things work through effort sometimes. I think he has draftable skill, but it's dependent on the rest of his game catching up to his peers.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 3rd, 2021

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Of Mississauga's draft eligibles, I thought Lavoie's flashes were the most exciting, but he had the worst performance. He beat a defender with an in-motion deke on their heels, got the inside, and set up a teammate with a cross-slot pass. Might've grabbed an assist had his teammate fired immediately. Turned forechecking into offence, but his lack of awareness really hurts. He doesn't scan first. Instead, he assumed that he has a teammate in the slot. One of his misses was a pass to no one, but another one could've been a chance had he pre-scanned. Involved defensively, mostly through effort rather than reads. It's not an issue at this stage. He's just so inefficient. A fringe draft pick at this stage, but this the early stages of his OHL career.

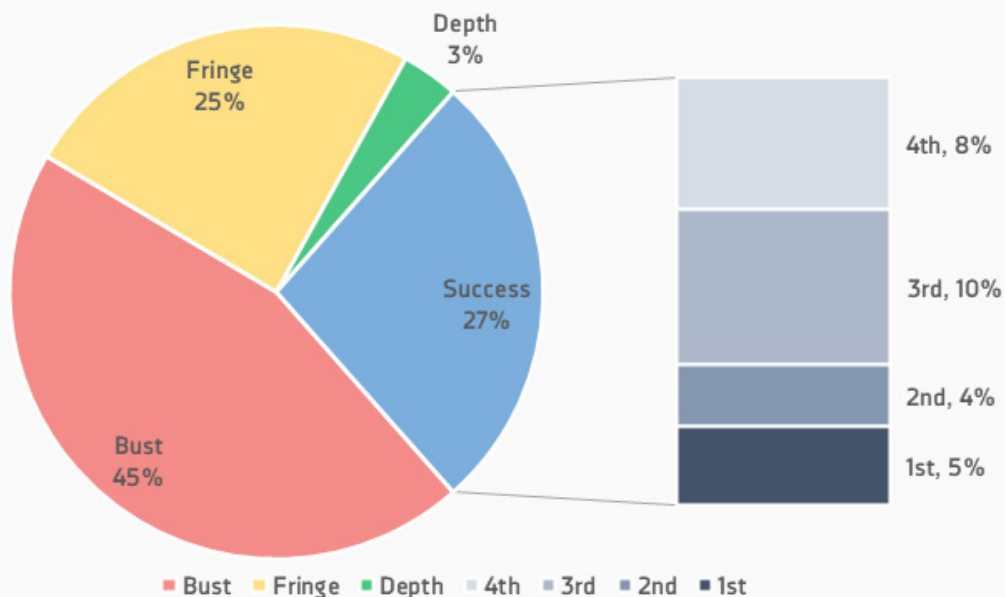
**Lauren Kelly:** October 29th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

This was a better, all-around effort from Lavoie than the

### Zakary Lavoie 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.





previous game, but it exposed some other concerns I hadn't had previously, the biggest of which is his decision-making when he has the puck. Lavoie got a couple of opportunities on odd-man rushes, but neither led to an actual scoring chance and on one instance he one-timed the puck up into the netting. He had a breakaway attempt in this game that was turned aside easily and I never really felt like he was a threat any time he had the puck. He was much more active in this game, drawing a penalty and laying some hits, but there were also missed assignments in his own end that led to scoring chances for Barrie. I'm still not sure what to make of Lavoie. I just think it looks like he's still adjusting to pace of play and better defensive structures from opponents, and it's a matter of exactly how long it'll take for him to start making more of a positive impact.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 24th, 2021

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Lavoie's rough game started when he took a hooking penalty early in the game. He had issues handling passes from teammates all game long and was quickly demoted off the top line. Lavoie would come back to support his defensemen but didn't do much else to help - he stayed along the perimeters and would only engage in battles when he felt like he had a good chance to win them. He's a decent skater with good edges and acceleration, and he keeps up with the pace of play well, but he wasn't really contributing much at either end of the ice.



**"Increased scanning and better rush patterns will help Lavoie create a better stat-line in the OHL while improving his NHL odds. His shooting and forechecking could make him a capable fourth-liner, and any playmaking and transition improvement will only increase his upside."**

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108  
Rank

5.5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

4.5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

4  
Physical

# ALEKSANTERI KASKIMÄKI

C | HIFK

HEIGHT 6'0"  
WEIGHT 183

D.O.B. FEB. 6, 2004  
SHOOTS LEFT

66%	45%	30%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s.	31	19	21	40
Liiga	4	1	1	2
WJC-18	6	1	3	4

## Scouting Report

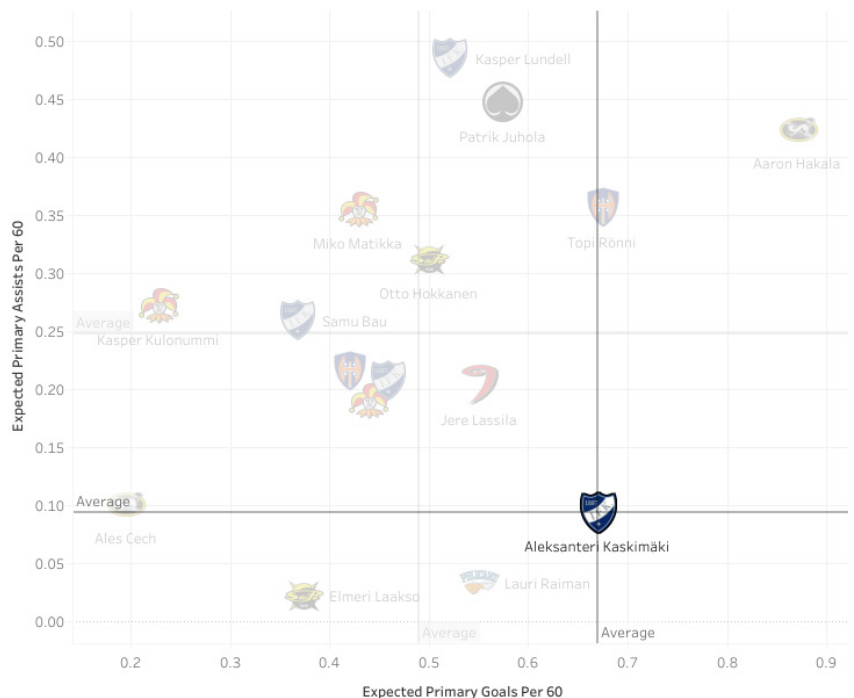
There was a point this season where Aleksanteri Kaskimäki looked like a can't-miss prospect in the middle of this year's draft. He led the U20 SM-Sarja in goals and points for a not-insignificant amount of time, and even held his own in a four-game stretch with HIFK at the Liiga level.

As the season wore on, though, Kaskimäki's production waned, and he capped things off with an okay-at-best showing for Finland at the 2022 U18 World Hockey Championships. And ultimately, we couldn't find any room for him on the tail-end of our final draft ranking.

"A winger with above-average skating and shooting skills, Kaskimäki can be a threat off the rush, shooting from between the defender's legs or beating them 1-on-1 with combination of pace and hands," Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen wrote in his year-end report on Kaskimäki. "He does need or at least hugely benefits from playing with someone who can set him up, though. Not a high-end passer himself or a big physical presence. Enough intriguing tools to be at the end of our board, but not someone that has to be there either."

It's not that hard to imagine a scenario where Kaskimäki

U20 SM-sarja 2021-2022: Expected Primary Points (5v5 only)



develops into a bottom-six, shoot-first winger who provides some secondary or tertiary offence at the NHL level, but a future where he's a significant driver for his line likely isn't in the cards. There may not have been room for Kaskimäki on the Elite Prospects board, but you'll likely see him go somewhere in the middle of this draft.

**Lassi Alanen:** April 23th - May 1st, 2022 - U18s

Kaskimäki skated the entire tournament on the top line together with Jere Lassila and Joakim Kemell (aside from the one game where Kemell was ill). Overall, I thought that he had a pretty mediocre showing considering the expectations. Kaskimäki did some good work in transitions with his skating, but couldn't generate nearly as much offence compared to some of the previous international tournaments. Rush offence has been his bread and butter, but I can't say I counted many impressive moments from him in that regard. He started the tournament on the half wall on top PP, but lost that spot to Lassila as the tournament progressed. I don't know if he has enough skill to become a middle-six winger. Ceiling is likely a bottom-six winger who can bring some offence in the form of shooting, but lacks as an individual creator.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 19th, 2022

HIFK vs. Lukko - U20 SM-sarja

Kaskimäki was playing in all situations for HIFK, at 5-on-5 and both special teams. He had one highlight reel shift where he deked around the defenceman off the rush with a toe drag but his eventual shot only hit the post, leaving him without points. That's where Kaskimäki is at his best: rushing through the NZ with a speed advantage, trying to shoot off the defender's legs or beat him one-on-one with his hands. Kaskimäki is a pretty good shooter with very competent curl-and-drag release in his arsenal. At times, he does hold on to the puck too long and misses passing opportunities. In my most recent viewings, I've liked how he has pushed towards inside more regularly. Made some solid defensive plays, mostly due to his skating.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 30th, 2021

HIFK vs. Sport - Liiga

Kaskimäki received just under 12 minutes of ice time, being back on HIFK's Liiga roster. I think he's shown that he can play at this level, though he probably should stick at the U20 level for the majority of the remainder of the season. He's not quite able to use his strengths quite yet, at least offensively. He's not been much of an off-puck guy in my viewings, preferring to create off the rush with the puck, which is usually the fastest way to see success in Liiga. He can make the quick pass in transition most of the time, apply pressure on the forecheck with his skating and play at least somewhat competent in the DZ as a winger. He did also draw a tripping penalty after a solid off-puck movement to create a passing lane and enough space to force the opponent's hand. Obviously lacks strength to compete in corners with men, although he admirably tried and even tried to leverage body

positioning, driving past the opponent's hips to gain leverage but couldn't quite make it work.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 10th, 2021

HIFK vs. HPK - U20 SM-sarja

Kaskimäki was back playing in the U20 league after a couple of outings in Liiga. He was held pointless and didn't have a very dominant effort, but strung together a few nice sequences here and there. Kaskimäki's small area passing seems like a strength. He made some nice feeds off the rush, delaying and drawing in pressure before slipping a pass towards the middle. Once he opted for a spin pass along the board and it was successful. On the power play, Kaskimäki put together some nice passing sequences and tried to run the PP with a lot of pace, even if the execution was a bit sloppy at times. I'd still say that he's a shooting-focused player who frequently tries to get to the middle. He's probably a pick in the first three rounds.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 4th, 2021

HIFK vs. Lukko - Liiga

Kaskimäki made his debut with HIFK's Liiga team with one of their top forwards serving a suspension. He only played a handful of shifts, but managed to score his first career Liiga goal with the puck deflecting from him in the net-front. Kaskimäki's explosiveness and quickness seemed like plus-level tools and looked good even at this level. He could bend from his ankles a bit more, but the depth is already good and he's clearly a good athlete. Hard to say much else based on the limited ice time.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 12th, 2021

U18 Five Nations, Switzerland

Kaskimäki skated on the top line for Finland at the U18 Five Nations for the entire tournament and also played right half wall on the top power play unit. He added three goals and four points in four games, being one of the top producers on the team. Kaskimäki didn't necessarily have a dominant showing, but he flashed those skills that have made his draft stock blow up quite a bit this season. He's a good skater with solid explosiveness and technique, clearly above-average in all those areas for this level of play. He's pretty skilled off the rush, scoring a couple of really nice goals by beating defenders one-on-one with his hands before beating the goalie with a wrister from mid-distance. The shot is another big strength. He's able to pick corners effortlessly and has above-average shooting mechanics, too. I'm not sure how good of a playmaker he is, though, with most of his offence coming from solo rushes or OZ sequences.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 5th, 2021

KalPa vs. HIFK - U20 SM-sarja

Kaskimäki was one of the more dangerous forwards on the ice in this one despite not recording any points. He had very good success in transition, carrying the puck through the neutral zone with very high success rate. He loves to curl up in his own end and gather speed from even near the goal line and then use the speed advantage to beat the neutral zone defence. Also showing some solid edgework while protecting the puck. Kaskimäki's not a particularly deceptive playmaker, but he recognizes passing lanes well and executes on most of them. I'd say he's primarily a finisher, though, having multiple good scoring chances at 5-on-5 in this one. His off-puck positioning was decent, even though he could add even more danger by improving in this area. Promising development over the past year.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 16th, 2021

HIFK vs. Kärpät - U20 SM-sarja

Kaskimäki didn't record any points in this one, even while his linemate scored four goals. That was quite an anomaly, because Kaskimäki's start to the season has been red-hot, with 12 goals and 20 points in just 12 games. It was a pretty average performance contrasting to that fact. Kaskimäki's skating is an asset at this level. His stride form is solid, with good depth and ankle flexion, though the latter could be more consistent. His first steps are rather explosive and his top speed is good, too. Projects at least as an average, likely above-average skater with our methodology. How he uses that skating was an issue at times. He was failing on some outside lane drives on exits and entries and he often entered a glide when he crossed the blue line with the puck. There was one really good sequence in the third period where he won a DZ battle in the slot, started a 3v2 attack by passing to the wing and followed with an inside rush towards the

net, receiving a pass in the slot but whiffing a bit on the one-touch shot. Active on the forecheck, but wasn't engaging enough properly, which is why he wasn't breaking up plays or stealing pucks. Didn't get a good view of his playmaking or shooting. He played a lot on both special teams, alternating between half wall and net-front on PP.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 14th, 2020

SaiPa vs. HIFK - U20 SM-sarja

Kaskimäki was skating on the right wing in this one, logging a decent amount of ice time and getting minutes on the power play where he played the bumper position. Kaskimäki shows intriguing skill in flashes. He has good hands, being able to attack defenders one-on-one with his speed and skill. His skating form seems solid enough and his acceleration and top speed hold up well at this level. He's not a consistent threat in the offensive zone, but gets himself open at times and managed to score a goal from the net-front from a rebound chance. He seems like more of a shooter than a playmaker, but tried some creativish passes in the OZ, too. Despite the lack of production, he's someone to keep an eye on.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 12th, 2020

HIFK vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

Kaskimäki was playing center, getting around 12 minutes of ice time in this one as one of the youngest players on the ice. His skating looked like it belonged to this level. He had good ankle flexion during his acceleration combined with high stride frequency, which made his first steps rather explosive. He was getting ice time on the power play, too, playing on the left flank but not getting many puck touches. Kaskimäki had some flashes with the puck in transition, beating defenders wide and cutting in on one shot attempt. The lack of physical strength was very apparent in the corners where he was stiff-armed and lost his balance quite easily.



109  
Rank

4.5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

4.5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# RIEGER LORENZ

C | OKOTOKS OILERS

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. MAR. 30, 2004  
WEIGHT 194 SHOOTS RIGHT

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
AJHL	60	38	47	85
WJC-18	4	0	4	4

> Committed to Univ. of Denver

## Scouting Report

Rieger Lorenz finished fifth in scoring in the AJHL this season, behind four players from the Brooks Bandits. Contrary to those four players, though, Lorenz didn't have a star supporting cast to count on, making his production even more impressive.

We came to appreciate Lorenz's game this season not because of its highlight-reel moments, but because of its details: his ability to win pucks back, to protect them with his frame and well-timed escape moves, to attack pockets of space as they appeared, and to link plays in transition to get his team from the defensive zone to the offensive zone.

"Lorenz is way ahead of the AJHL (and most WHLers)

when it comes to inverting pressure," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown wrote on October 2nd, 2021. "With a player tightly gapped in front of him, he delays, cutbacks, or spins, waits for the player to commit, and then peels off with the defender now on his back."

Lorenz's passing ability, engagement in the game, and understanding of the off-puck play should earn him minutes at the University of Denver next season. To become an NHL regular, however, his technical ability will have to improve significantly. His high-stance skating, imprecise shooting footwork, and bottom-hand dominant handling will limit his ability to create plays in the top league if they aren't corrected.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 12th, 2022

Okotoks Oilers vs. Brook Bandits - AJHL

The technical ability is not up to an NHL caliber in Lorenz. It could get there, but I doubt the skills ever pop that much in his game. He's interesting because of his physical game and his ideas, his ability to use space with and without the puck, and the occasional flash of playmaking, like the assist he got by sliding the puck under a stick with one-hand and backhanding it to a teammate across the ice for a shot. Lorenz can link plays all over the ice. He could feature on our board, but maybe in the latter part. Not a huge believer at this stage. The good news is that he will go the college

route and will have time to develop.

**David St-Louis:** March 29th, 2022

Okotoks Oilers vs. Drumheller Dragons - AJHL

The high-stance skating is a hurdle he will have to overcome. The lack of depth affects every other mechanic, from shooting to crossovers. The handling also looks a bit choppy. I liked his passing game, the way he used teammates, sent the puck into space for them, and anticipated their drives. The rush patterns, the crisscrossing movements also helped create zone entries for his team. The shot setups were pretty ineffective, but I liked the overall effort and physicality.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 8th, 2022

Okotoks Oilers vs. Blackfalds Bulldogs - AJHL

Lorenz tries all these crazy dekes and only one of them worked. It was a cool backhand chip inside crossovers, but the play selection is bad. With that said, he clearly has better plays in his arsenal. In one sequence, he combined the board play (scan, keep pressure on back, pass for the escape) with a give-and-go to get a chance – one of the better sequences I've seen this season. The shot looks better than earlier in the season. He transfers his weight over one leg now. The release is faster. He still takes bad shots; he's not a manipulative or even creative playmaker. Missed an open net because he didn't set his feet first. Pass receptions continue to give him trouble. The off-puck offence and board play are the NHL elements. It's a great combination. The skating and handling will have to improve, but he'd be a fine late-second or early-third.

**Cam Robinson:** February 21st, 2022

Okotoks Oilers vs Calgary Canucks - AJHL

A blowout game for the Oilers and Lorenz was a big part of it. It seemed like half his shifts were on the man-advantage. He was active in transition and used his length to break up plays and get in on the forecheck well. He scored a nice looking goal with a wide stance, cutting to the middle and finishing through the 7-hole. He seems to favour the 'stop skating, spread legs wide and shoot' technique a little too much though. Attempted a few outside-inside dekes and one or two worked. Made a nice transitional play with a fake, deke and inside cut at the line before changing gears and hitting a cross seam pass. He handles pressure and contact well with the puck, but was prone to overextending his reach or simply dumping the puck into undesirable offensive locations. The skating is ok, a little upright and tended to stay out a little long and coast a lot in this one. Didn't look like a top prospect in this one, but could be an interesting project type of pick in the 50-90 range.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 11th, 2021

Blackfalds Bulldogs vs. Okotoks Oilers - AJHL

Lorenz is a volume shooter with a troublesome shot. He widens his stance, drops his knees inwards, and locks his elbow to his side. His shot lacks control and power, but more importantly for this level, his release speed suffers. Leans on low-percentage shots in transition, despite having the space to cut inside, as a result. But there are some reasons for optimism. Off the pass, he gets his weight over his outside leg and the shooting motion in his upper body originates from his hands. And he's a capable off-puck threat. In one sequence, he moves further to the far post through the pass

reception, increasing the distance the goalie had to travel to make the stop. He sprints to the inside at the right times, gathering rebounds and occasionally getting a pass. Hands are rough – operating in rhythm with his feet and he relies on them too heavily in open ice. Bobbles pucks, too. Not a dynamic player. But combine the off-puck scoring with his body play, and he has third-line upside. His game should scale well, too. Perhaps an interesting late-second, early-third.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 16th, 2021

Calgary Canucks vs. Okotoks Oilers - AJHL

Underwhelming performance from Lorenz, but he still showed the inception of advanced ideas and translatable elements. He's one of the better prospects at managing pressure. With pressure coming from the front, he either fakes into open ice or turns to get them on his back (especially high in the OZ). With backpressure, he delays, invites contact, and then separates. In open-ice, he changes the point of attack, works give-and-gos, and finds pockets of space. Nothing too advanced, but he has the details for more impact. But he just wasn't productive with the puck. Lots of missed passes and poor shooting decisions. He fumbled the puck on one of his best looks of the game. Some weak offensive decisions, just throwing pucks on net without power or foresight. Skating and hands both look average projections. Didn't see anything to suggest a top prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 2nd, 2021

Okotoks Oilers vs. Whitecourt Wolverines - AJHL

Lorenz is way ahead of the AJHL (and most WHLers) when it comes to inverting pressure. With a player tightly gapped in front of him, he delays, cutbacks, or spins, waits the player to commit, and then peels off with the defender on now on his back. After that, there's a lot of diversity to his game. Shooting mechanics are stiff, but he gets inside. Even though he takes the odd low-percentage shot, he still sets up teammates. Look off, hook, and slip pass use. Off-puck movement in the OZ, sometimes timed with the play around but consistently sealing off back pressure. Relatively high pace of attack, very good at altering it. Engaged forechecker and in DZ coverage -- scanning for threats and guiding puck carriers into support. Hands are roughly average by touch, losing control semi-regularly and struggling to combine handling and movement together. Upper-lower dependency, but he's quite creative in his handling ideas. I think it improves. Didn't seem particularly quick, but his stride's most acceptable: knees pushed over toes, some hip flexion, finishes many strides, but some problematic out-toeing on recoveries. Definitely looked the part of an NHL draft pick, perhaps a late-second.



110  
Rank

4  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

4  
Puckhandling

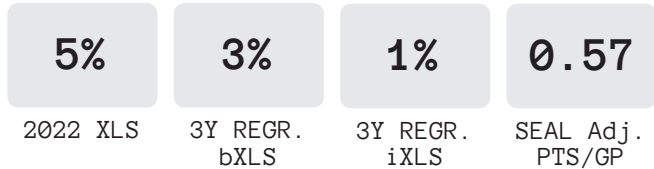
5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# MAREK ALSCHER

D | PORTLAND WINTERHAWKS

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. APR. 7, 2004  
WEIGHT 198 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	61	7	9	16

## Scouting Report

A late-season riser, Marek Alscher's impact rose as his minutes did.

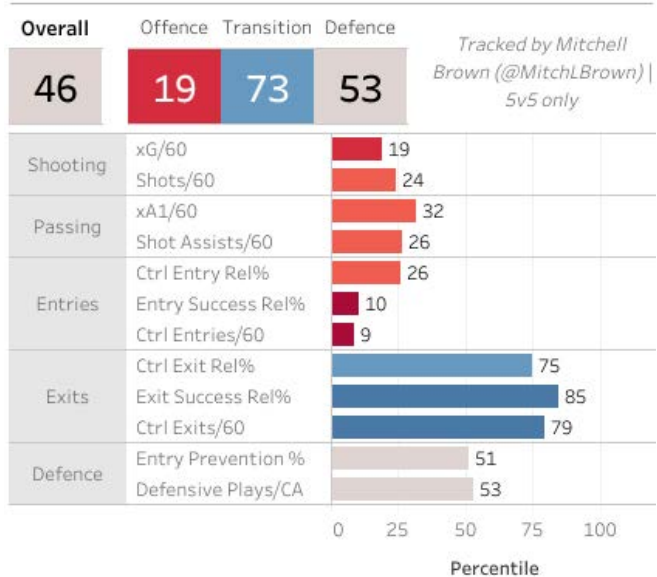
Defensively sound and robust, Alscher brings the skills one expects from a 6-foot-3 defenceman. He hits, clears the front of the net, and suffocates the opposition with a tight off-puck gap. Details like heel pushes instead of crossovers, keeping his stick on the inside, and angling attackers to the boards manage risk like a pro-level defender.

In today's NHL, defence alone usually isn't enough to become effective. Good news: Alscher's breakouts and activation could become strengths.

"While most of his activation is system reads, he also makes the odd advanced read like a give-and-go from the goal-line to the inside, beating multiple forecheckers at once," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote. "[He] cuts away from pressure and pre-scans to occasionally make quick-possession plays, including cross-ice and inside-lane passes."

Developing the manipulation and quick possession plays further are Alscher's development keys. While he's a fluid skater, capable of receiving and completing passes inside crossovers, his upright stance and lack of quickness prevents him from finding separation. His hands often fail him. As a

Games Tracked: 6 | Minutes Tracked: 105.3



result, his pace often dips too low, characterized by a slow glide while identifying options and passes aimed where his teammates were, not where they're headed.

As Alscher's point totals suggest, he's not much of an offensive player beyond stepping into space before shooting. But if his off-puck defence and breakouts continue improving, he could find his way to a No. 5 or 6 role in the NHL.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Shawn Belle YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY 95%	2 Clayton Stoner YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY 95%	3 Dan Mercer YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY 95%	4 Dylan Yeo YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY 94%	5 Nick Walters YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 94%
6 Brad Zanon YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 94%	7 Kyle Deck YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY 93%	8 Matt McCue YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY 93%	9 Marek Hrbas YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 93%	10 Brendan Mikkelson YEAR: 2005 SIMILARITY 93%

## Game Reports

**Marek Novotný:** May 11th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

The team performance wasn't ideal in this game, which had a bit of an impact on Mark Alscher's play. He showed that he is capable of getting out of difficult situations when under pressure, by finding a way in a small space to flip the puck to a teammate. Again, he showed puck protection and zone entry. His lack of aggressiveness on defense and lack of coverage of opposing players led to him being on the ice for 3 of the opponent's goals. He was also part of the PK unit, but overall it was not good from a defensive standpoint. Overall, though, I see a pick that could be good to work with.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 8th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

There are a bunch of Alschers in this draft class – big, fluid but lumbering defencemen who try plays. Most of Alscher's notable plays come in transition. While most of his activation is system reads, he also makes the odd advanced read like a give-and-go from the goal-line to the inside, beating multiple forecheckers at once. Cuts away from pressure and pre-scans to occasionally make quick-possession plays, including cross-ice and inside-lane passes. Other times, his low pace and poor play selection are more apparent. An upright stance and lack of crossover push off power mean that, despite his fluidity, he's never separating. Inside the offensive end, he uses space before shooting and plays within the system. Not creative, deceptive, or particularly adept at building plays. Skates into pressure with the skills to escape. Suffocating off-puck gap, physical, and ties up players at the right moments. Always looks for body positioning, but occasionally late to his check and lacks corrective ability. Maybe an end-of-board type. Long-term bottom-pairing projection.

**Daniel Gee:** April 27th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs Prince George Cougars

If anything, Alscher was steady more than anything in this viewing. Alscher proved to be a solid supporter against PG. In the first he shifted to help a defence partner who

was danced, protecting the inside lane. Later in the shift after a teammate turnover to the breakout he jumped into a shooting lane, blocked a shot, and Portland scored shortly after. Habits wise he keeps his legs steady, has the reach to guide, but he's so overly aggressive sometimes, going out of his way to travel long distances, poorly judging length of time to the puck carrier and potential secondary threats left after his activations. He shined in sustained defensive zone pressure and was a main penalty killer in this game. In the first he stick-lifted and roughed up a defender on a retrieval, shifting after to poke a pick way on the end boards, and finally boxing out a crashing Cougar. He seems very strong -- on one shift he just pushed away a forecheck on a retrieval. Alscher had some heroic final minute shifts to secure the sweep, all on the PK. First he clogged the lane and tipped a pass out. Then on the subsequent sequence, he blocked two one-timers off the right-hand circle, sliding into the lane on the shot releases.

Transitionally, he continued to manipulate to shake off forecheckers, but lacks that element when working towards the OZ. (other than small body or head fakes). He had a really nifty retrieval that ended with an in-motion exit on the backhand through an opened up seam. He two-touched a bunch of pucks -- processes well. Weaves on-puck; on one shift he worked in off the far boards and beamed Brennan in the mask with a shot. Overall really happy with how fast he executed plays and his willingness to join odd-man breaks off-puck. Not much here with Alscher off the blueline. Some board-to-middle movement, but he's fairly bland here skill-wise. No powerplay time in this one. Alscher seems like a D-grade for our board, but I can understand the unwillingness to rank him if you believe that the offensive package and creativity are too limited.

**Daniel Gee:** April 26th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Alscher was by far the most stable force on the Portland blue-line in this game -- especially transitionally.

The Czech-defender has some really solid habits. He

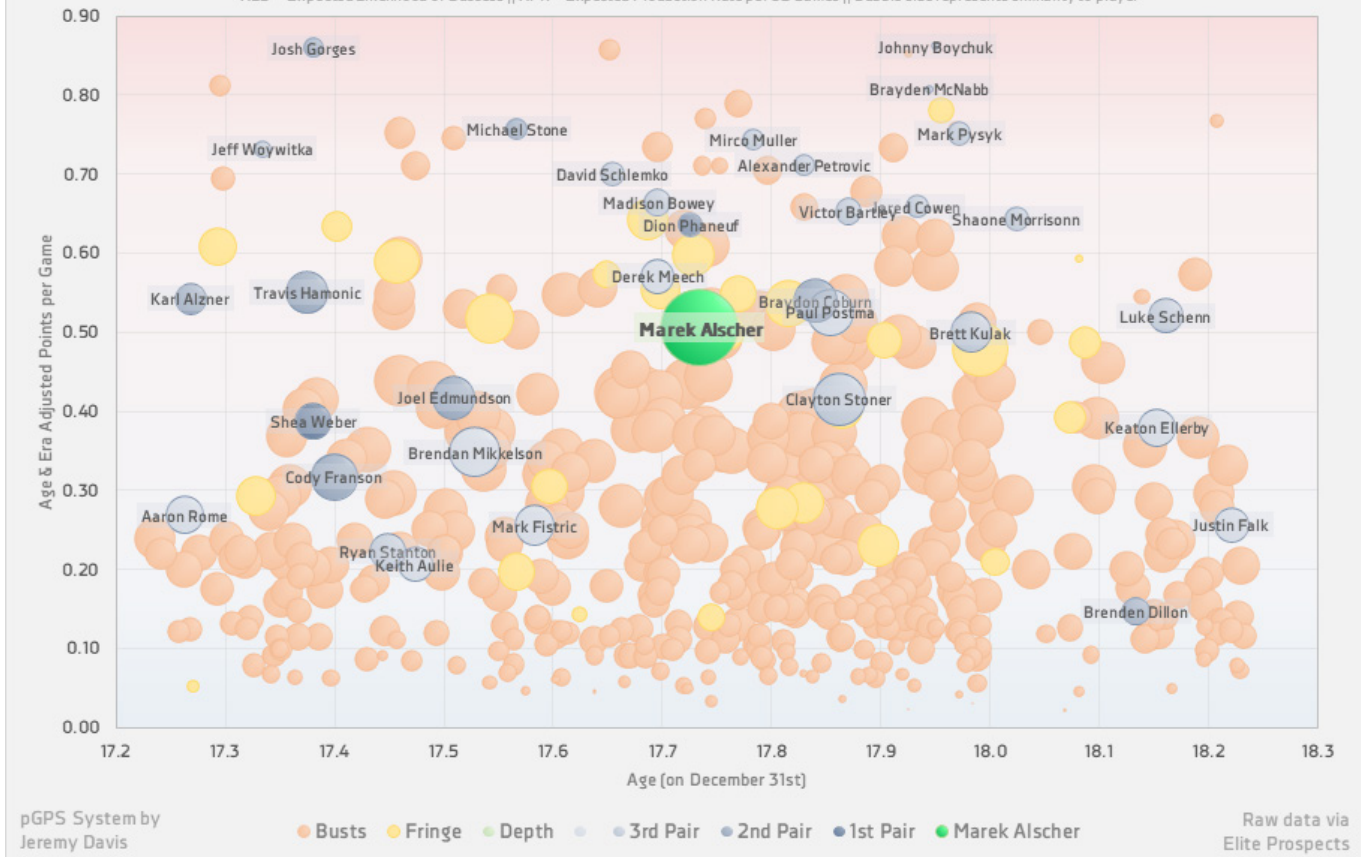


## Marek Alscher 2021-22 WHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 467 || Base XLS: 4% || Impact XLS: 2% || XPR: 21.2 || Drafted Pct: 26%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



manipulates with his feet on retrievals (scans as well), has some heel-push ability to protect the inside lane when attacking rush patterns change, and he's rather aggressive (too much so at times). His best sequence was a nullification of a Ziemmer on-puck cut into the slot -- heel push, nowhere to go, and killed play. He goes out of his way to activate high to initiate physicality -- questionable decision making at times. Alscher's gap was fairly strong all game -- even getting his stick in the release of shot attempts. Scanning helps him be proactive during sustained pressure -- on one second period penalty kill, he was able to hop into a shooting lane and create a turnover with the block.

Transitionally, he can really stretch the puck out; had a wonderful three-line pass in motion in the third. Showed some one-touch ability as well. In the first half of this game he was an incredibly aggressive activator transitionally -- constantly joining the rush. On one play he was wide open weakside but didn't get the pass. Processing seems to be strong; he read a play knowing that Nguyen was cutting-back into pressure, pinching to provide support -- so proactive there. He had a couple scoring chances in this game as well. In the second, he blasted two one-timers from the point -- one hitting O'Brien. Mechanics seem strong (arms in front of body and getting his frame through the shot).

Stuck up for a teammate after a boarding call -- fought Ziemmer. Looks like a D-grade prospect; gets limited offensive zone starts and no power play time.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

The best game I've seen from Alscher in terms of pace and movement. He's still lumbering, but he moved through passes and pass receptions with shockingly fluid crossovers and even used a double cut escape on a retrieval. Tight off-puck gap to eliminate passing options. Sound on-puck defender who doesn't commit his weight too early. Pro-level attackers will exploit his mobility but he manages risk effectively. Activation game is all system reads; he knows when to sprint and when not. He's not creative in these positions but fills his route and backs off defenders. With the puck, he similarly lacks creativity and foresight, but minimizes turnovers by playing more of a short-range game. Don't see a ton of upside here. Maybe an end-of-board type.

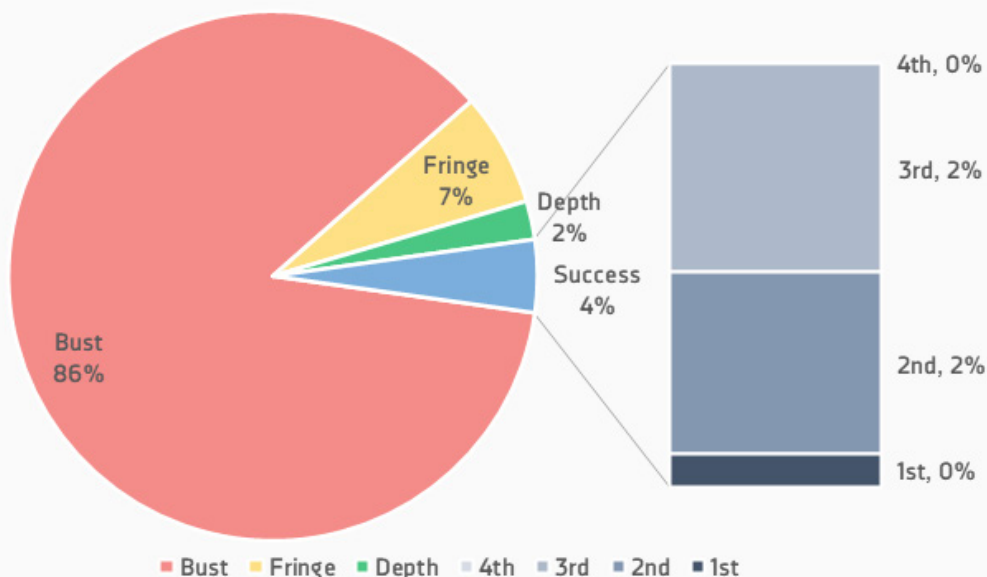
**Marek Novotný:** April 26th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Alscher had a good game. He showed that frame is his

## Marek Alscher 2021-22 WHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



strength, especially defensively. He was able to outwork his opponent in 1-on-1 battles and his active stick was able to get the puck through his pokechecking. He led the rush and skated deep in the offensive zone. This is a two-way defenceman who is very good at zone exits and zone entries. His puck protection also helps him a lot, so he is able to carry the puck up the ice.

The passing game was strong. At one time he looked like he was hurt when he collided with an opponent knee on knee, but in the end he was fine. Alscher wasn't afraid to block shots and dropped the gloves at the end of the game. He could have been more aggressive in the defensive zone and a sharper edge would have helped that. There's room for him to be an interesting pick. If he works on the physical aspect, the team that picks him could have a solid bottom-pair defenceman.

**Cam Robinson:** April 9th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Where did this kid come from? The 6'3 defender was all over the ice in this game. Activating up ice to join or lead the rush, manipulating at the line, jumping down the wall, hanging onto the puck below the goal line, making a shift and cut out and getting a shot on net. He went down on one knee to block a point shot, stood up and sent a gorgeous 100+ foot breakaway dish for an A1. Later, he walked in from the point, accepted the cross ice dish and burned it top corner on the far side. He was shifting puck position to get off shots, coming back and cleaning up rush chances against. I counted 5 shots on goal and at least a dozen clean takeaways.

This was a legitimate performance from a kid that is way off of the radar right now.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 20th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

For such a lumbering skater, Alscher has some defensive skating ability. He angles, doesn't crossover needlessly, and doesn't reach. Rocks back and forth on his inside edges. Too upright, but mostly solid stuff. Without the puck, he's always looking to make contact, whether that's by setting a pick or ramming a player into the boards. It doesn't translate with the puck. He's not aware of threats coming from behind. He straightens his legs when getting possession. Reaches and stops moving his feet. The hands are rough, and every time he goes to cutback or turn, he fumbles or leaves the puck behind him. There's the odd good idea: use the middle, activate and pass cross-ice, or making a cross-lane play through a defender. But his skills limit the execution. He's basically a more defensively-sound, but even more mechanically limited Rodwin Dionicio. There's upside, but it takes some imagination.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Alscher stumbled on retrievals, fought the puck, and missed opportunities to join the play. Missed high-value, easy-to-hit passing options in favour of simpler plays. Closed space at the blue line, killing a couple of plays. Physical game could be a projectable element with improved skating. He looks to establish body positioning (although times it poorly), tries

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# "As Alscher's point totals suggest, he's not much of an offensive player beyond stepping into space before shooting. But if his off-puck defence and breakouts continue improving, he could find his way to a No. 5 or 6 role in the NHL."

to get low, and slams players into the boards. Lack of depth prevents him from popping out his cutbacks and escaping. Handles the puck in front of his body in a glide – no in-motion or other notable skills. Didn't see anything that suggested a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

Alscher's slow. Slow to react. Slow to make plays. And physically slow. He's second on many pucks. He can't find any separation, even with his in-motion pass receptions and a high crossover use. Very limited ankle flexion. Barely gets one foot in front of the other in his crossovers. Can't consistently makes plays under pressure. Defence has moments of projectability but his skating's easily exposed by even straight-line attacks. There are cool passes sometimes. It's rare that skating alones make an open-and-shut projection, but this feels like one of those times.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

Alscher has some interesting ideas, although they're a product of the structure he plays in. He's not manipulating or problem-solving. He just runs the scripts. Sometimes, the script is a pass to the middle. But since he lacks foresight, he passes to a teammate on the train tracks. There are moments of generic activation – standing at the top of the circle, skating up the ice when his team has the puck – but there's nothing more to it. And he's slow. So slow. He's barely moving out there, even though he takes pucks in motion and tries more advanced skating techniques. Not sure how he makes the NHL.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 1st, 2022

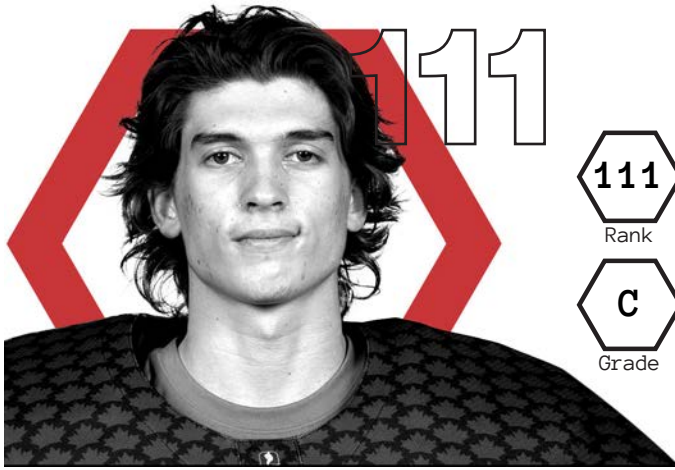
Portland Winterhawks vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

This guy's moving in slow motion out there. He actually has a shocking amount of skating skills and abilities, but everything happens at half speed. Doesn't matter what he does to deceive to manipulate; he's easily pressured into poor decisions and can't separate. Consistently chooses poor routes with the puck – he even tried to cut back directly into back pressure. Tough look. The intrigue really comes from potential as a defender and the moments of passing skill. He's not quick enough to take the middle, then explode across and kill the play, or step up early to force a dump-in. Instead, he keeps constantly backwards speed and lets attackers step into his space. It's not exactly a projectable strategy. Sometimes, he makes a quick pass to the inside after getting a stop or reverses play to escape pressure. Usually, he's pressured into a negative decision, like passing to a teammate more covered than himself or flinging the puck out of the zone with options. There's some merit in picking him, but the skating has to take leaps just to get to AHL-calibre.

**Marek Novotný:** November 5th, 2021

Portland Winterhawks vs Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Alscher scored after 24 seconds from the blue line. He cleverly used the boards, skating perpendicular to them, and threw the puck against that to get around the opponent and then passed it down deep into the offensive zone. He used his range and frame and was also part of the PK and showed attempts at long-stretch passes. Unfortunately though, he did lose the puck many times. He didn't close the gaps fast enough and defensively he struggled.



111  
Rank

C  
Grade

7.5  
Skating

4.5  
Transitions

6  
Hands

6.5  
Tracking

4.5  
Post

5  
Depth

# THOMAS MILIC

G | SEATTLE THUNDERBIRDS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. APR. 14, 2003  
WEIGHT 170 CATCHES LEFT

LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
WHL	47	2.44	.912	3

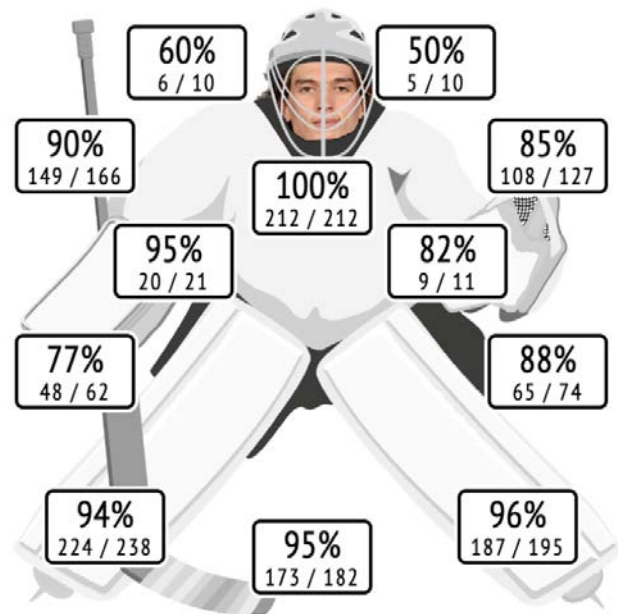
## Scouting Report

It's not often that you get to see a goaltender come back around for a second draft opportunity when they posted the kind of stellar numbers that Thomas Milic did in his first draft-eligible season – and it's even more rare that you see it happen when they kept those numbers up for yet another year after that without much of a regression.

That makes it hard to imagine a world where the 6-foot Milic gets passed by for a second straight summer, despite clocking in as one of the shorter goaltenders in his class once again (and without an international showing under his belt this year).

Milic quietly spent the 2021-22 season racking up another year full of good numbers, using some of the cleanest footwork in the draft and some of the crispest positional management to keep shooters guessing and seeking open spaces in his crease despite his size. He doesn't come out to aggressively challenge in order to take away space, but rather uses his speed and impressive footwork control to constantly keep up with where the play seems to be headed; he doesn't necessarily make the flashiest saves, but he also prevents himself from needing to recover by staying on the more conservative side with his depth overall.

He struggles a little bit with decision-making when it comes to allowing rebounds instead of holding on to pucks,



and he still struggles a bit with his recovery from down low to capture second shots or redirects – something that might have combined with his height to make scouts and front office members a bit gun-shy when it comes to picking him up with their coveted draft selections. But given how much more consistency he boasts with his technical structure and decision-making in comparison to this year's class, he's certainly made a case for giving a team a chance to show them what he can do.

**Catherine Silverman:** June 7, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Edmonton Oil Kings (WHL)

It's interesting to watch how a goaltender's game changes when they allow the first goal in a previously-tight contest, because it can do a lot to showcase how well they respond to adversity. This contest in particular was no exception; despite a final score of 4-0 in Game 3 of the WHL Final, Milic showcased beautifully how to maintain composure after first breaking the tie. His performance far outpaced the outcome; he managed to keep his team afloat until midway through the third period, when the onslaught of shots that Edmonton took in the aftermath of their first goal eventually coaxed the netminder into his first 'sloppy' goal of the game.

He anticipated changes in play structure from his opponents well, anticipating Edmonton's movements even when his own defence started to crumple in front of him, and he avoided the all-too-familiar mistake many young goaltenders make of getting too frantic in an attempt to correct any wrongdoings they may perceive after allowing the first goal of the game. On paper, it was a hard loss for Seattle – but visually, it's hard to find fault with much that Milic did. His biggest flaw seemed to be one that persists through his games; despite having a somewhat weak recovery speed when playing to stop shots on his knees, Milic persisted in allowing rebounds even when faced with somewhat heavy oppositional traffic.

EP

**"Milic quietly spent the 2021-22 season racking up another year full of good numbers, using some of the cleanest footwork in the draft and some of the crispest positional management to keep shooters guessing and seeking open spaces in his crease despite his size."**

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112  
Rank

C  
Grade

5  
Skating

5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# FRÉDÉRIC BRUNET

D | RIMOUSKI OCÉANIC

HEIGHT 6'2      D.O.B. AUG. 21, 2003  
WEIGHT 185      SHOOTS LEFT

4%	4%	2%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	63	12	34	46

## Scouting Report

Frédéric Brunet didn't quite make the cut on last year's board, but in hindsight, perhaps he should have. His game took a sizable step forward this season, as he ascended to the No. 1 defenceman's role for the Rimouski Oceanic.

It's his offensive side that has undergone the most significant change. Brunet always had a penchant for jumping into the attack, but now his activations are supported by legitimate playmaking skills.

"Brunet is getting more and more manipulative as the season goes on," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in a May 1st report. "Now he even has planning sequences, where he clearly drags a defender one way to hit another teammate, even at 5-on-5."

Brunet doesn't have the elusive skating ability and the smooth handling skills of some of the top defencemen in

this year's draft -- his tools received average grades -- but he could contribute to a professional team's offence somewhere down the line. His size and physicality coupled with his ability to engage opponents grant him shutdown potential at the next level, too.

For Brunet, the next step is improving his reads away from the puck defensively and the timing and preparation of some of his moves.

While Brunet is a re-entry, he's one of the youngest ones available. If he were born 25 days later, he would have been part of the 2022 NHL Draft to begin with. We expect him to become one of the very best QMJHL defencemen next season. He's a worthy project for a team in the later rounds of the draft.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 1st, 2022

Rimouski Oceanic vs Québec Remparts - QMJHL

A very offensive showing from Brunet. He created break-outs and entries, using his skating and also his physical skills. He can seal the puck away from opponents and move it quickly out of the zone and he's getting more and more manipulative as the season goes on. Now he even has planning sequences, where he clearly drags a defender one way to hit another teammate, even at five-on-five. Again, the skill-level

isn't high so maybe this doesn't end up working all that well in the AHL and NHL, but he has the offensive mind now. You can't really deny it. The defence is a bigger issue. He can box out opponents but it's the off-puck awareness that is problematic; he's late to areas and on his check. Reactionary. And I'm not sure about his pivots (mostly crossing his feet inside them). His risk management, multi-variable defence, also need work. A project, but one a team should be enthusiastic to take on.

**David St-Louis:** March 27th, 2022

Rimouski Oceanic vs Victoriaville Tigres - QMJHL

The clunkiness of Brunet scares me a bit. He's smoother than before, but not enough to really project him as an offensive defenceman. He doesn't have that kind of creative mind either. He takes chances and some backfires. His skating lacks ankle flexion. That hasn't improved. He does have pretty good skating habits: lateral slides to find lanes or manipulates opponents out of lane. I'll keep watching. The defence is a bit loose and reactionary but he has the tools to become a legitimate shutdown threat.

**David St-Louis:** March 24th, 2022

Victoriaville Tigres vs Rimouski Oceanic - QMJHL

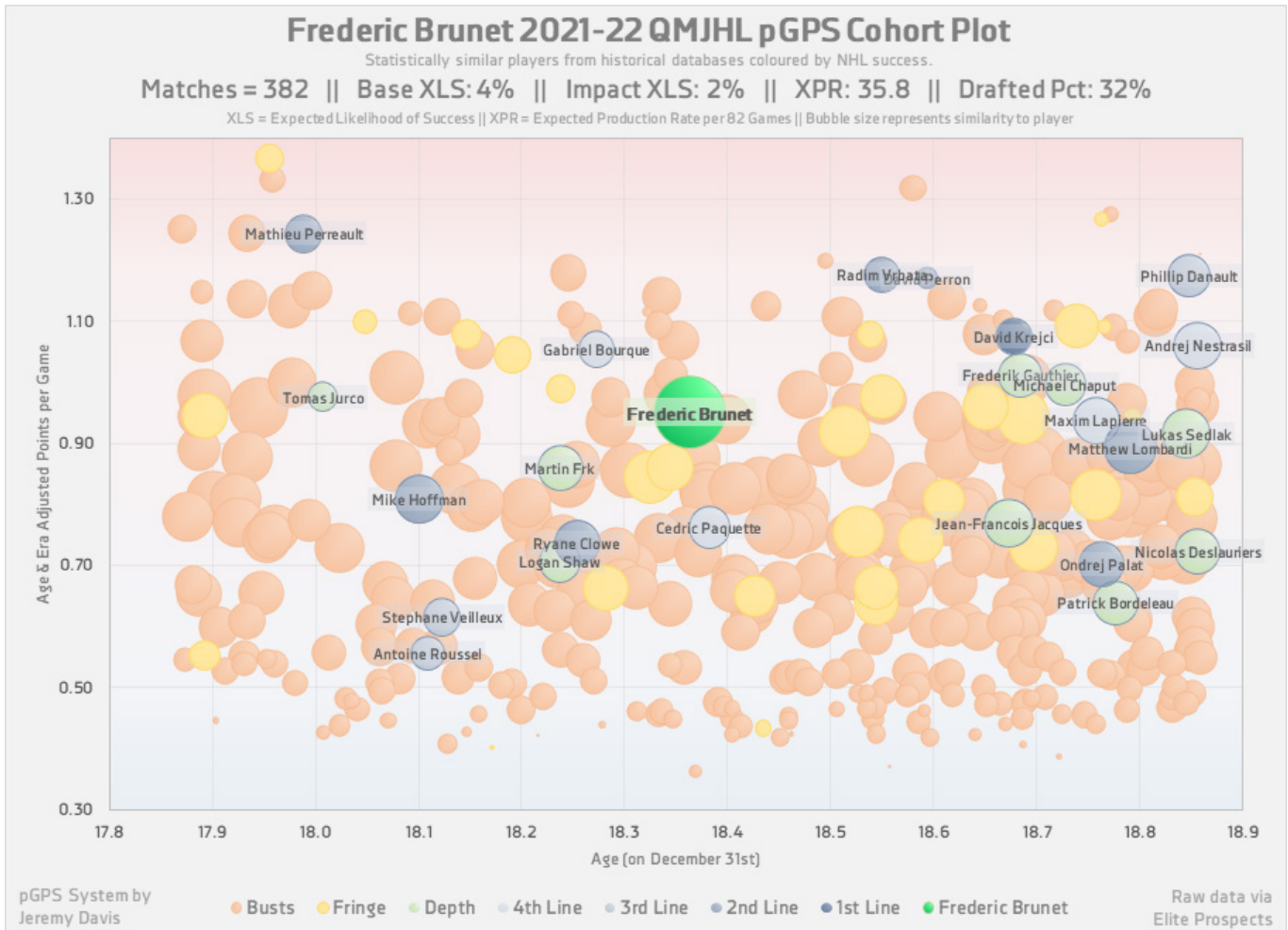
What a performance from Brunet. His offensive evolution over the season has been quite impressive. He's legitimately manipulative now. He understands how to drag opponents one way to cut back the other way and he does so with good timing. He's involved offensively, even going as low as the backwall and he shoots at the right time at the point, when there is traffic. He still lacks a bit in the skill department, a bit more agility, speed, explosiveness, and handling skills, which brings the question: Is he going to translate his new

**Closest pGPS Comparables**

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

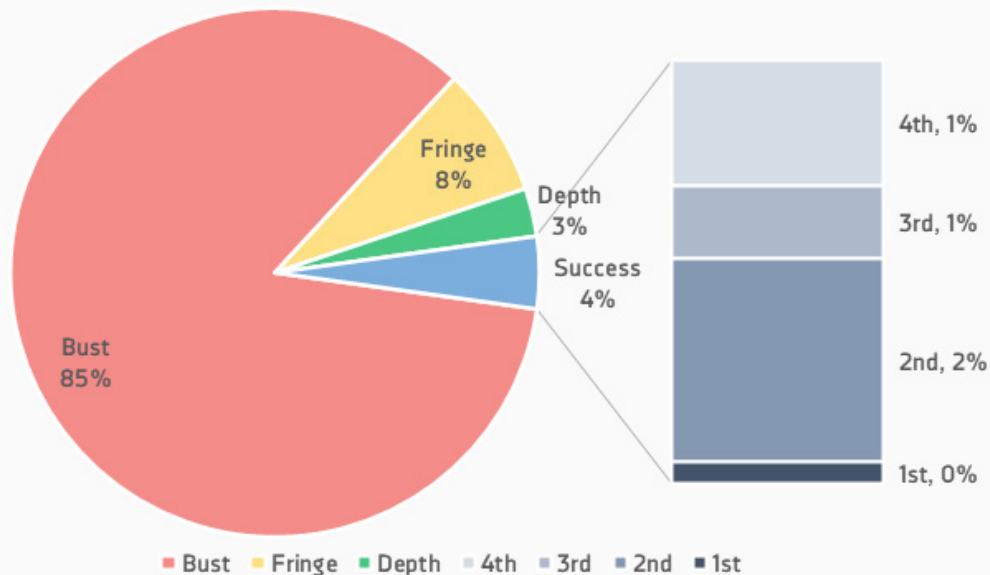
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1 Petr Preucil</b><br/>YEAR: 2001<br/>SIMILARITY 99%</p>       | <p><b>2 Pierre-Andre Bureau</b><br/>YEAR: 2003<br/>SIMILARITY 97%</p>   |
| <p><b>3 Guillaume Gauthier</b><br/>YEAR: 2014<br/>SIMILARITY 97%</p> | <p><b>4 Philippe Lacasse</b><br/>YEAR: 2000<br/>SIMILARITY 97%</p>      |
| <p><b>5 Zbynek Hrdel</b><br/>YEAR: 2004<br/>SIMILARITY 96%</p>       | <p><b>6 Denis Kamayev</b><br/>YEAR: 2013<br/>SIMILARITY 96%</p>         |
| <p><b>7 David Gilbert</b><br/>YEAR: 2009<br/>SIMILARITY 96%</p>      | <p><b>8 Patrick Delisle-Houde</b><br/>YEAR: 2010<br/>SIMILARITY 96%</p> |
| <p><b>9 Mirko Hofflin</b><br/>YEAR: 2011<br/>SIMILARITY 96%</p>      | <p><b>10 Samuel Seguin</b><br/>YEAR: 2000<br/>SIMILARITY 96%</p>        |

offence to the AHL and the NHL? But more and more I find him an interesting prospect for this draft. He's much smoother



## Frederic Brunet 2021-22 QMJHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



than before and much more in control. He still defends with the same aggressiveness, which I liked.

**David St-Louis:** February 8th, 2022

Rimouski Oceanic vs Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Not much has changed in Brunet's game. He's still a physical presence, a confident one who likes to get involved the play, who tries plays, but doesn't necessarily gauge risk and reward all that well. His defence is often a package of desperate close-outs and recoveries, but there is a path for him to become a solid, better risk assessing defenceman in the professional game. He can pin opponents to the boards and defend the net-front by boxing out early. There were shows of deception and manipulation in this game and he joined the offence at every occasion. Maybe he's a pick.

**David St-Louis:** October 1st, 2021

Drummondville V vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

Brunet scored with a rush and a wraparound. This could be the highlight goal of his Junior career. Or maybe not. He came alive in this game, relied to quarterback the powerplay and shutdown some of Québec's better elements. He showed poise in his puck-moving, pulling forecheckers to himself and banking the puck around them (he uses a lot of bank passes) and he conserved d-side positioning with controlled foot and stick work, breaking a few rushes. His offensive plays still lack fluidity, however, as he overhandles the puck and lacks manipulation skills. He tries, but sometimes can't pull off the plays he thinks about, not because of a lack of skill, but a lack of ability to move the opposition around to

materialize the plays. A player to keep an eye on.

**David St-Louis:** March 6th, 2021

Blainville Boisbriand vs Rimouski Oceanic - QMJHL

I am not convinced of Brunet's handling skills. His offensive game is mostly based around point-shots with the odd activation down zone. The defenceman showed puck protection mechanics and an ability to sprint in pockets of space to support the rush. His transition game is mostly based on off-puck speed. His skating projects as NHL average. He doesn't a lot of external hip mobility (pivots are crossover heavy or multiple movements), but the form is generally sound. He was engaged defensively, battling with opponents on the boards (pinning them and working them to separate them from the puck) and net-front to prevent them from winning inside positioning. Constant stick checks and Brunet conserves an athletic position to react quite fast to threats around the blue-paint.

**David St-Louis:** March 5th, 2021

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Rimouski Oceanic - QMJHL

Brunet is interesting due to his size, reach, and average skating ability (by that I mean projects as NHL average). He has a large defensive range due to decent agility plus his long stick. He can get into a good skating base overall and spring laterally to stop rushes. A few bad pinch decisions and a lot of glass-and-out plays on the breakouts, but when given the space and the authority to make plays at the offensive blue-line, you see some fakes and passes through opponents resurface. Not a high pick, but someone to keep an eye on.





113  
Rank

C  
Grade

4.5  
Skating

4.5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

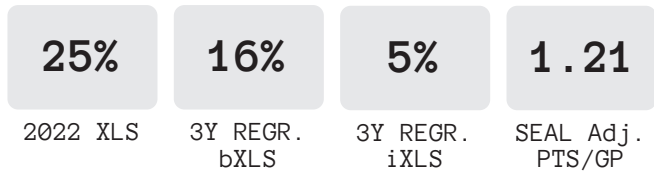
5.5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

# KOCHA DELIC

C | SUDBURY WOLVES

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. MAR. 11, 2004  
WEIGHT 183 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	65	17	29	46

## Scouting Report

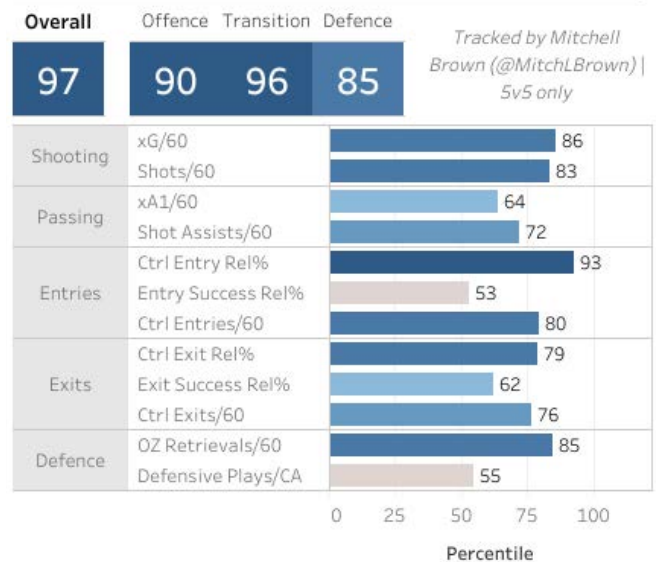
Koča Delic's numbers – 46 points in 65 games in the OHL this season – won't impress many scouts, but sometimes, a player's production doesn't tell the whole story. The winger's tracked data, his more advanced stats, actually paint him as one of the better playdrivers in the league this season. His profile even looks more favorable than David Goyette, his high-scoring, draft-eligible teammate.

"Delic was one of Sudbury's best players in this game," Elite Prospects OHL scout Lauren Kelly wrote in a March game report. "He was heavily involved in the forecheck and battles for the puck in his own end and scored both of Sudbury's goals."

What first stands out when watching Delic is his motor. The effort is constant, every shift, on the backcheck, on the forecheck, in the defensive zone, in the way he scans for opponents and teammates, and skates at full force to support plays and to win the puck back. His skating received a below-average mark from our staff. It will be a significant hurdle in his path to the NHL, but in most outings this season, his inefficient mechanics didn't matter as he compensated with a high stride rate.

His main scoring asset is his playmaking. Delic can link plays and even open them. He has manipulation skills, or abilities to imbalance defenders, their gaps, and move them out of passing lanes with feints. Those talents mostly re-

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 117.0



surface on the powerplay, where he has more time to plan his moves.

Delic will have to continue to improve both his mechanics and his creativity if he wants to earn an NHL role down the line as an undersized winger. That, and learn to not rush his plays as much. This year in the OHL was his first, however; we expect to see him blossom and develop more poise next season. While it's more likely that an European professional career awaits Delic, he could become a bottom-six, secondary scorer in the NHL with the right development.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Corey Locke YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY 96%	2 Rob Mignardi YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY 96%	3 Artur Gavrus YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 96%	4 Michael Sgarbossa YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 96%	5 John Mitchell YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY 96%
6 Michael Latta YEAR: 2009D9 SIMILARITY 96%	7 Jeffrey Doyle YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 95%	8 Scott Laughton YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 95%	9 Alan Quine YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 95%	10 Brady Vail YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 95%

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 28th, 2022

Finland vs Canada - U18s

Delic is not all that visible in those games, but if you look for him, you see him put up the same effort as in the OHL, zooming all over the ice, on the backcheck and forecheck. He made some plays in this game and "scored" by stopping at the net after a rush. Otherwise, he blocked shots and started a couple of passing plays. His awareness of his space is a bit lacking and he's not a creator, at all, on this stage.

**David St-Louis :** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

The pace of the game felt a bit quick for Delic who looked like he was rushing himself all game. I liked his constant scanning of the ice, however, especially on retrievals and the way he manipulated defensive gaps off the rush with changes of speed. He used his outside edge to slow down and let a teammate move in front of him to push the defender back and create more space to make plays.

**David St-Louis:** April 9th, 2022

Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

There is a lot to like in Delic's game, starting with his motor. He's fully invested in his every play and every shift, offensively and even defensively. His ideas are also, for the most part, great on the ice, even if the execution falters sometimes as he lacks the skating ability to separate and the high-end handling skills. He knows where teammates are and what the right play to make is. And he also has off-puck sense: timing and the right routes, especially off the rush to create space for others.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 3rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Delic is all speed, but the skating still lacks power. Lots of DZ scanning, got open and a shot off for a shorthanded chance, quarterbacked the powerplay at one point and was moved back to Goyette's top line after the first period. Good work down low on board battles and stepped up his

physical game as the physicality ramped up. Got into a couple of tussles with Steelheads players in the third period. Worked well on board battles. But while he played on both special teams (and this entire game was pretty much played on special teams), I don't know that he made much of an impact at even-strength. Mississauga basically ran Sudbury's show aside from when they were shorthanded. I think he's a mid-round pick but I generally like his decision-making when he has the puck.

**David St-Louis:** April 3rd, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

I'm coming down on Delic a bit. The skating is really limiting. Even if he can generate speed, it affects every other part of his game, especially the shooting. It's imprecise and uncoordinated for the most part. The deception is always the same and in the same situations, with a lane to the net -- fake shot into pass across. He has some wall play abilities; he moves the puck quickly. The first touches are pretty clever most of the time; they lead into the next play. He's much better than Goyette at recognizing and creating offensive advantages; the mental pace is higher. The skill limitations, the smaller size, and the lack of high-end creation potential makes me think of him more as a C prospect.

**David St-Louis:** March 25th, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Nothing impressive about this performance. Delic barely touched the puck in favourable situations and he didn't manage to create much, except earlier in the game on a couple of rushes. His defensive game was a bit loose; he missed at least one switch that could have led to a goal. Skating is still a 4.5. I still like his energy level in battles and the occasional flash of skills. His passing game is really the standout element, how fast he sees teammates, anticipates their position, and connects with them. There is some deception in his game, but we should see give-and-gos and manipulations appear more and more frequently as he matures.

**David St-Louis:** March 20th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Delic's skating is problematic. Really hunched over and incredibly wide. Yet, he tilts at the hips enough to add some explosiveness to his stride. There might be hope that he gets his mobility up to a 5, or NHL average. He players with pace, especially in his passing. Very quick ID of teammates, fast processing, and the patterns in his game are pretty interesting. He knows how to manipulate gaps off the rush by using criss-cross movements. He dictates many of his lines plays and he plays with a kind of recklessness and physical engagement is surprising for someone his size.

**David St-Louis:** March 18th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

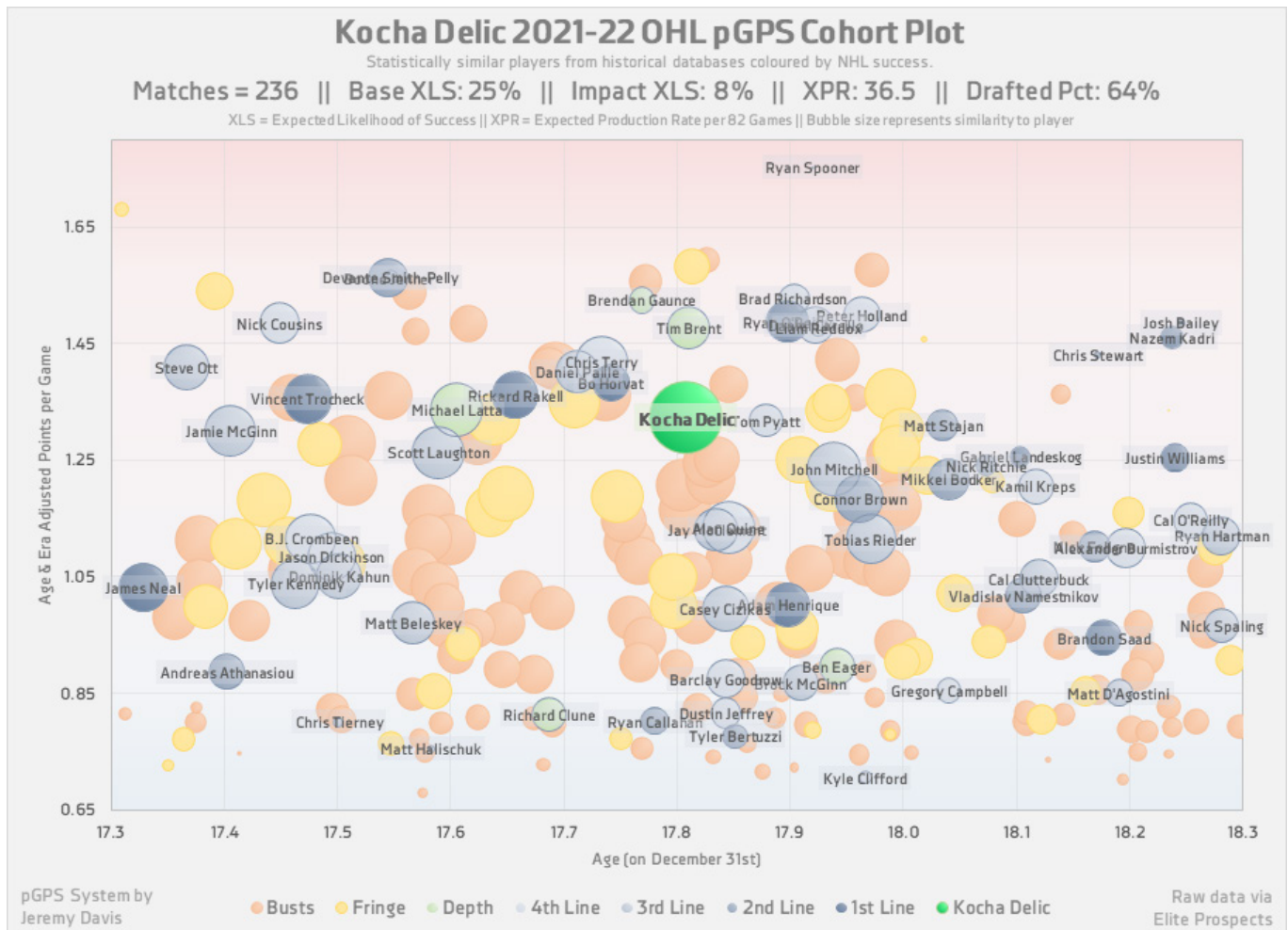
=The mechanical limitations really hurt Delic's projection. I'm not sure he manages to fix his skating all that much. He's still dynamic in certain aspects, so maybe it won't matter too much, but he's also undersized; the things he tries to do on the ice, the wall battles, the net-front drives, they don't work all that well for him now. I do appreciate the energy and

the attempts. The hockey sense is probably a 6-6.5 grades. His open ice reads and plays and manipulations are quite advanced, like cutting across to open up a defender and let a teammate (Goyette) move past that defender into space. Delic passes it to him for a clear chance. He's there defensively, generally checking the right attacker. He's interesting, but more of a project.

**Lauren Kelly:** March 9th, 2022

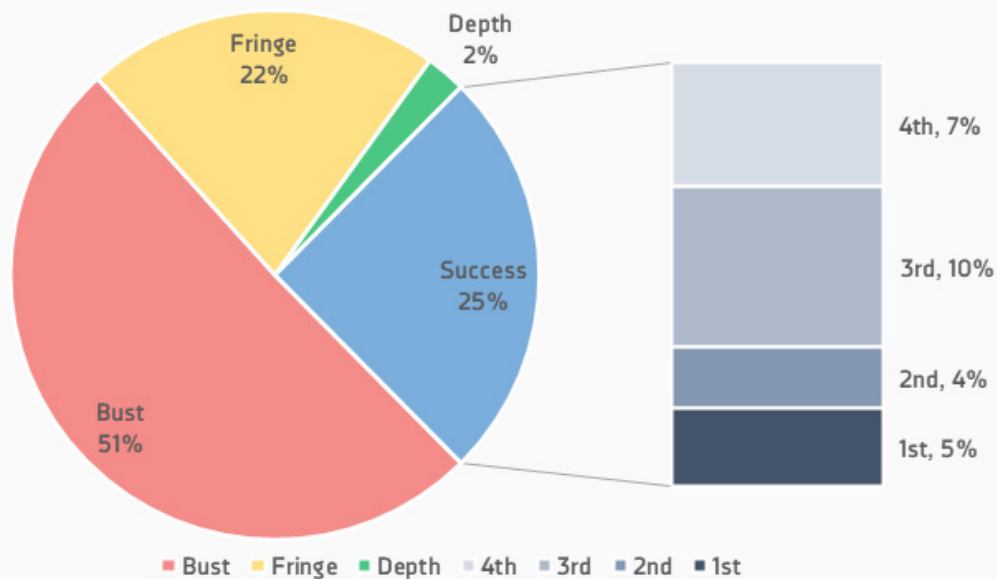
Soo Greyhounds vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Delic was one of Sudbury's best players in this game. He was heavily involved in the forecheck and battles for the puck in his own end and scored both of Sudbury's goals. The first came off a faceoff, as he corralled a loose puck before ripping it past the goalie. On the second, he read off a teammate with the puck and crept back door for a one-timer into an empty net. There was also a couple of sneaky pass deflections or tipped passes that he attempted, too. He's got good offensive instincts and with his defensive play, I think there's an argument to be made for taking him with a late second, for sure.



## Kocha Delic 2021-22 OHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



**Mitchell Brown:** March 6th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Delic was mostly a tertiary player on his all-DY line. Gains middle, then kicks puck to the outside and finishes his off-puck route – just didn't get the puck back often. One point-blank chance that deflected off the end of his stick. Lots of scanning before retrievals and pass receptions, and he usually made the right play. Play selection continues to improve: forced passes and missed opportunities aren't nearly as numerous. The pace and inside attacks are clearly NHL-calibre. He brings defensive value through pace and discipline, too. But does he have a clear offensive dimension for the NHL beyond being quick guy who moves puck quickly? Not sure. Still, he's far more intriguing than most players in this group. 70s type.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Delic showed good speed through the neutral zone rushing pucks up the ice and worked well in small areas. Lots of pass receptions in the slot or on the doorstep, but also fed the puck down low to Goyette for Sudbury's second goal. Still not exactly sure where he projects long term or where would be a fair bet to see him drafted, though I'm thinking at this point he's at least worth a pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 21st, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Delic was probably Sudbury's best draft-eligible in this game, but the consistency was lacking a bit. Showcased good passing abilities, whether it was breaking the puck out or finding teammates in the offensive zone. Worked well in tight spaces, pressured puck carriers, and kept up with play as it went back and forth several times on shifts. The problem was that on some shifts, he just wasn't noticeable. He picked up the primary assist on the 1-0 goal, but I'd say his best play of the game came off a desperation play where somehow he was the last line of defence and dove out in the crease to save a goal (no idea where the actual defenders were). I like his attention to detail and speed, but his game could use some refining so he's not overskating plays and making more of a consistent impact with each shift.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022 - Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

The most impressive draft-eligible prospect in this game by a decent margin. Delic plays too fast, I have no doubt about this. He throws away pucks in transition, unnecessarily dumps it in/out, and misses teammates with his slot passes because he's too far ahead of the play. But, he's getting closer and he continues to show NHL skill. Connected with a perfectly timed cross-slot pass between three defenders for an assist.

On a 2-on-1, he handled until the defender bit, then passed for a chance. There are look offs and one-touch passes in his game now, and most impressively, he had one pass where he faked the deke then passed to the trailer. Scored by moving away from the net for a deflection off a turnaround pass. Uses give-and-gos in all situations, including in OZP. He looked like a second-rounder in this game. On the quite the scoring tear, with 15 points in his last nine games.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 14th, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Delic was a surprise standout in a game dominated by his linemate. Showed off some slippery skating early on, with great edges. His acceleration was a bit hit or miss at times, felt like he could benefit from lengthening his stride and he's not generating a ton of power. But it didn't hold him back from being an effective player in this game. He drew a tripping penalty early, was always chasing after the puck, and showed great effort trying to get back to impede a breakaway (though acceleration issues are what prevented him from getting anywhere near to stop it). He had a great heads up pass on the 3-0 goal down to a teammate in the crease, looking for the deflection the entire way. Also had some nice tape-to-tape, crisp passes executed well. Great individual effort on Sudbury's sixth goal, rushing 200-feet and protecting the puck in the neutral zone before dangling around a defender and taking the puck to the net where the rebound was buried. A very strong offensive showing, but I'd like to see what he can do at the other end of the ice. If he keeps playing this way, a second round selection isn't out of the question.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Delic plays a bit too fast at times. He races ahead with the puck, skates straight into defenders, and then loses possession. Sometimes misses the odd opportunity to use his

teammates to achieve a better result because he's so focused on pushing the play ahead. Some skilled breakout passes off the wall to kick play to the inside, and then following up receive the puck again. He's mostly a playmaker, preferring short-range, volume playmaking into the slot over hunting the best play. That's fine, and he's a crafty skater with a few tricks (like the mohawk) to survey. Playmaking provides his primary method of getting a puck off the boards to the inside, but inconsistent timing on these passes (often passing too early for the window) limits his completion rate. Certainly has some NHL skills, but his combination of production and inefficiency hurt his case.


**Mitchell Brown:** November 14th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Another mildly interesting performance from Delic. He's a bit inefficient with the puck, often from accuracy issues, but I like the ideas driving these plays. He tries to pass through defenders, sneak pucks cross-ice, and even used his hands to manipulate a defender's stick and then pass back into the space he just created. Active on the backcheck, but seemed a bit outmatched in battles in this game. He's probably a fringe pick at this stage -- really depends on the development of accuracy, timing, and skating.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 28th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Delic looked like an NHL prospect in this game. He was effective the entire game, but at first through more simple plays. Mostly quick short-range passes to an open teammate or driving the net. But as the game wore on, he tried some more advanced stuff. Nearly connected with a spin-around backhand pass as he skated towards the point. Executed quickly, often with great timing. Created out of retrievals. Unsure about the skating or handling skill, but he showed intelligence, creativity, pace, and passing skill. 



114  
Rank

4.5  
Skating

4.5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

C  
Grade

4.5  
Puckhandling

4.5  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

# JACK DEVINE

RW | UNIV. OF DENVER

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. OCT. 2, 2003  
WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS RIGHT

21%	23%	9%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
NCAA	36	3	16	19

## Scouting Report

Jack Devine wasn't really set up for success this season. Not only did he face NCAA Division I competition for the first time, but he only got an average of twelve minutes of ice-time a game at Denver University.

While the team's high-powered offence gave him his fair share of assists, we never came to see Devine as one of the drivers of the formation this season. That more than half of his assists were of the secondary variety last season only contributes to this belief.

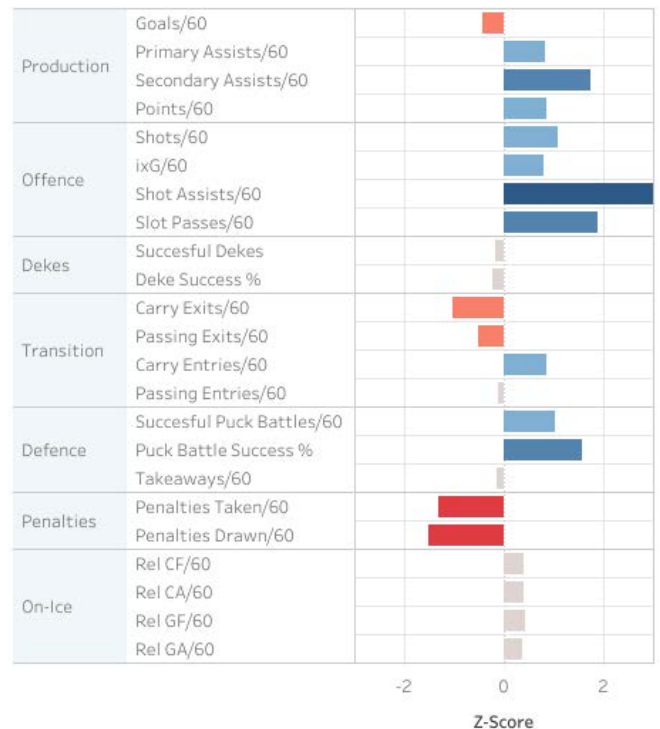
What we did appreciate was his unwavering defensive engagement, especially his constant energy in puck pursuit in all three zones. Devine's motor is one of his best qualities. The mechanical quirks in his skating don't matter too much when the forward is constantly striding at maximum capacity.

His energy also translates to offensive situations. Devine gets inside. He forces his way to the net with and without the puck. He also showed an occasional ability to link with teammates with clever passing plays.

Next year, with the departure of the program's top players like Brett Stapley and Bobby Brink, Devine should see an increase in minutes, which will help him show his skill more often. Devine is a good project to take in the latter parts of the draft.

Games Played: 24 | Average EV TOI: 10:59

Data via InStat Hockey | Viz by Lassi Alanen (@lassialanen) | EV only



## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Ben Walter YEAR: 2003 SIMILARITY 93%	2 Bryan Rust YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 93%	3 Teodors Blugers YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 93%	4 Cody Bradley YEAR: 2013 SIMILARITY 92%	5 Chris McCarthy YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 92%
6 John Sabo YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 91%	7 Justin Maiser YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY 91%	8 Michael Mersch YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 90%	9 Zach Budish YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 90%	10 Corey Tropp YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY 90%

**J.D. Burke:** April 9th, 2022

Minnesota State vs. Denver - NCAA Championship Final

Didn't really see anything special from Devine in this contest, though Minnesota State tends to have that effect on skill players. Speaking of skill, I'm not sure if Devine really brings a high-end element to the table offensively, but there are some interesting qualities in his game nonetheless. Has some touch as a handler, but his high stance coupled with a puck-out-front handling base leaves him vulnerable to lost possessions. Has vision as a distributor but I'm not sure I really saw much in the way of manipulation to open up lanes or anything - he's definitely not much of a planner with the puck on his stick. I really admired his defensive work rate in

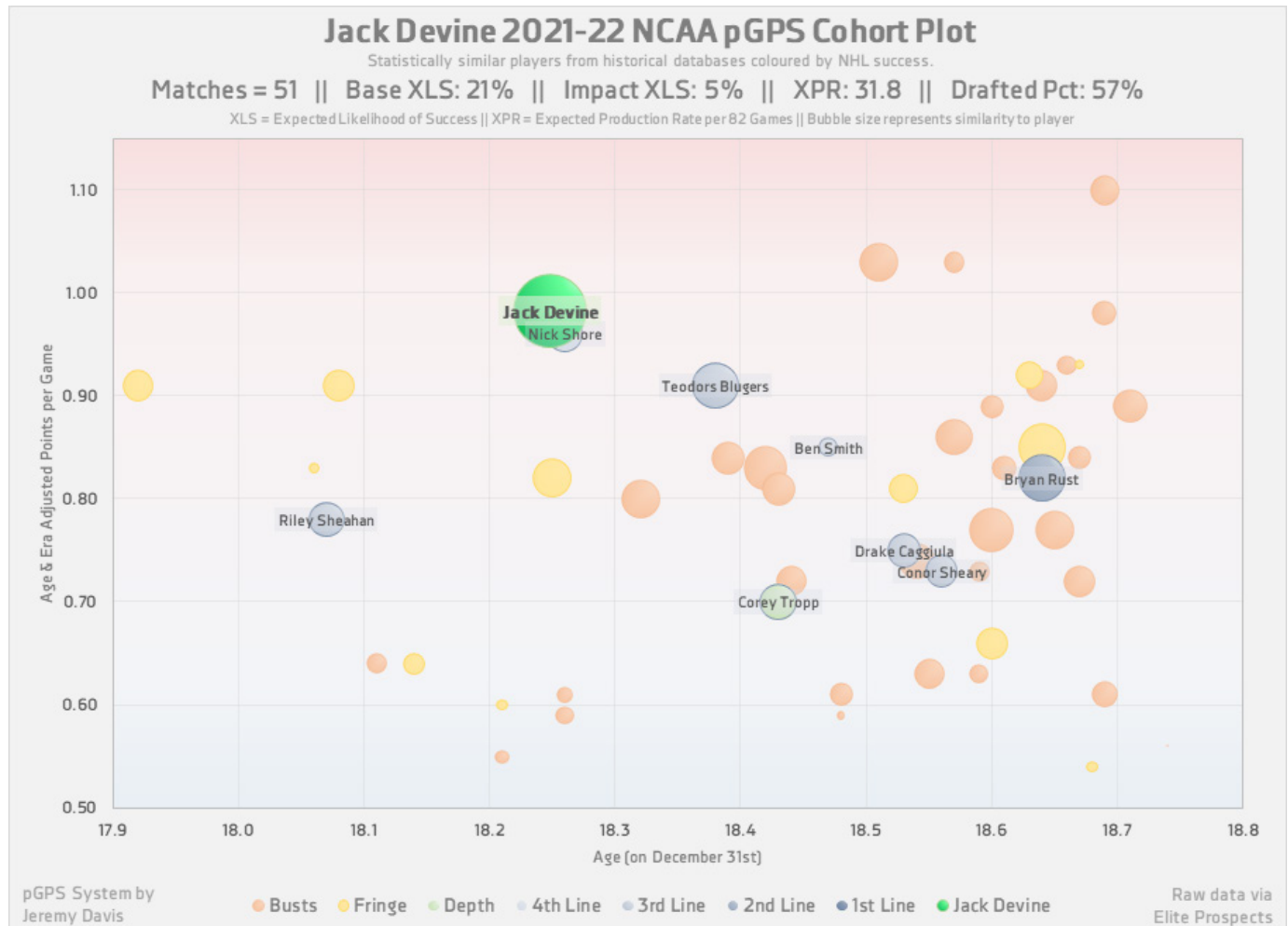
this contest, but the lack of scanning off-puck left him late to most of his checks. Looked like a C-grade prospect in this one.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 15th, 2022

Nebraska Omaha vs. Denver - NCAA

Devine didn't play much in this game, certainly not early on. He didn't do much either. But he closed the game strong. Used a backhand flick to cut inside in front of a defender, but then rushed a shot instead of delaying to wait for support. Combined pace and playmaking to win a race before setting up a teammate with a pass from behind the net. A solid defensive performance, but nothing notable beyond energy. Not enough ice time to draw any conclusions.

GAME REPORTS



**J.D. Burke:** November 13th

Denver vs. Western Michigan - NCAA

Another nondescript performance from Devine, who only skated for about 11 minutes in all situations in this contest but didn't make much of them. Had a pair of scoring chances but failed to convert on either of them, and I'm not sure they would register as high-danger by even the most charitable definitions. Lack of planning continues to limit his effectiveness with the puck as a distributor; I see much more skill as a passer than I do sense as a playmaker. Decent defensive performance. Devine was much less puck-focused than I'm accustomed to seeing and supported play well. Not really seeing anything special there, though. Maybe a C-grade prospect.

**J.D. Burke:** November 6th, 2021

North Dakota vs. Denver - NCAA

Just a nothing viewing from Devine. Few puck touches, and almost all of them went to waste. Full marks for a highly-skilled assist, a one-touch feed through contact to set up a Denver goal. Otherwise, it was a lot of straight line attacks, with the puck well out in front of him, his elbow stapled to his hip, and a lot of resulting turnovers. Has a nasty habit of dropping his head and missing teammates whenever he's pressured. Not really seeing much from Devine this year with Denver. Maybe a Day 2 pick.

**J.D. Burke:** March 27th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18 - USHL

Really liked what I saw from Devine in this game. Sniped one top-corner with a one-touch laser in the first period. Was an active participant on the forecheck, generating consistent pressure, and generally doing so with a purpose, funnelling the opposition towards support. Unsurprisingly, given the profile I'm building in this report, Devine spent a ton of time on the inside in this game, driving the net regularly. He was probably the best player on the Program this game.

**P**

**"Next year, with the departure of the program's top players like Brett Stapley and Bobby Brink, Devine should see an increase in minutes, which will help him show his skill more often. Devine is a good project to take in the latter parts of the draft. "**





115  
Rank

C  
Grade

5  
Skating

4  
Shooting

5  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

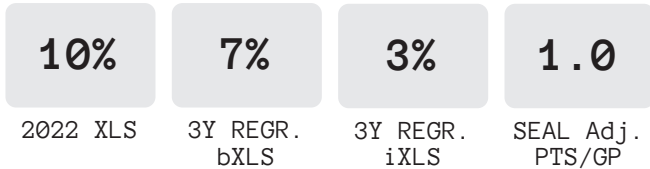
4.5  
Hockey Sense

6  
Physical

# MARCUS NGUYEN

RW | PORTLAND WINTERHAWKS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. AUG. 2, 2004  
WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	68	22	18	40

## Scouting Report

Marcus Nguyen accomplished a lot without much opportunity. Despite playing just 11 minutes per game at even strength, he tailed 22 goals and 40 points. Along the way, his handling skill and overwhelming pace produced several memorable plays.

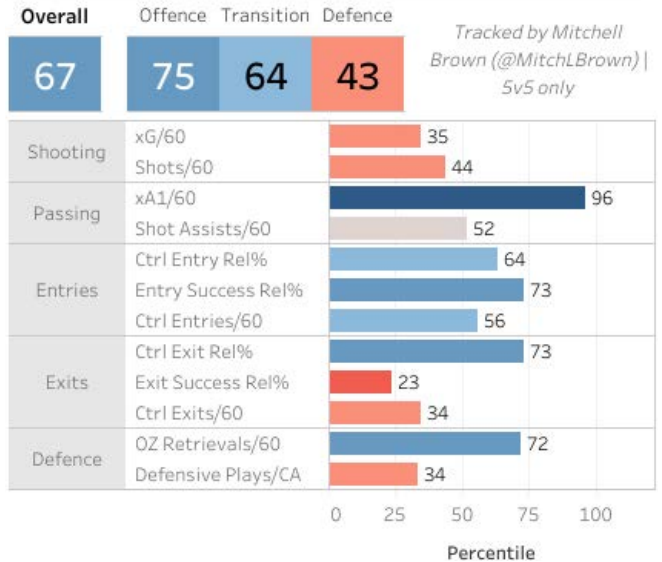
Don't be fooled by Nguyen's stature, his physical game projects as a clear strength in the NHL. He sprints for every loose puck, then jockeys for body positioning. If he wins, he deepens his stance and uses his free hand to keep the defender on his back. If he loses, he runs them over with a ferocious body check.

The energy also translates to the defensive end, where Nguyen's motor and proactive off-puck positioning combine for steals and non-stop disruption.

With the puck, Nguyen's game shows more holes. He plays a game based on speed and speed alone, lacking the change-of-pace style that better suits the NHL game. Deceptive qualities appear, but irregularly. Infrequent scanning leads to passes to no one and missed opportunities to improve the play.

Of course, Nguyen's puck game isn't short on redeeming qualities. One-touch, backhand, and slip passes all appear in his game, while his wrister and one-timer are both scoring

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 88.1



weapons at this level. That he's so willing to make plays to the inside under pressure should complement his physical game going forward.

Overall, Nguyen tracks more as a potential fourth-liner than a middle-six scorer. But his physical game, motor, and flashes of skills suggest he could surprise.

## Game Reports

Daniel Gee: April 27th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Nguyen was much better in this game in comparison to

yesterday's effort. Less inefficiencies on-puck, better decision-making and play-stringing. While Nguyen pushes a tonne of pace transitionally, so much so that he is often

caught in pressure, this was the strongest area of his game in this viewing. He made an incredible stutter-step deke on the left-wing to freeze a defender, stringing a pass into the slot shortly after. Nguyen even was sending passes into space on entries, delaying until teammates arrived. He looked for give-and-go's and tried to push some more complex passing plays -- on one shift he hooked a puck back as he entered. Still bobbed too many pucks and struggled with pass receptions -- might be a product of him trying to think too far ahead. He pushed some defence-to-offence sequences; third period sequence saw Nguyen intercept a neutral zone puck, work the puck in deep, executing a one-hand deke by a defender before starting a cycle play. During OZ pressure, Nguyen's cutbacks on the perimeter where much more controlled and effective -- didn't really activate or spin into pressure in this viewing. His escapability out of wall battles was commendable. Other than that, he often shifted to a net-front presence where he failed to corral rebounds for secondary chances.

Saw some positive defensive habits as well. He had a highlight-reel play on a penalty kill, batting a mid air-puck out the zone. He also helped on the back check to guide an attacker towards the wall in the second.

Maybe a late pick for NHL teams -- could see him producing more next season based off his motor. Don't think he projects into anything other than a fourth-line energy option. Won't be advocating for his placement on our board.

**Daniel Gee:** April 26th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Nguyen's motor was at full-bore, like always, but his sense holds him back from truly being able to capitalise on it. He put together such an inefficient performance, struggling with pass receptions, first-touches, and handling. He attempted cut-back after cut-back, only to run into Cougar defenders and turning the puck over -- lacks scanning, a feel for pressure off his back. Because he's so active all over the ice, he finds loose pucks. Nguyen had a really nice scoring chance after he jumped on a bouncing puck in the slot -- beamed Brennan in the crest/neck lacking proper placement to score up-close. Crashed the boards hard in this viewing as well; his best sequence was a recovery in the far-corner, a cut behind the net and a centering pass against the grain into traffic. Worked a couple of pucks into the slot off his backhand as well, setting up a wide open Chyzowski with a one-timer.

A non-factor in transition; makes poor handling positions and just can't execute handles in motion -- even without pressure mistakes occur. He threw a puck into the leg of a defender with zero pressure on his end -- frankly careless. Didn't look like a pick, even with some generation of chances in sustained pressure. What would he be if he had less opportunity?

**Closest pGPS Comparables**

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Colin Jacobs YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 96%	2 Cory Millette YEAR: 2012 SIMILARITY 95%
3 Jordan Messier YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 95%	4 Tyson Mulock YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 95%
5 Kenndal McArdle YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY 95%	6 Dale Mahovsky YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY 95%
7 Brandon Magee YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 95%	8 Jordan DePape YEAR: 2010 SIMILARITY 95%
9 Spencer Machacek YEAR: 2006 SIMILARITY 95%	10 Justin Maylan YEAR: 2008 SIMILARITY 94%

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Nguyen had an impressive shift: gained the zone, cutback, evaded pressure again, set-up a chance, then recovered the rebound and made another play to the middle. Consistently, he got the puck off the boards and to the middle. Much of his game revolves around hard skills: establishing body positioning and spinning off pressure. He's a physical player, too. That's probably his path to the NHL. With the puck in transition, he's a simple, often unaware player. He tries to deke around defenders or delay then pass, but fails because he doesn't scan for options first. Not a ton of NHL upside, but it's easy to see him becoming a big WHL scorer. Could make for an end-of-board type.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 20th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

Nguyen created a goal with a steal, sprinting past Korchiński, and freezing the goaltender before passing on the 2-on-0. Not much else in this game beyond the usual pace and energy. He really needs to slow down and started changing directions. There's potential to develop a physical game. He engages early, tries to establish body positioning, and uses his legs and bottom hand to fend off defenders. Probably a checker at the next level, but the flashes of puck skills give me some optimism.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 12th, 2022

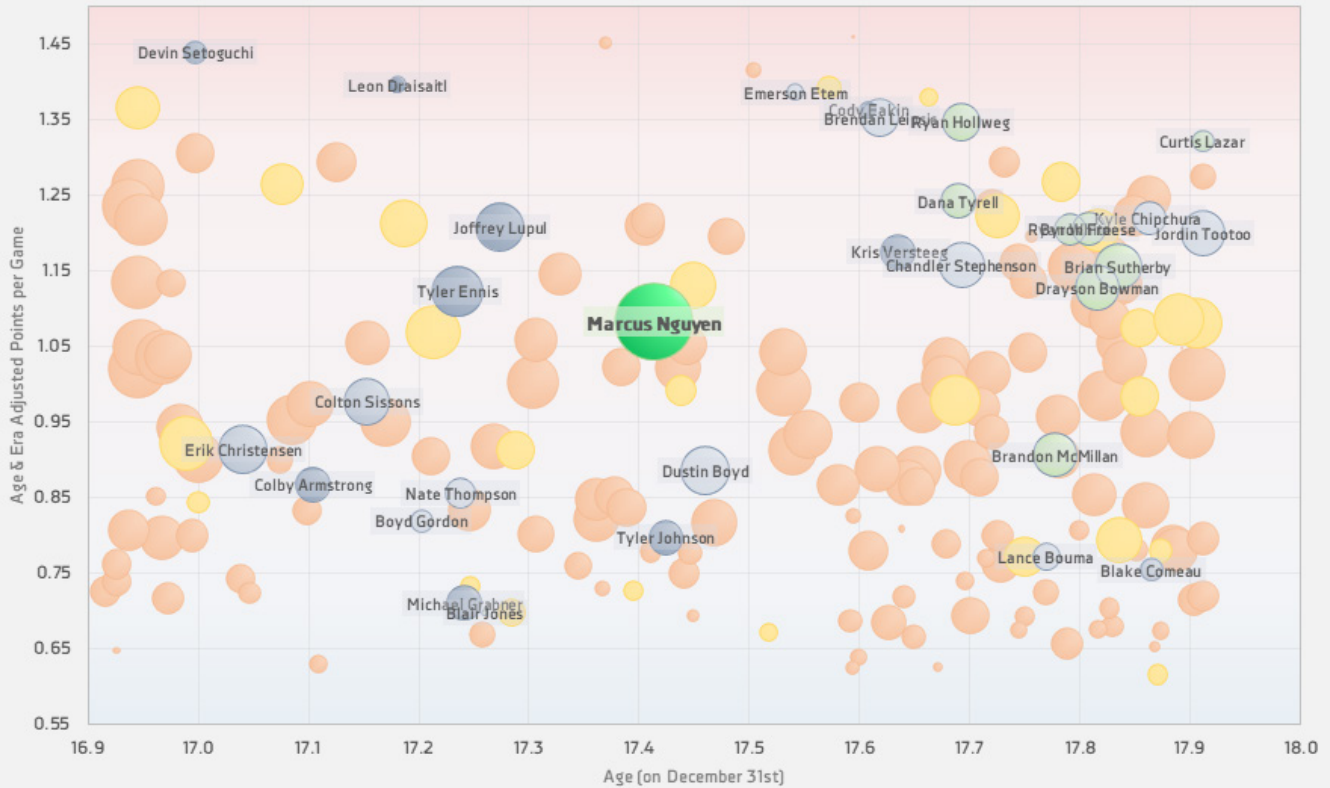
Vancouver Giants vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

## Marcus Nguyen 2021-22 WHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 192 || Base XLS: 10% || Impact XLS: 4% || XPR: 32.5 || Drafted Pct: 53%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



pGPS System by  
Jeremy Davis

● Busts ● Fringe ● Depth ● 4th Line ● 3rd Line ● 2nd Line ● 1st Line ● Marcus Nguyen

Raw data via  
Elite Prospects

Nguyen's a somewhat generic skill player, but has a great motor and flashes of high-level skills – which means he has a chance of making it. He was instrumental in Portland's five straight goals, which started with an under-the-D's-stick dish on the PK. Scored with a one-timer on a cross-slot pass, going back against the grain on the goaltender. Often has the right idea when passing – one-touch plays, off the backhand, through defenders – but his accuracy lacks. Tends to puck passes behind his target rather than leading them into space. In transition, he's overreliant on single-speed rushes with many directional changes. Defensively, he's disruptive and sometimes proactive. Anticipates supporting opportunities. And he reads the play off-puck to get open for passes across all three zones. He could be an end-of-board prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Nguyen's still figuring out how to calibrate his game. One touch, he makes things needlessly complex. The next, he keeps it too simple. Part of that's a consequence of playing too fast. He's clearly a skilled handler with passing skill. Too often, he avoids using the latter in favour of the former – that won't translate. The energy is the other selling point. Hit a player from behind for penalty, but otherwise, he stayed disciplined. Didn't overshoot his check, applied pressure at

the right moments, and played more of a support-centric role than normal. I haven't seen a ton of nuance in Nguyen's game, but he works, has a projectable physical game, and some puck skills. Perhaps a third rounder on our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

Nguyen mostly stood out for his defence in this game. The motor's high, he engages at the right times, and he's quite proactive. Eliminates players early. Usually first on pucks, but lacks additional details to make the most of it. Dekes with passing options, forces plays through defenders, and relies on pace over craft. Mostly a straight-line player with the odd advanced idea. He'll score in the WHL next season. But I'm convinced that he has skills to play his game at the next level. Too many poor decisions, though.

**Daniel Gee:** February 25th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Nguyen was a very simple player in this one-- maybe too simplistic to be a translatable offensive threat at higher levels, but he scored and was super high effort, so that's something.

A big forechecking threat, Nguyen had an epic shift where he laid out two Cougar defenders as they made a D-to-D ring pass below the goal line -- ridiculous motor on the shift.

His standout play of this game was an outside near-board carry; Nguyen executed a cut-back, and fed an open Thompson who was lurking in the slot. Off-puck he finds open ice well, but his on-puck carries mostly were inefficient. On one shift he tried to muscle a puck through a lot of resistance and turned the puck over -- just a dumb play.

Nguyen's goal in this viewing was probably a good representation of his game. He rejected an outlet on the far boards and walked the puck into the slot. As he tried to leverage down-force on his stick, he whiffed (did this multiple times in the game), recovered and executed a backhand-forehand handle into a shot that rang off the post. He then chased the puck into the corner, won the retrieval, fed the slot to create a high-danger chance, and eventually got the puck again at the top of the left-circle, scoring on a shot placed glove side.

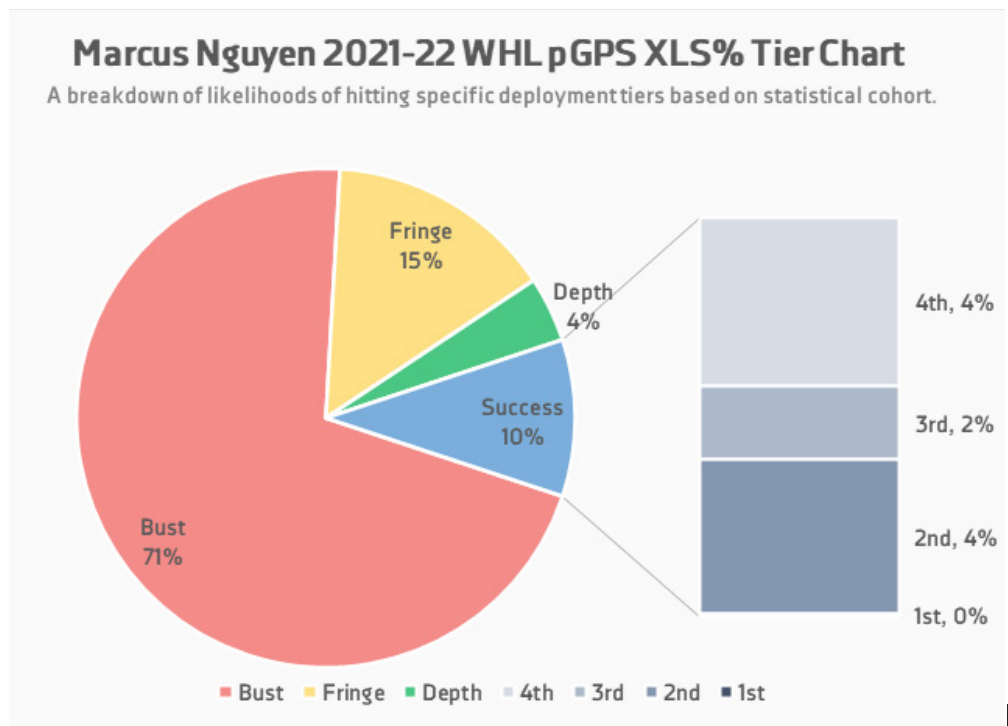
Nguyen's skating has some inefficiencies; he bobs his shoulders up and down consistently, but is almost always cutting hard on his edges. There's room to improve for sure. I think he's held back by his sense at times. Found him to be disengaged on some shifts. Defensively he is a stout puck watcher and can become lost as the high man during sustained shifts. Support game defensively was not good. Not sure he is a pick but at most his ceiling is a bottom-six energy player.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 29th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

More of the same from Nguyen. He's obviously talented. He plays fast and doesn't have any skill degradation when moving. He consistently attacks the inside in transition, often turning pass receptions along the perimeter into quick bursts towards the middle.

Still, he misses passes, fails to identify the best option, and doesn't show much manipulation ability. There's little planning to his game - it's just go. To be fair, that energy is a valuable weapon the forecheck and defensively. He would benefit from delaying in transition and increased scanning. He clearly has tools worth drafting, but with his inconsistent role and inconsistent execution, it might have to wait until next season.



**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

Nguyen had a breakaway chance, several strong close-outs to the point to prevent a shot, and generally strong off-puck defensive positioning and awareness. The tools probably don't quite reach an NHL level, but he plays fast, understands how to create advantages through changing pace and guiding play to the inside, and brings tons of defensive value. The skating, handling, passing, and shooting skill looked average at best, so probably not a draft pick. He's playing higher in the line up, so maybe there's more here that I'm missing.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 1st, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

Nguyen's game is easy to appreciate. He plays fast. And he plays with confidence on the puck. He dekes through defenders, uses deception to mask his intentions, and occasionally attacks the middle. With that comes a strong defensive game, whether he's fighting for possession of eliminating off-puck threats. He links ideas together. In one sequence, he intercepted a pass by staying on his check, led the rush, looked off his passing target, and connected for an assist. Turned a pass reception into a forehand-backhand move to access the passing lane on the defender's heels. Those were high-skill plays. Makes the odd poor decision with the puck, and he traps himself with possession in transition. Deceptive, but I don't think he's truly manipulation. Mostly just a skilled pacey player. Maybe an end-of-board type.



116  
Rank

C  
Grade

5  
Skating

4.5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

4  
Physical

# CONNOR MCGRATH

C | HUMBOLDT BRONCOS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. SEP. 4, 2004  
WEIGHT 154 SHOOTS LEFT

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
SJHL	56	35	49	84
> Committed to Ferris State Univ. ('23-24)				

## Scouting Report

Not only did Connor McGrath finish as the top point-producer in the SJHL last season, but he also grabbed the title of the top forward in the CJHL in the process. While his high-end production – 84 points in 56 games – is the main reason why he received that award, he also deserved it for his overall positive impact on the ice for the Humboldt Broncos.

“McGrath has a more refined game than we usually see at this level,” Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis wrote in a February report “His skill moves have a purpose, beating a defender, yes, but in a way to open up a pass to a teammate, and he doesn’t overdangle either. He picks his spots.”

The forward created scoring chances in a variety of ways for his team this season. He intercepted pucks on the forecheck and in the defensive zone and turned those interceptions into odd-man attacks. He supported power play rotations and presented his stick at the right time and place to teammates,

creating quick passing plays and one-timer goals. He also manipulated defenders off the rush with clever east-west movements to create space for teammates, space that they then turned into speedy attacks toward the net.

McGrath was the complete package – at his level. Some of his technical flaws, like his lack of ankle flexion in his skating, and his very light frame could very well prevent him from imposing his will on college games in the same ways, but his flashes of above-average hockey sense are worth a bet for an NHL team in the latter half of the draft.

While his lower competition definitely needs to be factored in, his re-entry status shouldn’t penalize him at the draft. Like many others, McGrath lost his first year of eligibility to COVID. He was also born only nine days before the cutoff of the 2022 class.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 2nd, 2022

Humboldt Broncos vs. Flin Flon Bombers - SJHL

I have more doubts about McGrath’s overall skill-level after this game. The ideas are good, but the execution sometimes lags behind, especially off the rush, where he tries to manipulate with weight shifts but lacks the fluidity and the explosiveness to pull it off. His skating lacks ankle flexion at this point, limiting his agility. He did score with a top-corner shot, in-stride, later in the

game, however, so maybe the concerns shouldn’t be that big. Otherwise, the energy was still present in his game. He almost scored with a couple of net-drives.

**David St-Louis:** March 27th, 2022

Ice Wolves vs Humboldt Broncos - SJHL

Great game from McGrath showing many interesting elements. His rush patterns, especially, stood out: east-west movements to manipulate gaps, attacks inside,

drop passes, crossover usage... I especially liked a 2-on-2 sequence where he attacked in between the two defenders to collapse them on himself and create a lane to shoot on net for a teammate. I also liked his game away from the puck offensively: good timing and anticipation of plays. The energy was quite high, but I'm not sure the skating is a strength.

**David St-Louis:** February 23rd, 2022

Humboldt Broncos vs. Mellville Millionaires - SJHL

McGrath has a more refined game than we usually see at this level. His skill moves have a purpose, beating a defender, yes, but in a way to open up a pass to a teammate, and he doesn't overdangle either. He picks his spots. There are playmaking details: delaying to let teammates get to supporting areas, attracting defenders to reach teammates and create space for them... The off-puck sense was still there, especially on the powerplay; clearly anticipates the next play and positions himself as a finisher or next passer. The defensive care also continued. The details aren't perfect in that area but you can build a legitimate shutdown game on what he tries currently.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2021

Humboldt Broncos vs. Battleford North Stars - SJHL

McGrath's energy is what stood out the most in this game, his defensive engagement and stick work on the forecheck. He created a turnover that directly resulted in a great scoring chance. I like his habits, the way he reloads the puck back when there aren't options forward, the way he tries to establish body positioning away from the puck to secure pass receptions, and the flashes of playmaking. He can manipulate defenders one on-on-one to slip pucks through them. The skill-level, I'm not sure it's that high, however.



**"While his lower competition definitely needs to be factored in, his re-entry status shouldn't penalize him at the draft. Like many others, McGrath lost his first year of eligibility to COVID. He was also born only nine days before the cutoff of the 2022 class."**



117  
Rank

C  
Grade

5  
Skating

4.5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

5  
Puckhandling

4.5  
Hockey Sense

4  
Physical

# JAKE LIVANAVAGE

D | CHICAGO STEEL

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. MAY 6, 2004  
WEIGHT 161 SHOOTS LEFT

22%	18%	14%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	61	3	42	45

> Committed to Univ. of North Dakota ('23-24)

## Scouting Report

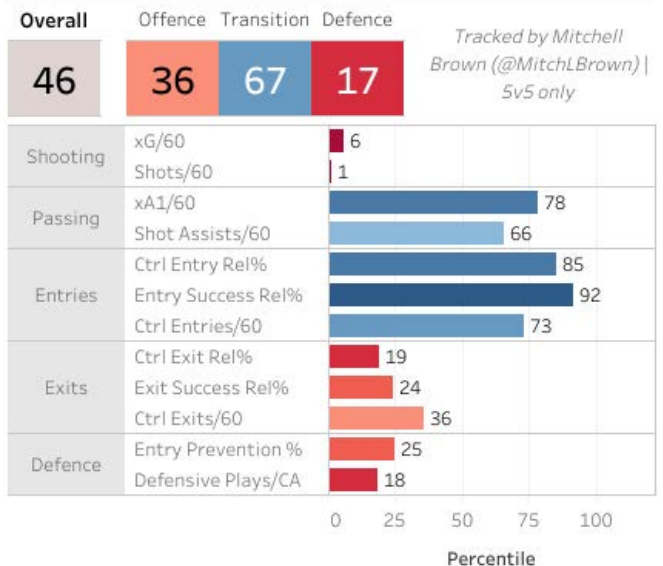
A season after essentially being Chicago's No. 8 defenceman, Jake Livanavage rocketed up the depth chart, leading his team in minutes per game. He became one of the USHL's top point-getting blueliners with those minutes. When the season closed, he sat just one point back of the USHL lead in power play assists for a defenceman with 24.

It's on the power play where Livanavage's skill shines the brightest. He plays several roles often within the same power play, managing space from the point before jumping down the perimeter and becoming the half-wall creator. When many players just make a pass, he steps in, shows shot, then passes to a teammate in an even better position. When he's not manipulating, he's prodding the penalty kill for openings and then waiting for the perfect time to exploit.

Put an extra defender on the ice, where Livanavage no longer has the lengthy unpressured touches, and his game moves from commanding to reactionary. He doesn't have the quickness to consistently separate, and his hands don't provide many solutions. The deceptiveness that makes him effective on the power play dissipates. Even when he tries to manipulate defenders, he makes the ensuing pass before the defender reacts to the deception. That's also visible on breakouts, where he often cuts back one way and then immediately back into the forechecker he's trying to beat.

Livanavage, like the rest of the Steel team, regularly activates, often using clever routes to maximize his chances of getting the puck. He glides down the middle, stops at the net, then pushes off to the weak side as the Steel work the

Games Tracked: 13 | Minutes Tracked: 229.1



puck around the perimeter. In top form, he uses the give-and-go and small-area passing to escape pressure and join the rush. Leaning heavier on those moving forward will be key to his development.

One constant theme of our game reports all season was Livanavage's highly passive rush defence. Some games, he might as well not even been there. Others, he gets on his check a bit early and gets stops deeper in his zone. In both performances, he consistently gives fast-moving attackers too much space, and then overcorrects by lunging in or hitting the brakes. In-zone coverage has similar inconsistencies, but at this stage, his combination of reactivity and passiveness makes his defence a weakness.

It's a long road ahead of Livanavage, but his activation-focused game aligns with the current direction of the NHL. Still, to make it, he'll have to tighten his defence and transfer his

power play skills to 5-on-5. If he can do it, he could become a useful depth piece.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 30th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

A slightly better defensive game from Livanavage than normal. He killed a couple of plays early and eliminated off-puck threats off the rush. With the puck, he avoids point shots at all costs. I appreciate that. Instead, he looks to pass. But he's not deceptive or patient. He can't prolong existing lanes, let alone create new ones. With the puck, he cuts back from pressure, delays, and dekes when possible, but he tends to trap himself along the boards. Intelligent forecheckers read his next play. And if they don't, he still cuts back directly into them. He has some interesting qualities, but he's not a candidate for our board.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** April 22nd, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Livanavage left this game a bit early with an upper body injury. The minutes he did play were solid, while he usually comes alive in the offensive zone, there were some promising defensive moments. He's a bit inconsistent defending the rush, sometimes he cedes too much space, doesn't check over his inside shoulder, etc. but he was making an effort to funnel players to outside, disrupt with his stick, kill the play early. In the o-zone, there was all the usual brilliance, the high-level activation from the point and confidence with the puck. He made fantastic passes to teammates in dangerous areas and was great at breaking down defensive coverage by moving the puck high to low and vice versa. There are holes to the game sure, but he's intriguing.

**Cam Robinson:** April 9th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

What to make of Livanavage. He's got a really nice structure to his stride - great bend, extension and recovery. He was able to showcase that on several occasions tonight in a 10-3 blowout. He led the rush with his head up, drew coverage and sent smart passes across to keep things moving. Ended up with three helpers. Now, on the flip side, he was giving up too much padding for oncoming rush attempts which limited his ability to step up and thwart anything early. He also ended up pokechecking his way off balance because he had to reach so far. A couple of plays he did keep his gap tighter and lo and behold, he was more effective. His transitions were really strong in this one - better than usual, which gives hope. But he needs a ton of refinement. I could

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Eric Werner YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 89%	2 Danny Richmond YEAR: 2002 SIMILARITY 89%
3 Torey Krug YEAR: 2009 SIMILARITY 89%	4 Brett Motherwel YEAR: 2004 SIMILARITY 88%
5 Alexx Privitera YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 87%	6 Bryan Miller YEAR: 2001 SIMILARITY 86%
7 Tristan Lush YEAR: 2000 SIMILARITY 86%	8 Joakim Ryan YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 86%
9 Jordan Schmaltz YEAR: 2011 SIMILARITY 85%	10 Blake Kessel YEAR: 2007 SIMILARITY 85%

see him going in the mid rounds or ending up not being selected at all.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Livanavage hasn't changed much throughout the year. He remains a very passive rush defender without a ton of in-zone play-killing ability - tough to see a path to becoming an NHL-average defender. His best sequences are when he joins the play, but he has difficulty doing so because of inconsistent habits and a lack of adaptability. Once he gets up there, he shows some playmaking, some shooting, and a give-and-go mindset. Nothing advanced, but perhaps enough that he could do a bit of damage in the professional ranks. In the NHL, I don't see it.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Livanavage with another awful rush defence game. He backs up so much and doesn't even try to engage until he's conceded the zone. So, even when he gets the stop, he's just poking the puck to the F2. Not much puck skill shown in this game. He scores, but I have no idea how to evaluate his upside. It's just well-timed pinches, simple passes, and deferring on breakouts with the odd flash of something interesting. Not a pick based on this game, but I've seen better.

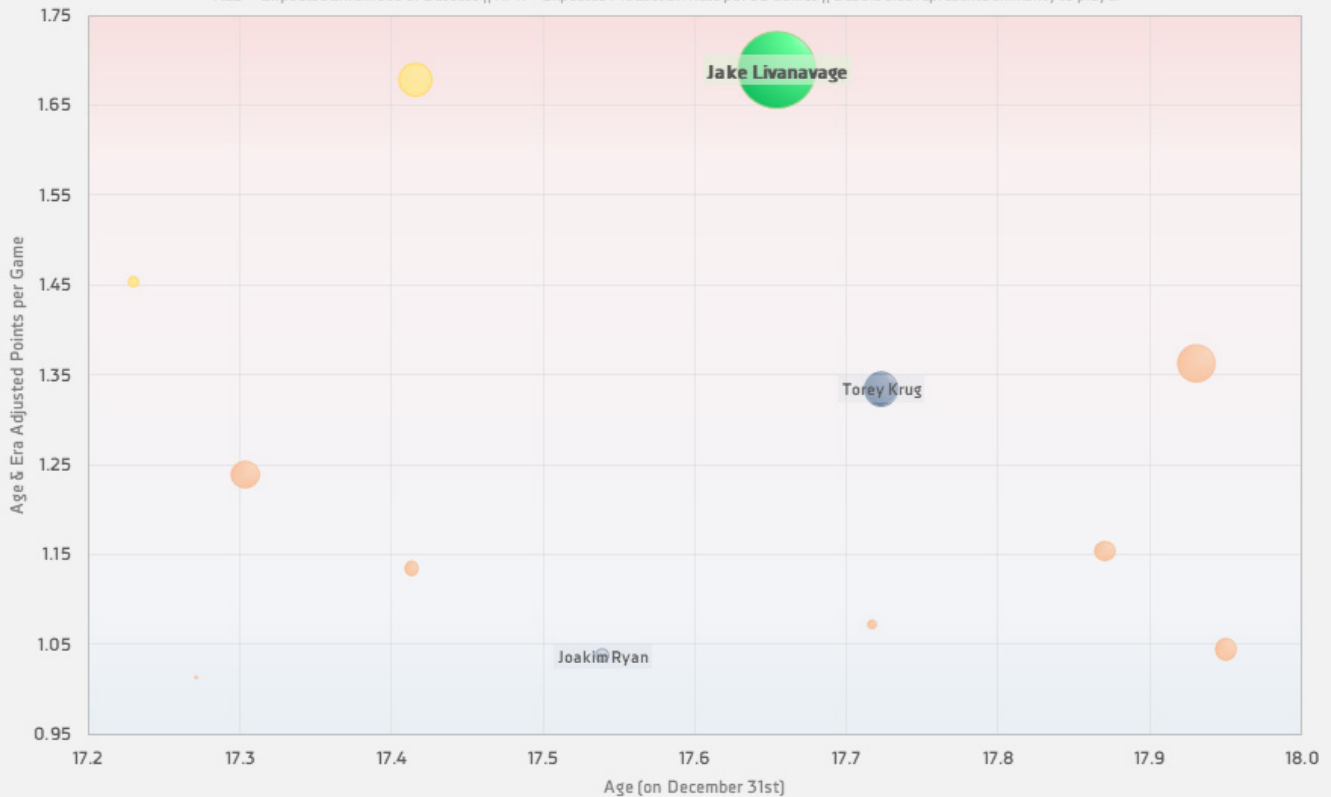


## Jake Livanavage 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 11 || Base XLS: 22% || Impact XLS: 19% || XPR: 53.4 || Drafted Pct: 45%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



pGPS System by  
Jeremy Davis

● Busts ● Fringe ● Depth ● 3rd Pair ● 2nd Pair ● 1st Pair ● Jake Livanavage

Raw data via  
Elite Prospects

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Livanavage had some impressive breakouts, attacking the F1, then passing cross-ice. But he's not particularly adaptable. And he requires space to make notable plays, otherwise, he rims or dumps the puck. Better gap than usual from him, getting a pair of stops at the right line. Better attackers exploit his passiveness and use it to gain the middle. Long-range pass for a chance at the end of the game. I didn't see anything that suggested a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Still one of the trickiest players to figure out. Livanavage has moments where it seems like he's thinking the game at a high level. Faking the shot while stepping into space to pass for a goal, reading the turning feet of a defender before deking inside, or completing a one-touch pass into the slot from the point. His pinches are mostly well-timed and while gap control remains an issue, he's far better at engaging in the DZ compared to earlier in the season. But most of his performances are limited by his inconsistent execution with the puck, terrible breakout decisions, and inconsistent acti-

vation. He consistently throws the puck away with the play in front of him – if he just scanned he'd see options in the middle or far side. Like Gustafsson, his retrieval plays leave him with more forechecking pressure than less, and he doesn't have the problem-solving skills to advance the puck. So, not a problem-solver and not a real planner. A fringe draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Livanavage's breakout issues and problem-solving limitations persist, but I came away far more impressed with the rest of his game. He wasn't perfect defending the rush, but his gap control was noticeably tighter, he read plays quicker, and grabbed a few interceptions. Stepped inside before making breakout plays. Give-and-go to gain the zone, then set-up a chance for a teammate driving the net. One OZP sequence saw him spin off pressure, pass low, activate across the crease and to the weak side, then set up a scoring chance – one of the better executed Steel plays of the season. The tools aren't noteworthy – probably a close to NHL average skater and handler – but his game looked NHL-calibre in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Livanavage's game seems very scripted. He plans but lacks adaptability. One sequence stands out: He cut back, and then cut back again – but the forechecker didn't change course. Instead of trying again, he just skated right into their stick and threw the puck away. He had one of the more impressive retrievals of the game, clearly more of a problem-solving sequence where he turned away from pressure a couple of times before passing to the inside. Reasonably involved through activation, but not exceptionally so. Rush defence looks better, but it's still a weakness. He's very passive through the NZ and then closes space too aggressively in the DZ as an overreaction. He's a fringe draft pick – not sure if he has an NHL role/dimension.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Livanavage didn't get dummied defensively in this game. He conceded the zone too easily, but made stops deeper quite regularly. A well-timed check with the pass disrupted one sequence, and he switched off his check early to kill a play around the play blue -- proactive read. He's missed some breakout passes and didn't see a couple of options. He also used the inside, looked for the cross-lane pass, and activated when given the chance. Very limited offensive impact in this game. He's a fringe pick at this stage.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Livanavage had the most impressive setup of the game. He walked down the boards with his head up and puck readied, then feathered a pass through layers for a powerplay tap-in goal. At 5-on-5, he activates regularly, fills space in OZP, and seems proactive, even for a Steel defenceman. He doesn't scan enough on retrievals, skates directly into pressure, and doesn't seem to have any advanced ideas (like cross-lane passes, stepping to the middle first, or manipulating pressure). And his rush defence is still beyond awful. When players charge at him, he doesn't bother building momentum. They take him wide, he pivots and ends up chasing. Beat cleanly eight times on eight tries. Anyway, he might be a pick, but it really depends on how the skill develops.

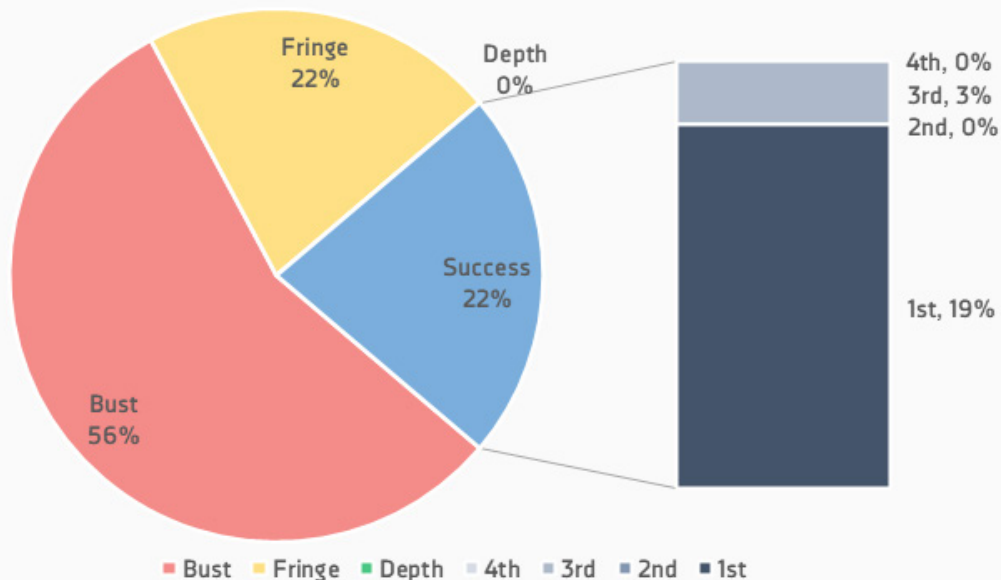
**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

USA U18 vs. Sweden U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Aside from the rare bit of rush activation from Livanavage, this was a pretty dour performance. Even some of those rush activations were pretty unremarkable. He doesn't move the puck with enough pace, puts his head down when pressured, and just takes the first option available to him rather than the best one. The Swedish forecheck picked up in intensity as the game went on, and he just became less and less effective on retrievals and in transition accordingly. He was fully hearing footsteps by the end of the game, rushing passes that either

### Jake Livanavage 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



"It's a long road ahead of Livanavage, but his activation-focused game aligns with the current direction of the NHL. Still, to make it, he'll have to tighten his defence and transfer his power play skills to 5-on-5. If he can do it, he could become a useful depth piece."

missed the intended target entirely or were unnecessarily difficult to corral. Took a really stupid penalty in the third period at the worst possible moment. I don't see a player worth even a late-round pick at this stage, though it's early.

**J.D. Burke:** August 2nd, 2021

USA U18 vs. Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021


Really not sure what to make of Livanavage after a performance like this one. It was ugly early. Livanavage was on the ice for at least two, maybe three of the goals against by the time it was 4-0, and looked particularly poor on one play, hesitating to make a play on the puck and promptly getting walked by Dalibor Dvorsky en route to the Slovak's first goal. Couldn't seem to make the stretch pass work, but I'm not sure it's fair to hold that against him because the Americans were running a hail mary breakout strategy with very little support, and the Slovaks shut it down with relative ease regardless of who was tasked with leading the breakout. Made an appallingly poor read on a rush play, stepping up on the puck-carrier right as he placed a drop pass to his linemate who skated in for a chance unimpeded as a result of Livanavage's lack of discretion - a display of piss poor problem-solving ability against multiple variables

if there ever was one.

Then the lights turned on for Livanavage in the second half of this hockey game, and he started to look the part of a player with mid-to-late-round upside. Made some really great reads off of the offensive blue line to make well-timed charges into space to present as a passing opportunity in high-danger areas. Made some great pinches to sustain possession in the offensive zone. Worked the give-and-go on one play for a scoring chance. You take the good and the bad, and you just might have a fourth or fifth-round pick here. Maybe.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Playing with the NTDP, Jake Livanavage really stands out. This team has a lot of quietly effective players without a ton of activation. Livanavage is in every play. He's up in the rush, activating off the point, trying to be a centrepiece in the action. There's some restraint to his game, but he creates repeatable situations: move, throw the pass reception and pass in motion. Might as well not even been there while defending the rush, sloppy defensive skating and stick work saw him beat a bunch, and his weak pivots keep him chasing. Still, tough to be too critical. Great performance. 



118  
Rank

C  
Grade

5.5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

6  
Puckhandling

4  
Hockey Sense

4.5  
Physical

# ALEXANDER PEREVALOV

LW | LOKO YAROSLAVL

HEIGHT 6'0"  
WEIGHT 192

D.O.B. APR. 16, 2004  
SHOOTS RIGHT

"He's got skill and natural offensive ability. Lots of risk there, sure, but plenty of reward as well." - Western Conference Executive in May 2022

46%	34%	27%	0.93
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
MHL	44	25	26	51
KHL	5	0	0	0

## Scouting Report

You always look for offensive skills in a top forward prospect at the draft, and Alexander Perevalov brings more than enough of that to the table. His skating, especially his agility, received an above-average grade from Dylan Griffing, our Russian regional scout, as did his handling and shot.

Perevalov can sprint up-ice, and without ever breaking stride, beat a defender and launch a shot past the goalie. His skating and handling can work at an independent rhythm and complement each other in impressive dangling moves.

"Perevalov's pace control is a dangerous weapon, and he uses it accordingly," wrote Griffing on September 7th. "He explodes in two strides and is always ready to attack the puck. He found success using deceptive body movements and aggressive stickhandling to get the puck up the ice as fast as possible and trying to beat the defense on the rush."

To project a skilled prospect like Perevalov to the NHL,

however, those abilities have to be supported by offensive instincts; a player needs to have a sense of which lanes are about to open, which defenders are vulnerable to his moves, and for the best play to make in which situation.

Our doubts surrounding Perevalov's ability to process the unfolding play never went away this season. Sometimes, skills can turn into weaknesses when a player relies exclusively on his technical advantage, his superior speed of hand and feet, to create as he rises in level. When that skill advantage dissipates against better opponents, they are at a loss as to how to generate scoring chances.

The team that will draft Perevalov will have to help him improve both his awareness and decision-making. If the winger can make significant improvements in those facets, maybe he could ascend to a top-six role in the NHL.

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

- |   |  |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| 1 Nikita Kucherov<br>YEAR: 2011<br>SIMILARITY 85%   | 2 Anatoli Golyshev<br>YEAR: 2013<br>SIMILARITY 71% | 3 Nikita Gusev<br>YEAR: 2010<br>SIMILARITY 67% | 4 Maxim Shalunov<br>YEAR: 2011<br>SIMILARITY 65% | 5 Sergei Shmelyov<br>YEAR: 2011<br>SIMILARITY 64% |
| 6 Mikhail Plotnikov<br>YEAR: 2010<br>SIMILARITY 61% | 7 Sergei Barbashev<br>YEAR: 2010<br>SIMILARITY 60% |  |  |   |

**Lassi Alanen:** March 16th, 2022

Loko Yaroslavl vs. Almaz - MHL

Perevalov scored twice but still managed to be pretty ineffective for the majority of the game. He can definitely shoot the puck. He managed to lift the puck upstairs from a tough angle on his first goal and then hammered a one-timer on 5v3 power play for his second of the game. What was missing was the consistent impact. The tools looked pretty good; he probably projects as a slightly above-average skater and the shot is clearly a weapon. Off-puck movement was ineffective, forechecking was ineffective. Often drove straight to pressure and tried to problem-solve with his hands but turned the puck over instead. Physical game didn't look that good either as he was rather easily shoved off pucks, balance being an issue.

**David St-Louis:** February 7th, 2022

Loko-76 Yaroslavl vs. Ska-1946 - MHL

I don't see an NHL-translatable player here. The skill is there and the flashes are great, like his shots straight out of the stickhandling motion and the slick backhand passes, but there is no purpose to the moves of Perevalov. He figures it out

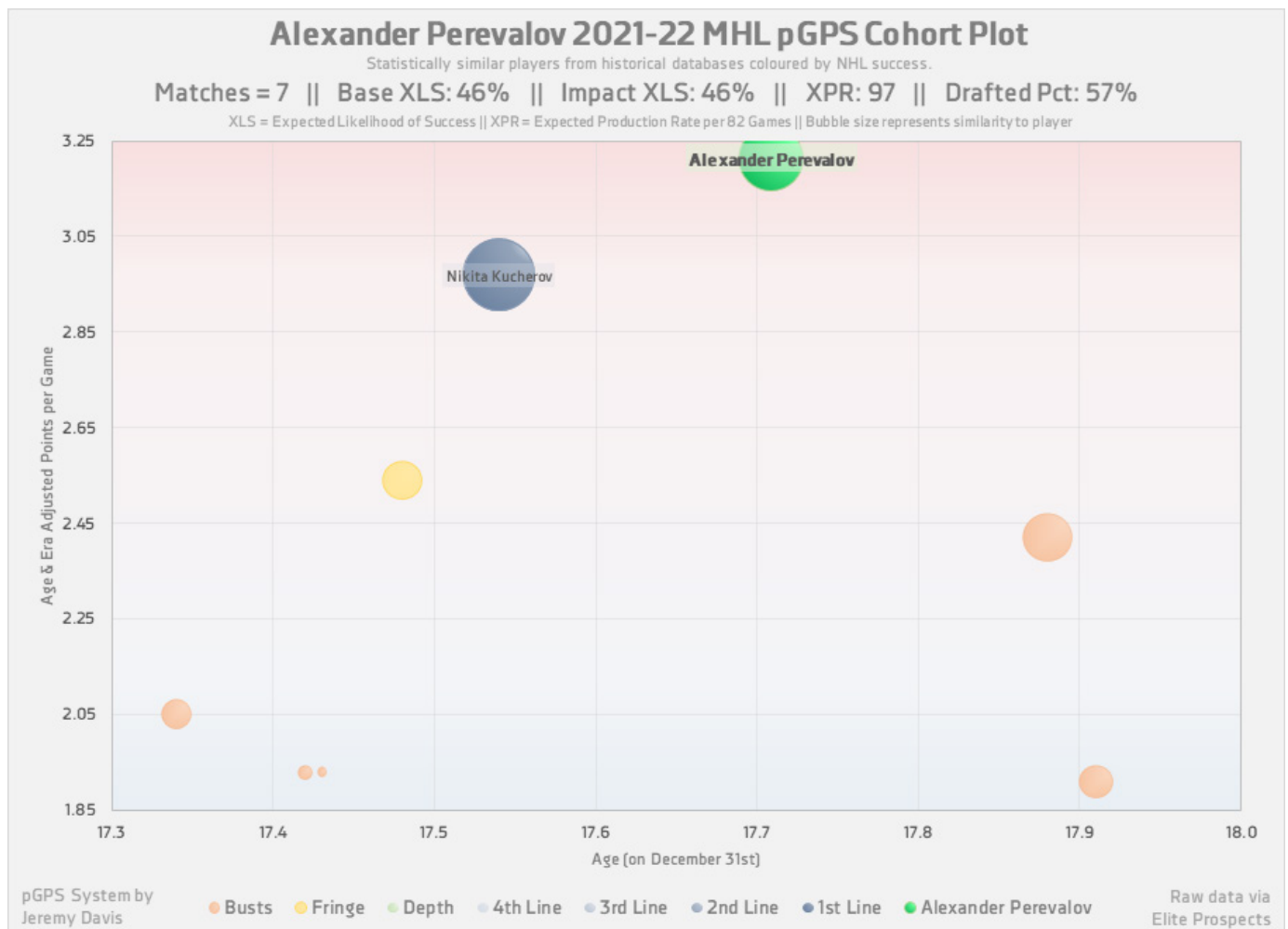
as he goes and not all that well. He doesn't scan but remains puck and defender-in-front-of-him focused. His choices of plays are mostly poor and his vision seems limited. The only interesting elements in his game seem to be the skills.

**Dylan Griffing:** February 5th, 2022

Loko-76 Yaroslavl vs. Omskie Yastreby - MHL

As much as an avid supporter of Perevalov I am, this game was undeniably a brutal glimpse of what he has become as the season has gone on. Maybe it boils down to the fact that he just doesn't want to be playing for Loko-76, but the incredibly low effort play away from the puck and constant turnovers with it are inexcusable. Constantly trying overly creative passes or unnecessary dekes, canceling out his few good plays with two bad ones right after, and poor rush patterns took him out of this game entirely. He's a player that always finds a way to stick out, whether it's through his flair and creativity or through the negative value that he tends to bring at this level – this game was certainly the latter of the two.

It isn't really much of a surprise to see that his scoring rates weren't sustainable. He is a player who accrues points with no rhyme or reason and, now that that pace has slowed to a



crawl, he's seeing less and less ice time and his performances continue to disappoint.

**Dylan Griffing:** January 25th, 2022

Loko Yaroslavl vs. Krasnaya Armiya Moskva - MHL

Perevalov is a tough read. The decision making is just so inconsistent, hockey sense switches between a 4 and a 5.5 in each shift. He's stuck in the MHL style of "enter zone and shoot". He did this, maybe, eight times. His playmaking is super promising, though. The execution isn't always there, but he is creative and dynamic, so he has the ability to open up a ton of ice when the puck is on his stick; however, he has a knack of throwing away that space and opting to go for a crazy stickhandle and, frankly, lose possession. Played with a physical edge this game, which I liked, fought hard for possession and was solid on his breakouts. There is a lot to like with this player, he makes good reads, plays quick, and gets around away from the puck, he just needs to reel it all in a bit and slow his hands down to stay on pace with his thinking.

**Dylan Griffing:** December 29th, 2021

Loko Yaroslavl vs. Almaz Cherepovets - MHL

This was another rough outing for Perevalov. Nothing was coming off, easily being read by defenders - besides one or two nice moves, he was constantly losing his handle or getting knocked off the puck. Shooting habits made his well-worked moves non factors because he did have times where he skated and handled the puck around the perimeter, waiting for something to open up, just to put his head down and shoot from the bottom of the circle. The one standout play was attacking a Almaz defender to gain possession and starting a solo rush, which ended in no shot on goal, but he recovered his off-target shot in the corner, kept the attack alive, and eventually got a pass through the royal road, albeit, nobody was there.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 16th, 2021

Loko Yaroslavl vs. HK Riga - MHL

Perevalov played with no pace in this game. His rush patterns were repetitive and ineffective, cutting across the ice and cutting off space for his teammates, rather than giving them more. He skated into his own linemates multiple times after switching wings and basically killing the play then and there. To his credit, the cut across did work once and it did generate that space that he was trying desperately to do all game, but it just doesn't make up for the amount of rushes he imploded. Skill came in flashes, had some success in tight areas, but he was getting dispossessed often in space,

mostly due to leaving the puck too far away from his body or just being too predictable. With the puck, he was providing volume, dangerous passes, but not enough quality. Forcing a behind-the-back pass through the royal road -- which was occupied by four opponents -- rather than activating either of his completely uncovered pointmen. Feet weren't moving at all off the puck and his defensive efforts were poor because of it. Losing puck races, some of which where it looked like he never wanted the puck at all. Couldn't read and react quick enough when the puck carrier was skating directly at him and inviting him to take the puck away.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 2nd, 2021

Amurskie Tigry vs. Loko Yaroslavl - MHL

Mildly disappointing outing for Perevalov, primarily due to his tough time reading and anticipating pressure. He had his head up on retrievals to scan his options, but he never checked over his other shoulder for the opposition player coming at him. This led to him really struggling to get the puck along the boards and limited his game. Outside of that, he found comfort in open ice. He started off hot with his passing, although Lady Luck wasn't on his side and his targets weren't on the same page as him. Aggressive rushes saw him attack weak coverage, use his elusiveness, and he drew a penalty late on in the game because of it. He likes to shoot, attempting ten shots in this bout, but most of them were from tough angles and he doesn't quite have the accuracy or deceptiveness to be able to score from those spots.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 19th, 2021

Lokomotiv Yaroslavl vs. Admiral Vladivostok - KHL

Starting a KHL game off on the top line is a rare thing to see for a seventeen-year-old. He definitely struggled to keep up to start this game, mostly being stuck in the defensive zone looking a bit lost. As the game progressed, he started to piece together some decent shifts to look not so out of place. He was getting dominated physically all game, knocked off pucks and shoved off when trying to apply pressure, but he did use his quick first step to build up speed quickly and go body-on-body twice, knocking his man down both times. He took his chances when they came, opting to shoot whenever the opportunity arose. He garnered himself a breakaway after he blocked a shot and recovered it himself, hauled down the ice, made a move, but was ultimately stopped on the goal line by an opponent's stick. Really reliant on his teammates, as expected, but overall a good performance for the lack of KHL experience he has under his belt.

**David St-Louis:** October 19th, 2021

Lokomotiv Yaroslavl vs. Admiral Vladivostok - KHL

Interesting performance from Perevalov. He can't really play the defensive game, but give him a rush chance, and he shows his skills. He has some adaptability, looking to make the best plays in those situations, and when faced with a one vs one situation, he can find solutions with his skills. The skating looks above-average and the handling skills, too (better than the skating). He should have scored, having slip the puck under the goalie, but a defender, at the last moment, knocked the puck away from the net.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 17th, 2021

Lokomotiv Yaroslavl vs. Kunlun Red Star - KHL

Perevalov's usage in this game was certainly favorable to his strengths. Almost all of his shifts started in the offensive zone and half of his time on ice was on the power play. In that time he looked like an MHL player thrown into the KHL, but still showed off his playmaking prowess, creating three big chances for his club in his six minutes of ice time. Physicality proved to be his biggest weakness, getting knocked off the puck easily and not being able to hold his own on the other end.

**J.D. Burke:** September 12th, 2021

SKA-1946 St. Petersburg vs. Loko Yaroslavl - MHL

The less said of Perevalov's performance the better. There just wasn't much there. Some really inefficient puck touches.

The low percentage hope passes to no one in particular and shots from the perimeter were his weapon of choice in this contest. A lot of straight line attacks without the breakaway speed to turn the corner on a defender in space. Perevalov played at a super low pace throughout this game. It's perhaps telling that my most positive thoughts from this contest centre around his off-the-puck defensive play in this contest. I'm not even sure Perevalov looked like a draft pick in this game.

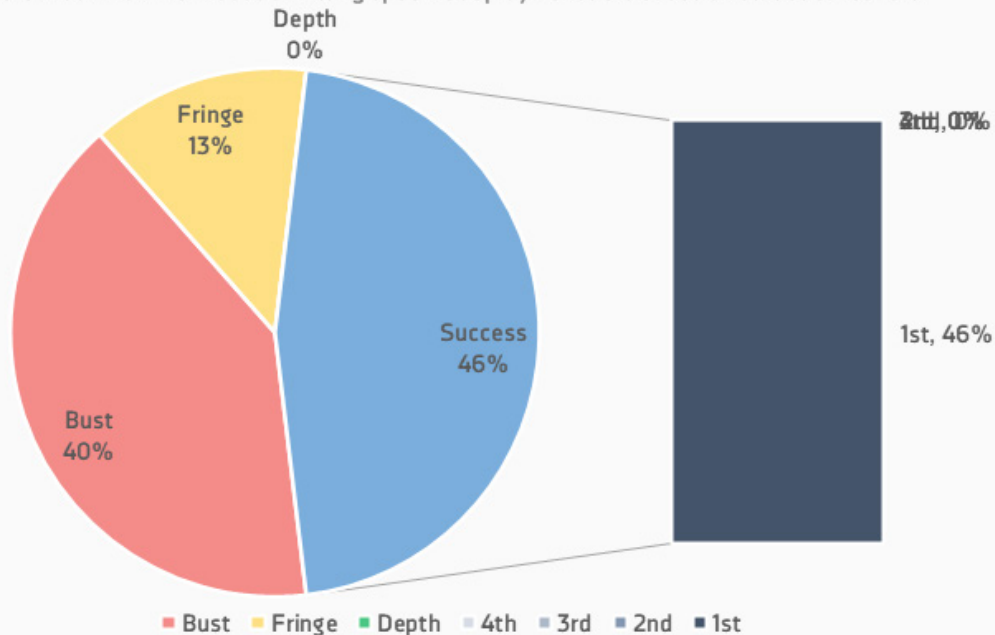
**Dylan Griffing:** September 7th, 2021

MHK Dynamo Moskva vs. Loko Yaroslavl - MHL

Perevalov's pace control is a dangerous weapon, and he uses it accordingly. He explodes in two strides and is always ready to attack the puck. This helped on the forecheck to collect dump-ins, which is a handy skill to have in a league where effective forechecking is very difficult to come by. What really puts him ahead of his competition is using his hands at the pace he plays at. He found success using deceptive body movements and aggressive stickhandling to get the puck up the ice as fast as possible and trying to beat the defense on the rush. Perevalov has an above-average shot, but he once again showed a lack of discipline and was ineffective because of it, not even generating rebounds for his team. Even when in a valuable shooting area, his body positioning was so poor that he had to shift to collect the pass and then re-adjust to face the net and try to get a shot off while tightly pressured, which led to a muffin into the goalie's chest.

### Alexander Perevalov 2021-22 MHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



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# “Perevalov is talented, but I’ve seen some games where he just doesn’t play very hard. He’s talented, but a risky player.”

*Western Conference executive, May 2022*

**J.D. Burke:** August 4th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Czech Rep. U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Nothing came easy to Perevalov in this contest. Mishandled the puck, chose the wrong escape route in small area situations... it just felt like he was constantly running into opponents. He made it work anyway with second and third efforts on the puck every time he was challenged. Made a great passing play from along the half-wall to set up Matvei Michkov at the goalmouth for a tap-in, but his stick got tied at the last second.

**Dylan Griffing:** August 2nd, 2021


Russia U18 vs. Finland U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

All of Perevalov’s puck touches came in the offensive zone this game. He failed to get involved off-the-puck in the defensive zone and was a passenger in offensive transitions, trailing behind the play so he could look for a soft spot on the ice to get a shooting chance. He did have good off puck movement in the offensive zone, though, to generate scoring chances for himself with solid routes. His shot looked good, as well, generating a lot of power on his release and

making the defensemen dance with body fakes, however his shot selection and timing were off, so he did find himself wasting chances. As the game progressed, he used this to his advantage by faking the shot and opting for passes to the slot instead, which resulted in two good chances for his line. As a forechecker, he was effective, getting right up on the puck carrier and using his stick and physicality to jostle the puck away and get back to work offensively.

**J.D. Burke:** August 2nd, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Finland U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Minutes were hard to come by for Perevalov, who spent much of this game on the fourth line, but he made the most of what was available to him. Had one great sequence relatively early in this contest. Lifted an opposing defenceman’s stick from behind as they attempted to break out, flashed some serious small-area skill, and fired a puck on net for a scoring chance and an offensive zone faceoff. Showed some real patience in this game, opting to hold the puck to let plays develop rather than taking the first option available to him. Good off-the-puck pace. 





119  
Rank

4.5  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

5.5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5  
Puckhandling

5.5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# MIKO MATIKKA

D | JOKERIT U20

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. OCT. 26, 2003  
WEIGHT 187 SHOOTS RIGHT

10%	13%	10%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s.	30	19	14	33
› Committed to Univ. of Denver				

## Scouting Report

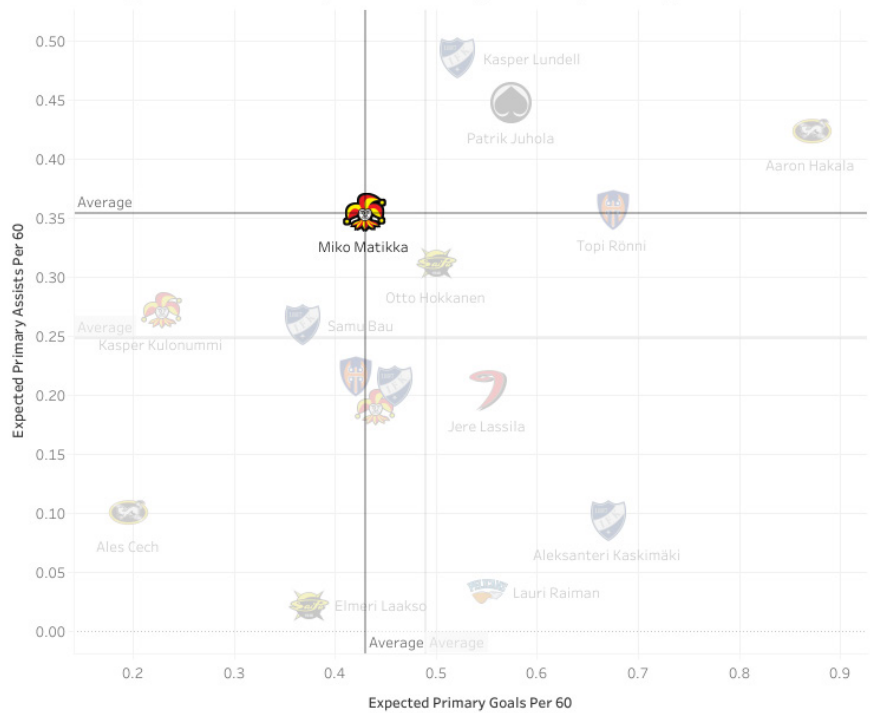
Miko Matikka has the size and the range to keep up with opponents and plaster them to the boards when the opportunity presents itself, but there's so much more to his game than just that.

He's a crafty passer, capable of dishing equally well with his forehand and backhand, under sticks and around opponents. He made some of the best passing plays in the Finnish U20 league this season.

"He identifies passing targets quickly and is able to make some one-touch plays. He's also comfortable with slip passes and passing under the defender's stick," Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen wrote in a game report last February. "He's clearly skilled in this area, but he wasn't consistently putting himself in positions to make use of the passing ability."

Matikka creates mostly through his hands, dangling his way past defenders on a game-to-game basis. Whether that will continue to be an effective part of his game at higher levels of competition remains to be seen, though. The Finnish forward's poor skating form could limit the effectiveness of his 1-on-1 game and his ability to make plays in the NCAA, much less the NHL. The first step towards building an NHL projectable game for Matikka is to

U20 SM-sarja 2021-2022: Expected Primary Points (5v5 only)



develop his skating and increase the pace at which he plays. He'll also have to round out the defensive part of his game, especially his stick work, as he tends to let opposing passes slide right past him with ease. That's a good set of starting points on the road to a lengthy career of professional hockey for the 6-foot-3 forward.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 19th, 2021

Jokerit vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Matikka found his way to the scoresheet twice. He opened the scoring on the power play with a wicked one-timer from the left half-wall that beat the goalie high far side, just over his shoulder. He also made the cross-ice feed to the game-winning goal in overtime. Aside from those points, it was a pretty lackluster effort. His pass receptions were off and the passing wasn't that great either, attempting cross-ice passes on the PP that were picked off, etc.. There were also weird mishandles off the rush. Skating looked fine for this level, probably grades out as 4.5. Showed some solid physical play in a few battles. He did get checked in the head in the second period but returned to the play shortly.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 12th, 2022

Jokerit vs. Lukko - U20 SM-sarja

One of the more forgettable performances from Matikka I've seen this season. He did have a few nice playmaking moments in the OZ. He identifies passing targets quickly and is able to make some one-touch plays. Also comfortable with slip passes and passing under defender's stick. He's clearly skilled in this area, but he wasn't consistently putting himself in positions to make use of the passing ability. Also in transition, he did make some poor passing choices and didn't scan properly, resulting in pucks thrown into the middle without a target. I thought that Matikka looked ok defensively in this one, though he's not someone who gets a very high grade in compete. He could be way more dominant physically if he played in such a way. Right now, he's more of a big-bodied, very skill-focused winger.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 2nd, 2022

Jokerit vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

No doubt one of the better Matikka showings from this season. Managed to find the back of the net on the power play with a quick and snappy wrister from the half wall. Also had a bunch of looks at 5-on-5, mostly creating for himself off the rush. I liked how he handled in his hip pocket for the most part, was able to keep defenders guessing. Some good playmaking moments too, displaying good vision. Not a manipulative passer, but recognizes open lanes and executes on them consistently. Some good transition moments, some forced dump-outs. He was on the ice protecting lead at the end of the game, which tells you something about how his coaches view him. I don't think he's a particularly strong defensive player, though, but with his projection, you'd want that he'll develop into more of a two-way threat.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 4th, 2021

Ässät vs. Jokerit - U20 SM-sarja

Matikka scored his fourth goal of the season off the rush, making a flashy toe drag to setup a shooting opportunity and ending up burying his own rebound. Matikka had some really good moments in this one, making a couple of clever feeds off the rush by adjusting the passing angle and also had a couple other chances himself. Skating looks like about average projection-wise; deep ankle flexion and knee bend, hunched over upper-body. From that to his handling and passing, there's a lot of tools to be a fan of. Consistency has been an issue for him, though, and even in this one, there were shifts where he didn't do basically anything.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 27th, 2021

Jokerit vs. JYP - U20 SM-sarja

Matikka was back from the injury that kept him out for quite a while and was skating on the second line and receiving power play time in the bumper role. He's a hard player to figure out for me. There are flashes of good offensive play, like when he protects the puck very effectively along the boards, handles at an above-average level or looks off his passing targets in the slot. His pace just isn't very high and there are some shift-to-shift consistency issues. I'm not sure if he's a legit off-puck threat either. He skates well enough for his size when he tries to do so.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 16th, 2020

HPK vs. Jokerit - U20 SM-sarja

Matikka played around 16 minutes on this one. There are flashes of good tools. His stride is very hunched over, but he's able to get a good amount of ankle flexion and decent knee bend, resulting in a decent stride form. He doesn't have blazing speed, but he's a solid skater for his size. His handling is probably the best part of his game. He has good puck control with dominant top hand and flashes deception skills. His vision is solid and he can manufacture entries and chances with hook and slip passes. It just wasn't very consistent shift-to-shift, and defensively he was much of a factor (little to no scanning, pretty low motor).

**Lassi Alanen:** October 9th, 2020

Ässät vs. Jokerit - U20 SM-sarja

Matikka had some flashes in this one. His skating seemed pretty decent for a player his size. He showed ankle flexion at times and decent crossovers (hunched over, though), having decent explosiveness with his first steps, too. He changed his pace a fair bit during shifts, not going at a single speed the entire time. He logged two shot attempts at even-strength,

# "Matikka creates mostly through his hands, dangling his way past defenders on a game-to-game basis. Whether that will continue to be an effective part of his game at higher levels of competition remains to be seen, though."

flashing good puck skills when he was coming down the wing off the rush. He fumbled a few pass receptions, though, and his passing accuracy wasn't that good. He had some good ideas, but the execution was lacking. Defensively, Matikka was pretty prone to puck-watching and overcommitting, which opened space on his side of the ice for a defenceman to pass to.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 2nd, 2020

Kärpät vs. Jokerit - U20 SM-sarja

Matikka made his best play in the first shift of the game. He received the puck in the defensive end, exited the zone with empty space, then deked around the defender, initially going inside and then putting the puck between his legs back to the outside, then punishing the read from the second defender by passing the puck to the slot for a high-danger chance. After that, there wasn't much in the way of meaningful offence. Matikka's skating is interesting. He has solid ankle flexion, but he's very hunched over and has the weight of his toes, not sitting very deeply in his stride and lacking knee bend. Could this be a result of lacking lower-body strength? Matikka is a very handling-focused player who's always looking to

beat defenders one-on-one with his dekes. When it works, it looks sick (like in the first shift of the game), but he also turned the puck over quite a bit by doing that. Defensively, he wasn't that impactful, making questionable reads and making some errors with his stick positioning.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 11th, 2020

Jokerit vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

Matikka played over 16 minutes in this one and got multiple shifts on the power play where he played on the left half wall. Matikka had a few highlights. He showed good handling ability, once deking the puck around the defender and once pulling it close to his body in tight, showing good dexterity. He had a few good passing plays, going through the royal road for a one-timer or making a timely cross-ice pass through the on a zone entry. Matikka's skating seemed fine for his size, though he lacked quickness and could have benefitted from a change of gear on a few transition plays. He did a fine job at trying to create passing lanes off-puck and made moves to the slot with regularity. Matikka has the frame to be more punishing and assertive along the boards.



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120  
Rank

4  
Skating

5.5  
Shooting

5  
Passing

C  
Grade

5.5  
Puckhandling

4.5  
Hockey Sense

5  
Physical

# ALEX BUMP

LW | OMAHA LANCERS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. NOV. 20, 2003  
WEIGHT 194 SHOOTS LEFT

7%	5%	1%	0.92
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHS-MN	31	48	35	83
USHL	27	11	6	17

## Scouting Report

Alex Bump was this year's breakout star of the Minnesota High School circuit, scoring five goals in Prior Lake's Class AA tournament debut to upset the No. 2-ranked team. When the dust settled, he amassed a staggering 2.68 points per game and won Minnesota AP Player of the Year. And if that wasn't impressive enough, two standout USHL stints sandwiched his high school season.

Some of the most impressive sequences our scouting staff all season were courtesy of Bump. Without any tell, he fluidly dekes through defenders along the perimeter to gain the zone. A textbook curl-and-drag wrister beats the defender and changes the angle in one motion. He's also a skilled two-touch and catch-and-release shooter.

While Bump leans shooting (often egregiously so), his playmaking consistently improved throughout the season. Early in the year, he was just a straight-line puck carrier who passed only after beating a defender. By the end, he was cutting back to wait for the trailer and making backhand passes off the boards. He even started manipulating defenders with deceptive puck positioning and movements,

even if just at low speeds.

Right now, "[Bump's] game looks best mechanically when he's preparing and executing certain skills, such as curl-and-drag wrister shots, deking from the boards, or shooting off the pass," according to Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown. Otherwise, posture becomes upright, his stability declines, and he becomes frustratingly reliant on the same few patterns. His puck touches are also innumerable because he's often late to arrive in pockets of space or disengages entirely.

As Bump continues to develop stronger links between his numerous skills, his defensive game should keep him on the ice. While inconsistent in the early stages, his energy, penchant for steals, and occasional proactive reads made him a noticeably strong defender down the stretch.

Given the improvement and advanced skills in specific areas, Bump seems to pick up new skills relatively quickly. That bodes well for his NHL odds. It'll require lots of time, but he could become a solid depth scorer in the lower portion of the lineup.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Omaha Lancers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Bump doesn't resemble the Bump in October. He's not just a single-speed, straight-line shooter anymore. Where he used to pull the trigger, he cuts back and waits for the trailer.

Sometimes, it's just a simple play. Others, he makes a more complex pass. This game, that was a look-off cross-slot pass through layers for a point-blank chance. His punch turn is more of an outside leg stop because he lacks depth. Keeps his weight on his heels. But he uses crossovers and looks for

give-and-go opportunities. Lots of defensive impact in this game through non-stop pressure and well-timed support. Suddenly, projecting him to the NHL becomes a lot easier. A shooter with some playmaking via a delay game. Could be a late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Omaha Lancers - USHL

I appreciate Bump because he's always doing something, which is far better than most USHL prospects. Mechanical limitations persist, including in his shot. Keeps that top hand locked to his side and tends to lean back, rather than forward. But he's a projectable off-the-pass shooter, turning passes into one-timers and catch-and-release wristers. Limited ankle flexion (barely gets his knees to his toes at the best of times) hinders the shot, handling, and quickness. Mostly plays to the outside when getting open; he needs to start getting inside defences and finding space to score at the next level (or even consistently in the USHL). Not a playmaker, and I didn't see the delays that have appeared recently. Doesn't manipulate opponents. In his best opportunity, he scanned, saw the defender in the lane, then tried to will the puck through them. He had a bunch of options there: threaten the inside to drag the defender's stick across, pull the puck into his feet before passing, fake the shot, or just try to outrace the defender to the net. He could be a late-rounder, but I doubt he makes our board. Combination of mechanical limitations and poor execution. But he's improved a ton and shows increasingly projectable ideas.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Omaha Lancers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Bump's game isn't all that complex, but there are flashes. He usually defaults to sprinting into space and hoping to shoot through defenders. This game, he delayed and found options twice. One was a clever backhand pass while managing backpressure, hanging onto the puck for an extra second to wait for two defenders to close in before passing. Standard outside leg wrister without any trickery, and he missed an opportunity to shoot off his inside leg for the in-stride release. Consistently hit the cross-ice pass on the breakout, starting from strong supporting position. Skating lacks ankle flexion and full extensions; keeps weight on his heels. Reaches instead of coming across the hips. He might be worth a late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 23rd, 2022

Fargo Force vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Alex Bump has a collection of interesting skills but struggles

## Closest pGPS Comparables

pGPS System by Jeremy Davis

1 Robin Bergman  
YEAR: 2007  
SIMILARITY 96%

2 Evan Rankin  
YEAR: 2004  
SIMILARITY 96%

3 Austin Ortega  
YEAR: 2012  
SIMILARITY 96%

4 Tim Jackman  
YEAR: 2000  
SIMILARITY 96%

5 Austin Czarnik  
YEAR: 2011  
SIMILARITY 95%

6 Joel L'Esperance  
YEAR: 2014  
SIMILARITY 95%

7 Mike Marnell  
YEAR: 2013  
SIMILARITY 95%

8 Jordan Samuels-Thoma  
YEAR: 2009  
SIMILARITY 95%

9 Thomas Di Pauli  
YEAR: 2012  
SIMILARITY 95%

10 Sam Warning  
YEAR: 2011  
SIMILARITY 95%

to link them together or choose the best times to use them. The highlight was an in-motion pass reception, followed by a deke just as the defender turned their feet. He picked the puck on the other side, slowed down, shifted his weight to his outside leg and angled his toes inwards, curling the puck around the defender for a high-danger chance. Lacked some ankle flexion through the shot, but it's that Bump has skills. Then, he tried the shot twice more and failed. He doesn't usual manipulate defenders, and when he tries, he does it in a glide. Shoots when he should pass for the better play, and he's late to recognize passing options in all three zones. Defensively, he's somewhat instinctual. Gets stops by anticipating passes and movements of opposing players. His game looks best mechanically when he's preparing and execution certain skills, such as curl-and-drag wrister shots, deking from the boards, or shooting off the pass. When he's not, he lacks ankle flexion, stability, and details. Tends to reach and give up his stride too early. Off-puck instincts has moments, but mostly seem like a weakness. There's an argument to make our board given the skills. It comes down to developing better mechanics and skills underneath them.

**Daniel Gee:** March 12th, 2022

Prior lake vs Hill-Murray - USHS-MN

I'm still not the biggest fan of Bump, but I appreciate his game more than I have before. While much of what he does out there is not translatable, there is skill present here.

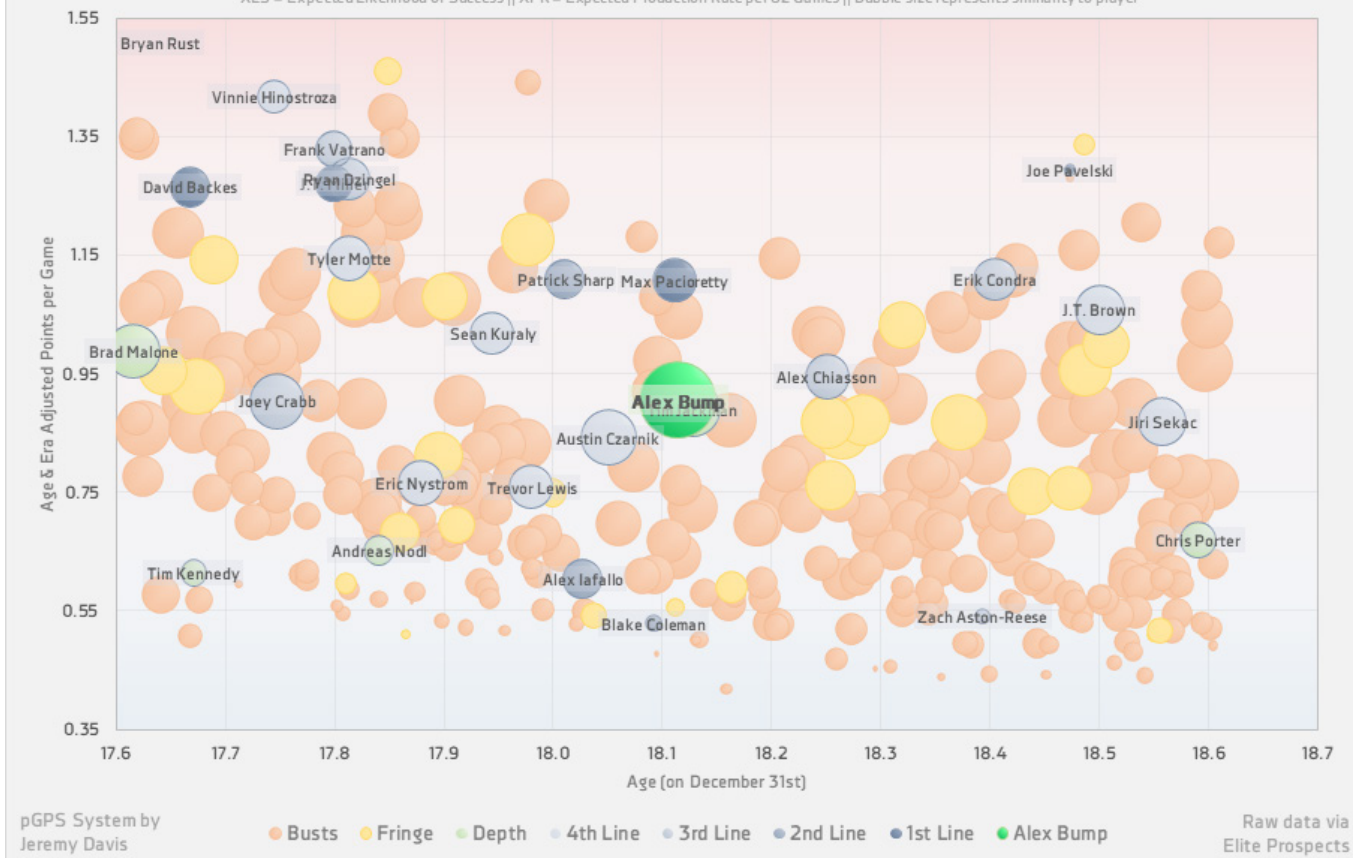
Bump is still as predictable as ever on the rush. His process

## Alex Bump 2021-22 USHL pGPS Cohort Plot

Statistically similar players from historical databases coloured by NHL success.

Matches = 312 || Base XLS: 7% || Impact XLS: 2% || XPR: 33.2 || Drafted Pct: 26%

XLS = Expected Likelihood of Success || XPR = Expected Production Rate per 82 Games || Bubble size represents similarity to player



is simple; carry the puck in the offensive zone, attack the defender directly, execute a toe drag or a bump forward deke, and try an outreached shot. So many examples of this in this game, almost all the shot attempts are limited by the lack of weight transfer and reaching he has to do -- if he didn't smash the puck into the defenders leg. What was most noticeable however is how many of these opportunities he got from stripping pucks in the neutral zone -- constant pick-pockets from static positions. He did not have the same success in the USHL action I watched. Skating also blends negatively. He can't handle in stride, he's on his toes almost exclusively, and lacks lateral edge work and manipulation. Possesses a level of tunnel vision on odd-man rushes, -- will almost always shoot -- completely looked off an open Schumacher to shoot five-hole. Has some ability to slip pucks and does hunt for some pass-off-pad chances.

More impactful in sustained pressure. He scored a minute into this game planted in the slot with no coverage. Bump absolutely wires passes in the OZ, to the point where teammates can't handle them. Executed some interesting maneuvers in this viewing -- on one shift he pulled off a stutter, inside-outside move to beat a defender and feed a man in the bumper. Some look-off passing ability as well -- pulled off a really nice pass in the third on the powerplay.

Forechecking is half-hearted at best. Reaches on all his defensive actions and doesn't help on the backcheck if the player isn't near him.

If Bump can diversify out of one handle, learn to execute in motion, and up his pace in all three zones, he can maybe be a depth scorer -- lot's of work to do here though.

**Daniel Gee:** November 11th, 2021

Sioux City Stampede vs Omaha Lancers - USHL

Bump is such a frustrating player to watch. Mainly because he flashes some real scoring potential tool-wise, but, at the end of the day, he is always somewhat limited by poor habits and sense-based issues.

On his very first shift, Bump followed a dumped puck in, shifted to the net front, and popped in a great backpass from a teammate who won the long puck retrieval. Beyond that, Bump's game consisted of constant inefficient tow-drags and pass look-offs. His most egregious play was a first period sequence; while on-puck a 2-on-1 developed, and bump attempted a really awful shot, not even looking to pass through the defenders triangle. The handling issues can't be understated. He tries to execute his handles in bad times. He only toe-drags essentially and is very predictable. He also lacks the skating ability to effectively blend his hands. Most

of Bump's transitional on-puck sequences are: Carry the puck in the perimeter, toe-drag the closest pressure, and shoot, regardless of pressure and pass options. In sustained pressure Bump saw most of his pressure during powerplay sequences. His shot is strange (arm locked to hip limiting upper body leveraging, but release is deceptive). In the second he had a sequence where he walked downhill off the left-wing, but Bump telegraphed a five-hole shot. In the third, Bump made a really nice slot cut, to leverage his shot in the crease -- it was saved. It's a weapon at the USHL-level at least.

In general he Bump's defensive efforts are enough to constitute a DND status. He gives up on the backcheck regularly. He is a straight-up pylon in the neutral zone, lazy in his attempts to even create a morsel of resistance (he reaches to try and poke pucks away). Very limited defensive posture -- upright with arms disengaged. He had one shift where he reached heavily to pokecheck a puck carrier in the slot -- concerning. Scanning habits? Battle? There's some issues here, at least in this viewing.

**Daniel Gee:** November 6th, 2021

Omaha Lancers vs Fargo Force - USHL

Conflicting first viewing of Bump, who had his fingerprints all over this game, exploding offensively, and showing some less than desirable habits.

Bump's skating is clearly below average, even for the USHL. Recoveries are wide, shortening his subsequent push-offs, hips don't sit deep enough affecting his knee bend, and he heel kicks wildly . He's uncontrolled mechanically, crossovers being his main separation tool -- shoulders bobbing hard as he cuts and knee-bend non-existent. This is really apparent transitionally, an area of the game that Bump is just inefficient. On-puck carries almost always devolved wide for Bump, fruitless handling plays with limited momentum leading to turnovers. Lack of an in-motion element and deke-selection issues. Just not enough problem solving, inside activations, or execution. His best transitional carry was actually a play in which he pulled off a stop-up. Bump then avoided a check, spun on another cut-back, but sent a puck across the ice to no one. He's better on retrievals and dump-and-chase plays. Bump is super strong, out-muscling end-board retrieving defenders. On one shift he did just that, handling to drag around a pokecheck but flubbed his shot as he centered. Some element of manipulation when he has space. In overtime, Bump stole a puck to create a 2-on-1, faked a shot, pulled the puck behind an outreached stick and connected on the cross crease to ice the game.

In sustained pressure, Bump was typically looking to leverage his above-average shot. He telegraphs his attempts,

but there is some ability to shoot through and around opponents. He snipped an incredible goal in the second off the top of the left-hand circle on the powerplay. (Omaha plants him on the circle and funnels pucks through him.)The release and wrist-roll was wicked but his elbow is locked to his hip -- partly due to his penchant to shoot on his inside leg. Some ability to facilitate the cycle; actively targets teammates in dangerous shots around the crease -- definitely isn't shot-only oriented.

In terms of defensive impact, Bump was lacking; too much puck watching, floating high, not involved in Fargo overload of his crease. Passiveness was really an issue; on one goal against he had multiple opportunities to create resistance and opted not to. Improved as the game went on, however. Started to leverage frame and strength to win pucks. Got a surprising penalty-kill shift late where he showed a good level of constraint occupying a lane, leading to clear. Was a bit nasty in this game; absolutely leveled a player away from the puck with a crosscheck. Question how far his shot can take him with his skating, handling issues, and habits. At least he has a separating tool? How will he be able to leverage it at higher levels?

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Fargo Force vs. Omaha Lancers - USHL

The best performance I've seen some Bump. The usual stuff applied: skating concerns, an inability to play through contact despite having body positioning, and concerning rush patterns and routes. But instead of looking to gain the zone and shoot, he started passing. Connected with a wicked curl-and-drag pass for a cross-slot assist. Used eye deception to misguide defenders on multiple occasions. Made the one-pass-away play -- seeing the middle-lane driver, then passing to a teammate in a better position to connect with them. An infrequent scanner and forces plays that aren't there. Motor on the defensive end continues to impress, even if he's reactionary. Might be a late-rounder. He has skills but currently, there's not much interaction between them.

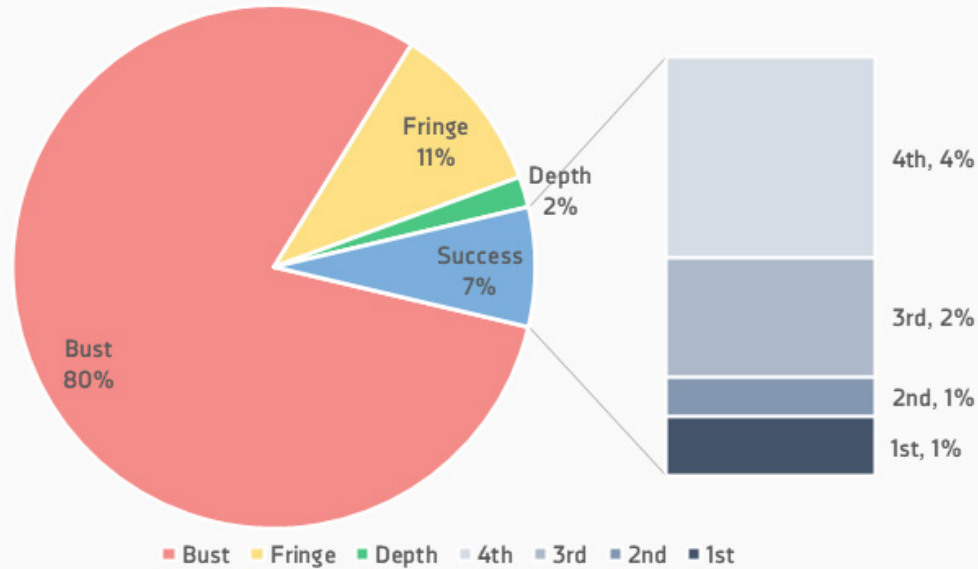
**Mitchell Brown:** October 16th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Omaha Lancers - USHL

Bump has moments of skill, but lacks details. Transition's game the biggest issue: he's just a straight-line deker. Doesn't make defenders move their feet or create advantages. Inside the offensive end, he establishes body positioning, makes early contact, and shows an awareness of options. Doesn't make the best play, and his skating prevents him absorbing contact, but he has the framework for better offensive play. More looks to get open on the weak side, once getting a

## Alex Bump 2021-22 USHL pGPS XLS% Tier Chart

A breakdown of likelihoods of hitting specific deployment tiers based on statistical cohort.



catch-and-release wrister. Shot's deceptive, but lacking in mechanical refinement. Active defensively, both in terms of supporting and pressuring. Not a proactive player, but he generally understands where to position himself. A couple steals across the ice from reading the play and getting in lanes. He's a fringe pick at this stage.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Omaha Lancers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Bump didn't show many NHL skills in this game. Mostly a shooter with a one crafty backhand pass to the trailer for a better look. Locked into straight-line, single-speed rushes and doesn't use his teammates enough. Limited off-puck instincts, both in terms of supporting the play and getting open for scoring chances. Anticipates turnovers on the forecheck, but lacked notable puck-winning skills. Little ice time and an early season viewing - won't weigh this one too heavily.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 1st, 2021

Omaha Lancers vs. Des Moines Buccaneers - USHL

Bump's transition game is nightmare fuel. He doesn't really change directions or pace; just attacks in straight lines down the board until he turns the puck over. Always problem-solves with dekes, never passes. They usually fail. Now, when the deke isn't just a last-ditch effort, he has success. The hesitations, including the heel-to-heel step, are projectable. Bump actually shows a fair bit of skill in the offensive zone, too. He gets open (usually along the perimeter for shot), makes early contact on retrievals to separate, and sometimes makes a quick pass from the boards to avoid the cycle entirely. Scored with a deceptive outside leg wrister on the PP, keeping his blade closed, then showing short-side just before firing low on the far side. Crafty play. The tools are probably barely NHL average projections, with the skating likely being below-average from an constantly too-upright stance. Still, if develops a more nuanced approach to offence, he could get there.





121  
Rank

C  
Grade

5.5  
Skating

6  
Tracking

3.5  
Transitions

4.5  
Post

4.5  
Hands

5  
Depth

# TOPIAS LEINONEN

G | JYP U20

HEIGHT 6'5"  
WEIGHT 234

D.O.B. JAN. 25, 2004  
CATCHES LEFT

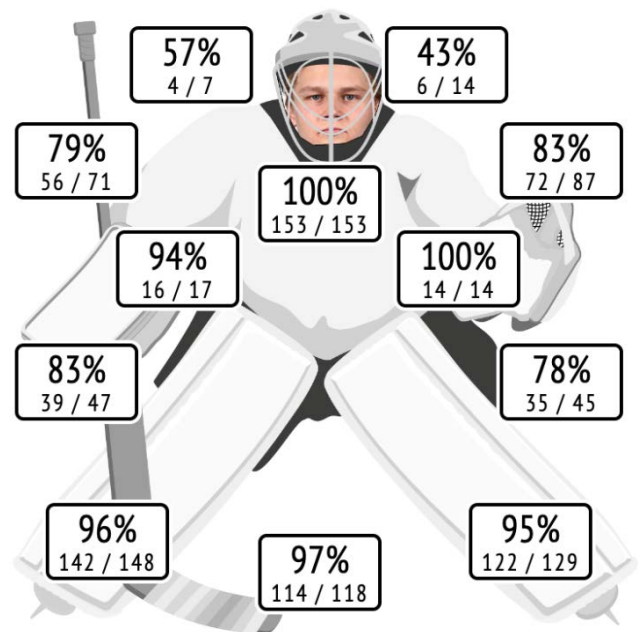
LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
U20 SM-sarja	21	2.28	.916	2
Liiga	4	5.02	.825	0
WJC-18	5	2.61	.897	-

## Scouting Report

There's just something about Topias Leinonen that makes you want to fall in love with his game - but on the flip side, there's also just something about him that doesn't quite seem to have lined up for him yet.

He's got the height and the movement patterns that suggest he'll make a name for himself as a goaltender with a quick, crisp style, and he's got the kind of tracking movement that suggests he's spent plenty of time studying play patterns and how to anticipate what's going to happen next. But somehow - possibly thanks to boasting the kind of lanky build that can take athletes years to grow into - he just doesn't seem to put the two parts of his game together smoothly; he still plays with a bit of a stutter-step and a bit of a delay to his movements that suggests he's still figuring out his own pacing and spatial relationship to his own crease.

If he can put it all together, there's a lot to like - but until he does, there's still a bit too much to pick apart on each goal allowed to feel true confidence in him.



## Game Reports

**Lassi Alanen:** March 30th, 2019

Jokerit vs. JYP - Jr. C SM-liiga

Leinonen has been one of the most promising goalies in his age group for a while, and he had a very solid game despite JYP losing 1-3 against Jokerit in the Finnish U16 league playoffs. Leinonen made a couple of highlight-reel saves and none of the goals he conceded were clearly his

fault. Leinonen is a very well-rounded netminder. He is very tall for his age and takes away big portions of the net very well. Leinonen stands out due to his hockey sense and athleticism, and he is really hard to beat with a clean shot. Leinonen also has very good puck-handling skills behind the net and he isn't afraid to use them.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

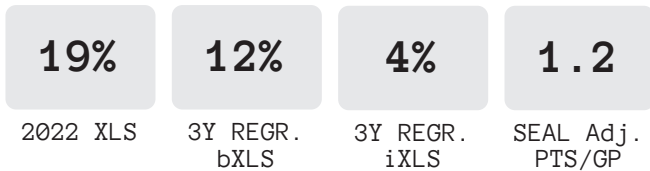


Physical

# RYAN ABRAHAM

C | WINDSOR SPITFIRES

HEIGHT 5'8" D.O.B. APR. 5, 2004  
WEIGHT 168 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	64	15	31	46

## Scouting Report

The cancelled 2020-2021 OHL season made the slow starts that many top prospects endured understandable. Through 36 games, Ryan Abraham, a first-round pick in the OHL Draft, was scoring at just 0.5 points per game. In the 40-plus games since, he's clicking away at a 0.9 point per game clip, much more aligned with his skill level.

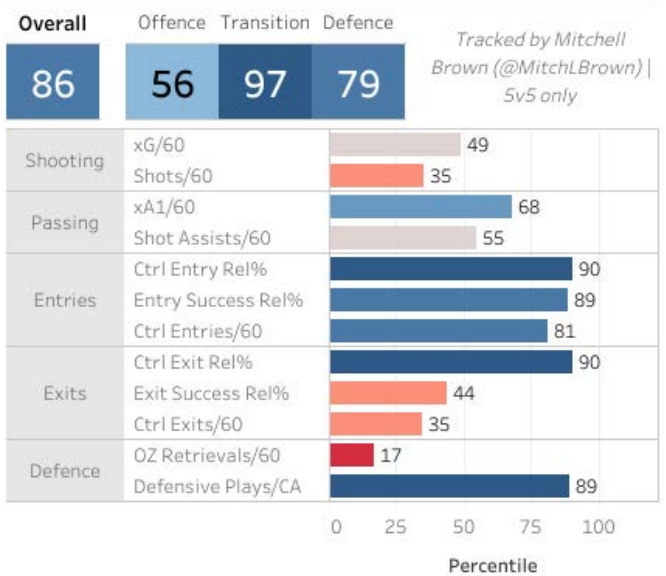
Abraham clearly has the puck skills to turn that second-half 0.9 points per clip into 1.3 or even 1.5 in subsequent years. Where many players try to outrace defenders, he gears down or hesitates to bait the defender to slow or reach in, then continues. The best of these handling sequences takes him from the boards to the inside lane, creating a scoring chance.

A subtly effective player along the boards, Abraham uses heel-to-heels to face the perimeter, dexterous handling to slip pucks through defenders, and well-timed cutbacks to get pressure on his back.

With the offence comes defensive value, as Abraham's an intelligent worker. He angles plays to the outside, supports plays down low, and gets with well-timed dashes to the point.

While Abraham's skilled, he lacks the extra layer of skill that players in his archetype usually need to make the NHL. "He's not much of a problem-solver or adapter," Elite Pros-

Games Tracked: 5 | Minutes Tracked: 70.0



pects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a late-season game report. "He lacked the foot speed and skill to do some damage from the advantageous situations he created."

Applying his crafty handling, passing, and skating skills to a more manipulative style of play could give him the extra layer he needs to make the NHL.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: March 26th, 2022

Windsor Spitfires vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Abraham flubbed a high-danger opportunity and didn't

create anything for the rest of the game. While a skilled skater who uses the heel-to-heel and can punch turn around both legs, he can't separate with them. When he's not proactively

cutting to the inside, he's locked to the perimeter – that's what happened in this game. He's not much of a problem-solver or adapter player, so it's tough to see how he carves out a role in the NHL. Defensively, he's solid. Gets above the puck, then angles. He's engaged and sprints for loose pucks and to disrupt potential shooters. Don't see the path to the NHL yet.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 12th, 2022

Windsor Spitfires vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Abraham has some solid ideas, especially in transition. He cuts inside across the front of the defender, allowing him to set up opportunities to beat defenders with speed, shoot from the inside, cutback, delay, or find the trailer. Mostly shot in this one. And he lacked the foot speed and skill to do some damage from the advantageous situations he created. Changes pace but doesn't wait for the reaction of the defender before acceleration. Lacks balance and stability when leaned on. Didn't look like a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 16th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. Windsor Spitfires - OHL

Abraham didn't do much in the early stages of this game. He skated until he ran out of space, showing little awareness of how to move possession to the inside and floated instead of moving to get open. But, as the game wore on, he started creating. Turned a bobbled puck into a reactionary deke and a clean entry up the middle. Set-up a chance with a cross-slot while falling, after recovering his own turnover. Hesitation moves to freeze defenders, but he lacks a proper delay game to hit the trailer or create options. Mostly an outside lane player who relies on pace as he scans the inside for an opportunity. He has NHL skill, but it's strewn throughout his game rather than combined and sequenced. Maybe he's a late-round flyer.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Windsor Spitfires vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Outside speed. That's the name of the game for Abraham. Heel-to-heel to scan for threats inside. Hesitation moves to slow down defenders before taking the outside lane. Lacks foresight as he consistently continues forward instead of delaying or cutting inside. Clearly has the handling skill and

skating to do those, however. One-timer for an assist on the powerplay, but he's far from a clever or mechanically sound shooter at 5-on-5. Works defensively, gets the odd steal on the forecheck because of his pace, and generally tries to get above the puck when necessary. In defensive zone coverage, he lacks foresight and awareness of threats, but he positions himself well enough to disrupt plays on the recovery. Not sure he's a draft pick. His style isn't conducive to NHL success, but he has the hands and skating.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 28th, 2021

Guelph Storm vs. Windsor Spitfires - OHL

Abraham made two quality offensive plays in this one. For his goal, he shook off a defender, popped into the slot, and finished the rebound. Later, he retrieved his own failed pass, c-stepped around the perimeter while facing the slot, and feathered a pass around two sticks for a one-time chance on the other side of the ice. He's turnover-prone in transition, either by poor passing decisions or running himself straight into pressure with no escape plan. Some jump on the backcheck and his work on the forehand consistently stood out. Disruptive, even if a bit lacking in foresight. He looked like a later-round prospect in this game, but there's a lot of potential for more.

**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

USA U18 vs. Sweden U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Some interesting moments from Abraham in this contest, in which he was undoubtedly the best American forward. Some really deceptive passing plays in this contest to set up a number of scoring chances. Has really nice touch as a distributor. Scans off-puck and completes what should be difficult one-touch passing sequences with relative ease, often through bodies and sticks. Needs to move his feet more. Really poor skating habits. Everything happened at a glide or a complete standstill until about the third period, at which point he decided to go full-Antonio Stranges and deploy the mohawk every time the puck was on his stick. Not sure this is a player you should draft, but might be interesting as a late-round flier.





Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# BRENNAN ALI

C | AVON OLD FARMS SCHOOL

HEIGHT 6'1"

D.O.B. FEB. 9, 2004

WEIGHT 201

SHOOTS LEFT

1%

2022 XLS

2%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

1%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.75

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHS-Prep	27	15	19	34
USHL	9	0	2	2
USDP	2	0	1	1

## Scouting Report

There's never taking a shift off, and then there's Brennan Ali. Every second of every shift, he's working. He sprints for every loose puck, applies non-stop pressure, and throws himself into the puck carrier. Where many players, justifiably, coast, he keeps his foot on the gas pedal for the chance that he could impact the play.

Most of Ali's offensive impact comes through the work rate. He finishes every off-puck route, backing off defenders and creating space behind him. Second and third efforts win battles, and then he looks to the net. He also has moments of creativity, like a give-and-go, cutback into a net-drive, or delay before passing to the trailer.

To turn these moments into regular plays, Ali must refine his mechanics and add layers. His skating's wildly inconsistent, sometimes achieving near-adequate depth and other times not getting close. The variance provides a shaky base, where he struggles to find separation, fights the puck, and lacks speed despite his motor. He's also not a deceptive or particularly patient player with the puck, leading to turnovers.

While the lack of nuance to Ali's game led to his omission from our final ranking, players with his athletic qualities and motor often exceed expectations. He could become a fourth-liner in the NHL.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Sioux Falls Stampede vs. Lincoln Stars - USHL

Ali drew a penalty by hitting the brakes then deking around a defender. Some creativity on breakouts, using teammates on the inside and weak side. Much worse when gaining the zone. In one sequence, he skated directly into his teammate as he tried to cut inside. This game was stop-and-go with all the penalties, so Ali didn't get a ton of touches in prime spots. No indication of his shooting or passing skill. Strides lack a bit of hip engagement, but otherwise seems sound. Shows a strong preference for his inside edges. Motor looks like a potential standout skill. But just not enough to make a projection on.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Des Moines Buccaneers vs. Lincoln Stars - USHL

Ali loves to skate. He skates non-stop. For every loose puck. He finishes every off-puck route. He sprints where most players would glide. He just goes. He also understands body positioning; he gets low, fights to his leg in front of the opponent's, then skates through their hands. He has some crafty passing ideas, but only in a glide. Some interesting off-puck ideas - slip behind defenders, pop into space at the right moments. It often seems like he's fighting the puck. The wildly inconsistent skating is the culprit. Sometimes, he gets almost enough ankle flexion. Other times, he's not

even close. Can't get knee-over-knee inside his crossovers. His feet flail violently. But when the skating gets deeper, he shows some agility and handling skill. He wants to play on the inside and generally uses his teammates effectively. Upside looks low and he's far away from achieving it.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Omaha Lancers vs. Des Moines Buccaneers - USHL

Ali's a worker. He sprints for every puck. Always give himself a chance. Very disruptive in all three zones. He also has some ideas with the puck: a give-and-go after cutting inside, driving the net from the corners, and getting pressure on his back with well-timed cutbacks. Most of this plays fail or he barely completes them. Skating and skill level's largely at fault. His depth changes wildly, and since he's a hand-to-side handler, he ends up fighting the puck with these choppy motions. He's also not deceptive, telegraphing most of his plays. Keeps puck centred, requiring a lengthy wind-up to make the next play. Requires a glide to make plays, where he's most stable. While I appreciate his game, his mechanical limitations might prove too limiting.

**Daniel Gee:** March 3rd, 2022

Lincoln Stars vs Des Moines Buccaneers - USHL

Ali was full-value effort-wise against Des Moines, his motor and energy permeated throughout his shifts.

Most of his impact came in transition, forcing turnovers and miss plays on the forecheck, subsequently working counter-attacks off of those stops. For example, in the first he enveloped and stole a puck being broken out, executing a power move crease crash -- able to get the puck on his forehand in tight, but was ultimately pulled down. Later, he stripped a puck out of a far board pile up, but was pretty uncontrolled on the counter-attack, scrambling, losing control, but ultimately able to poke the puck forward. He had a couple more forechecking sequences that created turnovers -- he swings so aggressively in the neutral zone, I just wonder if better puck carriers would just simply manipulate past him at higher-levels. It doesn't help that he has a bunch of mechanical issues with his stride, regardless of his high foot speed. Ali is basically always on his inside edges and he falls backwards while crossing over. He showed some ability to change his rush-patterns and work pucks to trailers, but in general he seems limited by his tools. A good example is the shift where he recorded an assist. Ali was able to chip a puck deep off a DZ faceoff, falling forward on his toes as he increased his pace. He drove the far-boards and was angled off to the end boards -- his teammate came into support and scored on a wrap-around. Play ain't really translatable

at all and probably leads to a turnover 90% of the time. He didn't have any sustained offensive zone shifts worth of note further exacerbating concerns about his ability to translate to higher levels effectively.

Ali had one epic defensive play that lines up with his effort. He made a full rink backcheck, overcoming teammates and opponents to help angle off an entering puck carrier. In sustained pressure he is puck focused however. Probably not a pick for our board.

**Daniel Gee:** January 19th, 2022

Northfield Mount H.S. vs Avon Old Farms - USHS-Prep

Not the greatest viewing of Ali, who really didn't dominate the level of competition. Frankly, he lacked creativity, and his tools looked average at best in this game.

Probably his best asset is his high-revving motor; he's constantly moving and pushing pace for better or worse. Most of his carry attempts start with some sort of forced turnover in his own zone, and then an inefficient action that leads to a turnover. His tools and sense blend often fail him. He will attempt long, highly contested shots, only to have the puck blocked within feet of his release point, he stops moving his feet while he handles leading to easy gap-ups, and when he doesn't win retrievals, hope passes kill any chance of converting motor-generated puck recoveries into any form of offense. For instance in the third, Ali chased down a puck on fair-boards, powered wide, and hope-passed a puck into the crease, devoid of an actual target. The positives are, when Ali is facing a defender with bad body positioning, he does have some ability to beat them one-on-one. He destroyed a defender in the first, executing a weight-shift inside-outside handle as his opponent pivoted. Ali then baited a pokecheck, beat the defender again before losing the puck. Just straight up struggled to string actions together. Instinctually, Ali does bisect open lanes well on-puck, changing his pace to cut through defenders spacing.

The forechecking and retrieval play is an obvious asset in sustained pressure. He works an inordinate amount of pucks free through his forechecking efforts and can generally escape pressure. Question his shooting ability off-puck -- had a gift of a centering pass with limited pressure, and he failed to catch-and-release the puck adequately. A very typical Ali shift occurred in the second; he drilled a defender in the near corner, established body positioning to protect the puck from incoming support, and then flubbed a short two foot pass immediately after.

Defends well enough at the USHS level. Backchecking harassment created issues for Hermon Schools transition. He's an active scanner on the penalty kill, and his physicality is a

clear plus. He looks like a late pick to me, someone who can provide some value in a bottom-six role. His touch is really rough and it makes me wonder if that will become an even larger compounding issue in the NCAA.

**Daniel Gee:** January 1st, 2022

Omaha Lancers vs Lincoln Stars - USHL

Ali played under ten minutes in this game against Omaha, but it was kind of incredible how much pace he pushed throughout his few shifts. This is apparent transitionally, an area of the game where Ali should excel, but falters slightly due to some decision-making and execution errors. On-puck is where most of the issues arise. Some of Ali's shooting decisions are questionable at best, hunting high placements off the wing with pass options filing through the dotted-lines. Passing execution was also a bit of an issue in this viewing -- not sure if the infrequency of his shifts was a factor in this. There is an attempt to connect skill plays; split passes in motion, exploiting the defenders open triangle, etc, but a botched two-on-one pass, and a turnover off a neutral zone slip pass were the most apparent mistakes in this game. To his credit, he hit a couple teammates with long bomb outlet passes so it's hard to discern a pattern right now. Off-puck, Ali's transitional game is excellent. He's very inside oriented and changes his pace to occupy open pockets of ice (as a trailing pass option).

He had a couple incredible sequences in his short amount of minutes through his off-puck game. In the first he took a backpass as a trailer, cut into the slot, popped the puck over the blade of the defender, jumped around them to get back on puck, and tried to slip a pass through his legs as he crashed the crease. Later in the second Ali worked in off the right-wing and took a questionable shot, but he was able to recover the puck out of the far corner, completing a layered cross-ice pass across his body while working high. He then shifted to the wide open slot (didn't get the pass) and moved to support and win a puck battle. Ali then took the puck high again, and pivoted at a sharp 180-degree cut through an

open lane, unleashing a shot and followed up on the rebound crashing through a couple of defenders. It was an incredible shift. He is always first on pucks and won practically every retrieval he went for.

Ali appears to have an above-average shot based on what I saw in this game; he changes the angle, unlocks his arm from his body -- all aided by his inside-oriented play. High-danger attempts. Looks like a pick based on his tools and mentality.

**Daniel Gee:** December 31st, 2021

Tri-City Storm vs Lincoln Stars - USHL

Not the most flattering viewing of Ali, who's play directly led to two goals against. Sporadic minutes (under 10) and a lack of touches led to essentially no generation on the offensive end of the ice.

Ali looked out of his depth, committing some cardinal sense-based mistakes. In the first, while at the end of the shift, he carried the puck out of his zone, and released a saucer-backhand pass through layers that was instantly picked off on his blue-line, leading to a rebound goal after the breakaway chance. Later in the period he fell under pressure high in the offensive zone, propelling the puck towards his net, leading to another breakaway and goal. While Ali was typically hard-working in this game, his decision-making and execution were questionable. Weird forechecking routes, beaten by simple misdirections, passive and uninvolved defensively after rushing back to support -- strange game in general. Regardless he did make a stop in the third, getting his stick on a planted Tri-City player in the slot, preventing a centering shot. He supported some perimeter plays in the offensive zone as well.

Overestimated his skating ability in another viewing. While he possesses pace and can achieve aiding biomechanics like knees-over-toe bend and recoveries landing under his core, he degrades after his first few initial push-offs. Heel kicks, wide recoveries, and limited-to-no extensions appear. Didn't look like the same player from the Jan 1st viewing, looked like a no-draft, actually.





Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# TIM ALMGREN

C | ÖREBRO HK J20

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JUL. 18, 2004  
WEIGHT 152 SHOOTS RIGHT

9%

2022 XLS

6%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

4%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J18 Reg.	10	4	9	13
J18 Nat.	4	2	5	7
J20 Nat.	44	19	21	40

## Scouting Report

The best tool in Tim Almgren's toolkit is his skating stride. His strong mechanical base and rail-thin frame give him a ton of open-ice explosiveness.

Only making matters better is the fact that this Swedish centre has committed himself to playing a high-pace brand of hockey. He tries to take every pass in movement – preferably in rapid crossovers – to create a speed difference with his opponents. It's an advantage that he then leverages to get to soft ice for scoring chances or reach teammates in those same spaces.

Almgren is now at a crossroads in his career, though, as he won't be able to rely only on his skating alone to create offence in the NHL. Currently, he needs a lot of runway to

launch his attacks, something he won't be there for him in the big leagues. There, most of his plays will have to be made under a lot more pressure.

"He lacks physical strength and cannot overcome that with neither skating, puck skills or hockey sense," Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin wrote in a January report. "This is something he needs to overcome if he wants to have a successful career at senior levels."

There wasn't enough there from Almgren this season to warrant serious consideration on the final Elite Prospects draft ranking, but further development of his game could portend a future in the NHL as a speedy bottom-six winger.

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**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 9th, 2022

Linköpings HC vs. Örebro HK - J20 Final Four

Tim is a good and agile skater. His skating is a weapon. He can transport the puck through traffic if he times his skating the right way. He likes to get the puck at full speed which makes him look faster than he is.

Almgren has a dangerous wrist shot. He moves the puck to move the goalie when he shoots. He has good control of the puck at speed.

Almgren's hockey sense is quite good. He does not control pace or find open spaces on an above average level but he makes small smart things ahead of the play like time his speed to get an upper hand on his opponents. He can use both his hands and brain to open up space.

Almgren's biggest weakness is his softness. He rarely wins battles and does not seem to want to engage physically.

All in all he has average to above average feet, hands and brain but below average heart and muscle. Mid to late round pick for me.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 28th, 2022

Växjö vs. Örebro - J20 Nationell

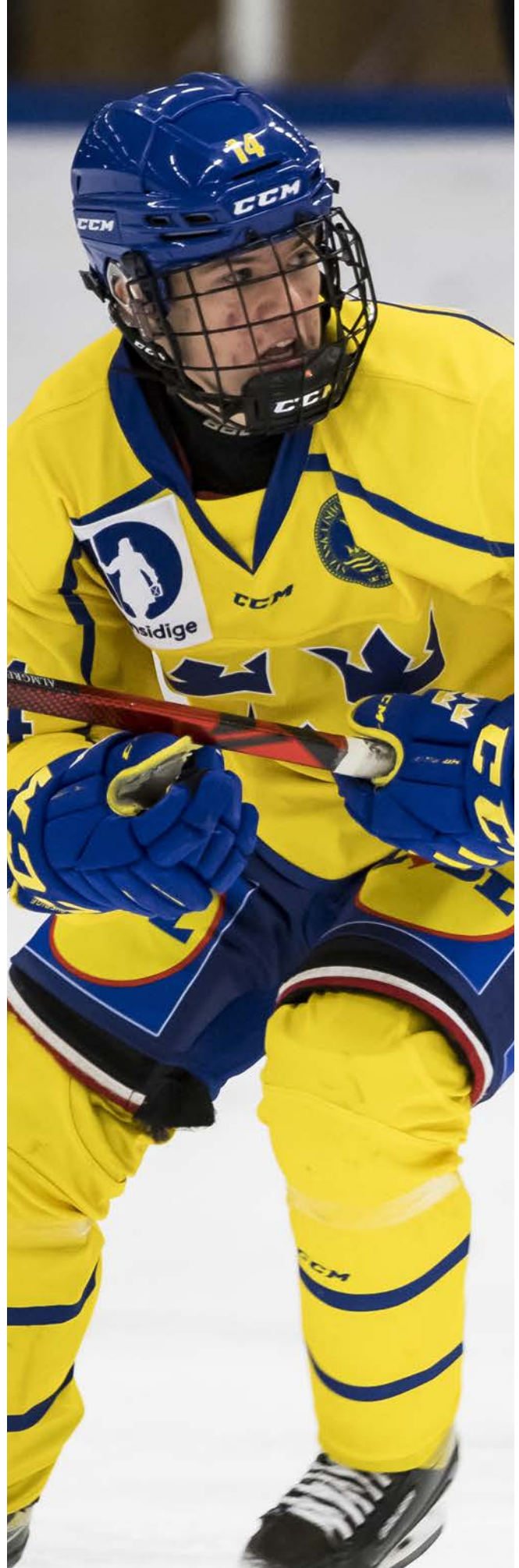
Tim played over 20 minutes in a tight overtime game. He did not put up any points in the game and had two shots.

Tim is a good skater. His technique is foundationally good. His balance comes from his lower-body and the stride is long and effective. He can play at a high pace without using much energy. He needs to add more physical power in his strides though and lacks separation speed at this point.

Tim has decent puck skills and a very good shot. He plays in all offensive situations and is most dangerous with his shot. He has a quick release and is dangerous from distance as well. He does not need much room to shoot. His passing skills and overall puck handling is average. He cannot drive the play, or create space with the skill of his hands. He does not seem aware of options either. His hockey sense is average with the puck. Without the puck I like how he supports offensively and makes himself open to a pass. In the offensive zone he will try to find an opportunity to be ready for a shot if he gets the pass.

Defensively he is not a strong forechecker. He shys away from puck battles and has a hard time winning battles. He had some sequences in the game where he carried the puck but was shut down and lost the puck. He lacks physical strength and cannot overcome that with neither skating, puck skills or hockey sense. This is something he needs to overcome if he wants to have a successful career at senior levels. For the draft, I would not consider him in the first three rounds. His skating technique implies that he has room to develop to a speedy forward and his shot is a weapon.

 P







Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

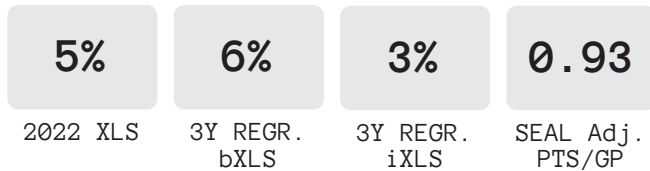


Physical

# LIAM ARNSBY

C | NORTH BAY BATTALION

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. NOV. 20, 2003  
WEIGHT 183 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	46	9	17	26

## Scouting Report

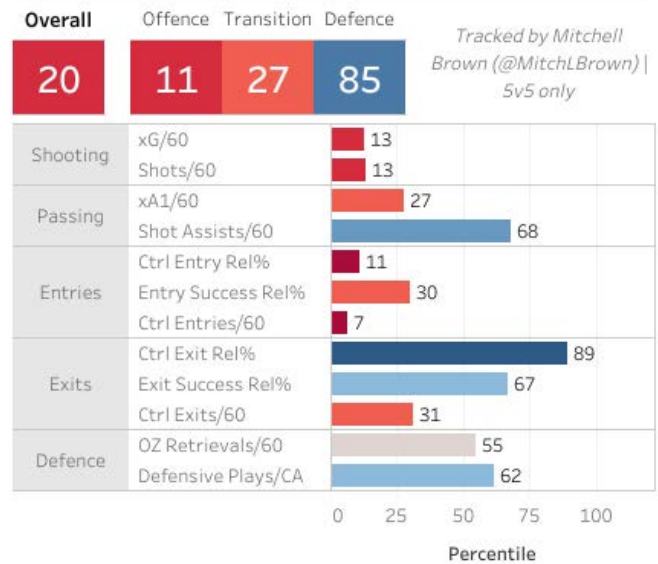
Being the captain of a CHL team as a draft-eligible is enough to drum up NHL interest on its own. For Liam Arnsby, that prestige also comes with several interesting NHL elements.

Defence and physical play drive Arnsby's value. He's astute defensively, scanning for threats and eliminating them," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote early in the season. "He overwhelms with back pressure and non-stop support. Physical, often extremely so, and constantly looks to engage." The energy and attention to detail appeared in every viewing.

With the puck, Arnsby shows a bit of skill as both a shooter and passer, highlighted by a projectable outside leg wrister and the odd slick backhand pass. Without space, he rushes plays and the skill dissipates. He's also a straight-line, single-speed puck carrier without much impact in transition and lacks the off-puck offence to consistently accumulate touches and get scoring chances.

Arnsby's style of play still gives him NHL potential. To

Games Tracked: 6 | Minutes Tracked: 72.7



achieve it, he needs to add quickness, as OHL scout Lauren Kelly explains, "[he] lacks the acceleration and edgework that would make him an effective checker at future level." If he makes it, it will likely be as a fourth-liner.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: May 25th, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

As a hitter with a bit of skill, I like Arnsby. He's physical without chasing. Wins battles not through craft, but through effort and strength. Shot could be a projectable NHL skill off the outside leg: hands in front, creates distance between feet

to drop his mass, and keeps his chest/shoulders up through the shot. If it's not perfectly set up for him, he tends to sweep the puck towards goal. Don't see any playmaking or transition potential. He's a straight-line skater without any nuance to his approach, and lacks the vision to adapt. I don't see the upside, but can see why a team could take him late.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 25th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Ottawa 67s - OHL

I don't think we'll end up ranking Arnsby at EP, but I think there's enough positives in his game that an NHL team could take a flyer on him in a later round. The skating isn't great considering he's not 6-foot, he lacks the acceleration and edgework that would make him an effective checker at future levels. But he makes responsible reads, is strong carrying the puck up the ice, and eliminates most threats in the DZ. I don't know if his already limited offensive skills are going to translate to future levels of hockey, but if he can continue to improve on his skating and defensive game, I don't see why he wouldn't be a late draft pick this summer.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Arnsby and Wakely are very similar. Arnsby's even more physical at the expense of some of the puck skills. Just makes simple plays. He passes to the point even with options in the middle. Defaults to uncontrolled plays with teammates open. Runs himself into defenders in transition and then throws the puck away. The defence is admirable. The energy's always there. He's not a candidate for our board. Upside likely a depth player.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 25th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Peterborough Frontenacs - OHL

Arnsby ended his night early and after smashing a player into the boards from behind. Dumb. But this was the best playmaking performance I've seen him. He looked for options before shooting or throwing the puck up the ice. The timing was off considerably, but perhaps there's more upside here than I've previously seen.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 14th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

I like Arnsby's shot and physicality. If he makes the NHL, that's how. He's constant looks to get in the way, and when given a bit of room, he has an NHL release. Hammered a shot off the post with a step-in wrister: hands in front, back leg out and stable for downforce, and chest up driving through the shot. Solid defensively, but wasn't quite as active compared to

other games. I doubt he's a draft pick for us without sudden skill development this season, but I understand why teams might feel differently.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 31st, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

I'm not sure if Arnsby's puck skills could become NHL-calibre. He doesn't really create much, his hands often fail him, and he's neither an interesting shooter or passer. More concerning: His game seems locked into one idea, often well in advance, and he can't adapt. Strong, proactive defender with tons of physicality. He's probably a checker at the next level, unless there's more skill hiding in here.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 23rd, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Arnsby is a North Bay Battalion player if I've ever seen one. He's very astute defensively, scanning for threats and eliminating them the play. He overwhelms with back pressure and non-stop support. Physical, often extremely so, and constantly looks to engage. Skating lacks flexion and refinement, stopping short of finishing his strides while hopping through his crossovers. Projectable wrister that rung the post. Apart from a cross-ice assist on Coe's goal, he's a very basic offensive player. Mostly looks to shoot, doesn't adapt to changing situations well, and can't manipulate players. Probably a fringe pick, likely a checker at the next level.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 7th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

Arnsby set the tone early by throwing a hit in the neutral zone to separate the puck carrier from the puck, before feeding a teammate for a partial breakaway and picking up his first point of the season with an assist. He was hard to force off pucks and constantly looking to force turnovers, though he skates faster when he's carrying the puck as opposed to when he's joining the play up the ice. Arnsby makes great passes under pressure and doesn't seem fazed by other players. He was very, very physical in this game, throwing hits left and right and playing much like an energy forward, which is likely what he projects as in the NHL.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# VASIL I ATANASOV

C | MAMONTY YUGRY

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. SEP. 25, 2002  
WEIGHT 148 SHOOTS LEFT

0%	0%	0%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
VHL	5	0	0	0
MHL	54	39	28	67

## Scouting Report

The most significant limiting factor in Vasili Atanasov's game last year was his skating stride.

His feet kicked the air before recovering underneath him as his upper body swung in a pendulum like motion through each movement. The inefficiencies in his stride limited Atanasov's output, his agility, and in turn, his ability to execute plays.

This year, his stride has improved a little bit. It has more control, but it's mostly his talent for reading the ice that we have come to appreciate more.

## Game Reports

**Dylan Griffing:** November 24th, 2021

Mamonty Yugry vs. Chaika Nizhny Novgorod - MHL

I still like Atanasov and he has shown some improvements since last year. His shot has improved slightly, still below average, and his skating is also improving. Still weird skating habits, but he controls his weight very well, which adds on to his skill and smarts. Strong problem solving, pre-scanning, reading the ice quickly. Strong passing. Picked up two goals in this one, one coming off of a 2-on-1 rush and the other being a shot from the high-slot/point on a delayed penalty. He has intriguing qualities, but he is still limited by his skating.

**David St-Louis:** November 9th, 2020

Sibirski Snaypery vs Mamonty Ugry - MHL

Atanasov showed a bit better skating in this game; his feet didn't kick as high and he felt more in control of his weight -- could use it to move around defenders better. He still had

"Strong problem solving, pre-scanning, reading the ice quickly," wrote Elite Prospects Russia regional scout Dylan Griffing on November 24th. "Strong passing. Picked up two goals in this one, one coming off of a 2-on-1 rush and the other being a shot from the high-slot/point on a delayed penalty. He has intriguing qualities."

Unfortunately, while the skating mechanics are getting better, they're still holding back Atanasov. His skills are not trending toward an NHL level, and as such, we couldn't find room for him on our final board.

a hard case of tunnel vision on many plays and seemed to handle the puck with his head down. He locks himself into certain skating/dangle patterns and only looks to pass after them. However, I saw him manipulate a couple of Ds with handling moves and weight shifts. He scored near the net twice -- once taking his own rebound and the other time with a skilled tip. I don't see NHL qualities there still.

**David St-Louis:** October 19h, 2020

Belye Medvedi vs Mamonty Ugry - MHL

Atanasov combined poor skating habits (attacking in straight lines) with poor skating mechanics. He bends his knees, but hunches over and kicks his feet very high. His stride will limit his ability to create offence at the next levels if uncorrected. He also forced a ton of dangles by attacking defenders straight on in a glide. How does he hope to beat them? He likes the explosiveness to attack at such poor angles.



# ARTYOM BARABOSHA

D | KRASNAYA ARMIYA MOSKVA

HEIGHT 6'2"  
WEIGHT 190

D.O.B. MAR. 18, 2004  
SHOOTS RIGHT

4%	3%	0%	0.35
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
MHL	45	4	7	11

## Scouting Report

You'll note that we don't place too large an emphasis on a player's production as a scouting team. It's a part of the evaluation process, to be sure, but hardly the be-all, end-all. This is how we were able to justify taking a deeper look at Artyom Barabosha this season, despite his meagre 11 points in 45 regular season contests and three in 19 games of playoff action.

Qualitatively, we came to appreciate Barabosha's ability to engage opponents as they rushed toward him and on the walls of the defensive zone. The defenceman goes all-in in those 1-on-1 encounters, punishing players with his stick and shoulders.

"He is just a physical presence at all times with a lack of

remorse for whoever he is hitting," Elite Prospects Russia regional scout Dylan Griffing wrote on April 19th, 2022.

Barabosha could play a shutdown role in the higher levels of Russian hockey. To get there, however, he has to improve the reach of his skating. Currently, his suboptimal backward stride forces to back off early from offensive situations so as to not get beat wide by rushing opposing attackers. His plays with the puck, in general, also have to improve, both in their speed and precision.

For Barabosha, the first step is learning to scan for options before he gets to the puck on retrievals, something that would help him connect with teammates faster, and perhaps even offer him a pathway to an NHL future.

## Game Reports

**Dylan Griffing:** April 19th, 2022

Krasnaya Armiya vs. SKA-1946 St. Petersburg - MHL

If nothing else, Barabosha has his size. He plays smart for the system he's in, punishing puck carriers who are glued to the wall whilst leaving the middle of the ice relatively open. He is just a physical presence at all times with a lack of remorse for whoever he is hitting and a real lack of grace, losing his stick while hitting players on two separate occasions. Ineffective with the puck, but reliable enough for basic breakout maneuvers.

**David St-Louis:** April 8th, 2022


Krasnaya Armiya vs. Omskye Yastreby - MHL

Barabosha lacks technical refinement and potential in puck plays. He looks mostly like an engager at this level, someone who takes on opponents physically around the net and the boards, who wins retrieval races, but lacks the speed of reads and the finer mechanics to make great breakout passes at higher levels. He did support an offensive sequence by attacking the offensive zone with teammates, creating a passing play that lead to a goal. The backward skating needs

work (more flexion) to allow him to adequately defend the rush at higher levels.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 20th, 2021

MHK Dynamo Moskva vs. Krasnaya Armiya - MHL

Barabosha definitely has tools that make him an interesting player. The size, skating, and creativity all combine to make this beautifully chaotic defenseman. He threw his body around like no tomorrow in this game, dumping pucks early so he could check the guy trying to stop him, playing the body first almost always, and trying to engage in every board battle. His retrievals are slow and poor, even seeing him get beat out to an open puck which immediately led to a goal for Dynamo. On the puck, he is pure excitement. Not a lot of pre-scans, so his passes were wild and uncontrollable. He does have an ability to find pockets to skate into, but once they closed down, he failed to adapt to the situation and either forced a play or got the puck poked off of his stick. Just a real route-one style of offensive approach that just won't work at higher levels. Really needs to slow down and add more control to his game. 

**"For Barabosha, the first step is learning to scan for options before he gets to the puck on retrievals, something that would help him connect with teammates faster, and perhaps even offer him a pathway to an NHL future."**





Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# MAXIM BARBASHEV

LW | MONCTON WILDCATS

HEIGHT 6'1"

D.O.B. DEC. 18, 2003

WEIGHT 183

SHOOTS LEFT

5%

2022 XLS

14%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

2%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.91

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	59	15	27	42

## Scouting Report

Though the scouting community once thought of Maxim Barbashev as a top prospect in this year's draft, things haven't exactly gone according to plan for the Russian forward this season. Now, after only producing 42 points in 59 QMJHL contests with the Moncton Wildcats last season, he'll be lucky to hear his name called as a mid-round pick.

Barbashev possesses some power forward elements that could continue to draw NHL interest, though. The handling skills, the size, and the physicality all stand out in this regard.

His skating, however, isn't quite there yet. His feet recover very wide under him after a push, which limits the extension of his stride, its output, and his ability to shift his weight to fluidly change directions. Barbashev can't make the outside edge moves that are commonly associated with NHL power

forwards; he can't lean into turns to protect the puck while driving the net or cutback away from pressure along the walls. He still drives there, but mostly when he doesn't have the puck to become a disturbing net-front presence.

The bigger issue, however, was his decision-making this season.

"Barbashev lacks awareness. This is fixable, but the quality of his decisions remains quite low," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in a report last season. "He is focused on skilled plays, on beating defenders one-on-one, and making passes through them."

Perhaps a diligent NHL development staff can coax a more projectable player out of Barbashev, but it's going to take time. He's one of the draft's project players.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 15th, 2022

Québec Remparts vs Moncton Wildcats - QMJHL

I don't see an NHL prospect. Barbashev's can put up speed, but his stride is wide and short which will limit his ability to use his outside edges to cut around or through opponents. His choices of plays were pretty poor in this game in general and his passes, imprecise I don't see how he will be able to play a power forward game at the next levels when he can't get a step on others to drive the net. He's a late round project, but at his age and his production, not sure he's all that likely to succeed.

**David St-Louis:** February 15th, 2022

Moncton Wildcats vs Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Barbashev's skating looked a bit better in terms of speed. He was a passer mostly this game, looking for teammates as he attacked off the rush and creating some nice passing exchanges, without forcing plays. Good decisions overall. He was still physical, attacking the net and finishing checks. I still think the upside is pretty limited -- I don't see a high-end Junior creator here, just a player who can take what's there.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2021

Moncton Wildcats vs Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Quiet performance from Barbashev. He goes to the net, plays physical, but his skating holds him back. He has an extremely wide recovery (probably due to a lack of flexibility). He's stronger than most at this level and not scoring. I'm worried about the projectability of his game. He doesn't seem to know how to create advantages for his team. If he makes the NHL, it's based on tools only and those aren't that impressive.

**David St-Louis:** October 10h, 2021

Cape Breton Eagles vs. Moncton Wildcats - QMJHL

I'm having some serious doubts about his upside. Barbashev lacks awareness. This is fixable, but the quality of his decisions remain quite low. He is focused on skilled plays, on beating defenders one-on-one, and making passes through them, often to no one. He is physical but lacks balance due to a high-stance and lack of ankle flexion, which also limits his explosiveness. He could score through physicality, high-danger drives, but he lacks the other skills that would make his game positive at higher levels. We'll see how much he scores this season and reevaluate as the year progresses.

**David St-Louis:** October 9h, 2021

Moncton Wildcats vs Cape Breton Eagles - QMJHL

Not a performance worthy of a high draft pick. At all. Low pace, but goes to the high-danger areas and feels comfortable there. He attacks in a straight line and tries to dangle defenders head on. I didn't see any kind of translatable offence, except for a timed movement to the slot at the end of the game. His off-puck movements were not all that clever for the rest of the game, however, as he skated in coverage and didn't create passing lane. He was also a couple of steps late defensively. He made some passes through defenders, but didn't open lanes with the puck on his stick either. Barbashev might score in Junior from his inside driven playstyle and ice time, but this game was off-putting. He will have to improve over the course of the season.


**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2021

Moncton Wildcats vs Saint John Seadogs - QMJHL

I feel for Barbashev. He barely touched the puck in this game due to Moncton's complete lack of passing game, that stems from poor breakouts and support. There were barely any opportunities for him to create. He still showed his skating ability. It could be above-average in terms of speed and power, but his weight is on his heels, limiting his ability to resist contact and maintain good control over the puck despite strength and he is not explosive. (He has to sink his pelvis to cutback). The few pucks he did get, he made productive plays with; hit tight lanes with saucer or one-hand, showing some passing skills. He attacked the net quite often.

**David St-Louis:** April 14th, 2021

Acadie Bathurst Titans vs. Moncton Wildcats - QMJHL

Impressive performance from Barbashev. He forced some plays, but mostly showed deceptive abilities, head fakes combined with good prior teammate ID (vision) and good off-puck timing and support when possible. Moncton is not connecting many plays due to inferior skills across the board. Very disjointed on the ice. Barbashev does what he can, but his hockey sense is definitely above-average. His passing skills stood out; he attracted before feeding, only hit teammate when they were inside space (thought about their receiving conditions), and looked for better plays, not just the first one, and his passes exploded out of his stickhandling. Skating is still bouncing between average to slightly above-average for me. He's young, but weight is clearly on heels, hunched over form a bit and wide a bit, nothing egregious, but he has to sink his pelvis to cut back, making him spring up and losing momentum. Those cutbacks/tight turns are very deep though. Defensively, he is a bit of a puck watcher but he tries. I like the effort. He could be a good 2nd rounder at the next draft. Some technical limitations, hockey sense that is probably a 6-6.5, and still a year to grow. He's a late birthday though. 

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Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# SAMU BAU

F | HIFK U20

HEIGHT 6' 4"

D.O.B. APR. 20, 2004

WEIGHT 214

SHOOTS LEFT

0%

2022 XLS

0%

3Y REGR. bXLS

0%

3Y REGR. iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s.	36	10	8	18

## Scouting Report

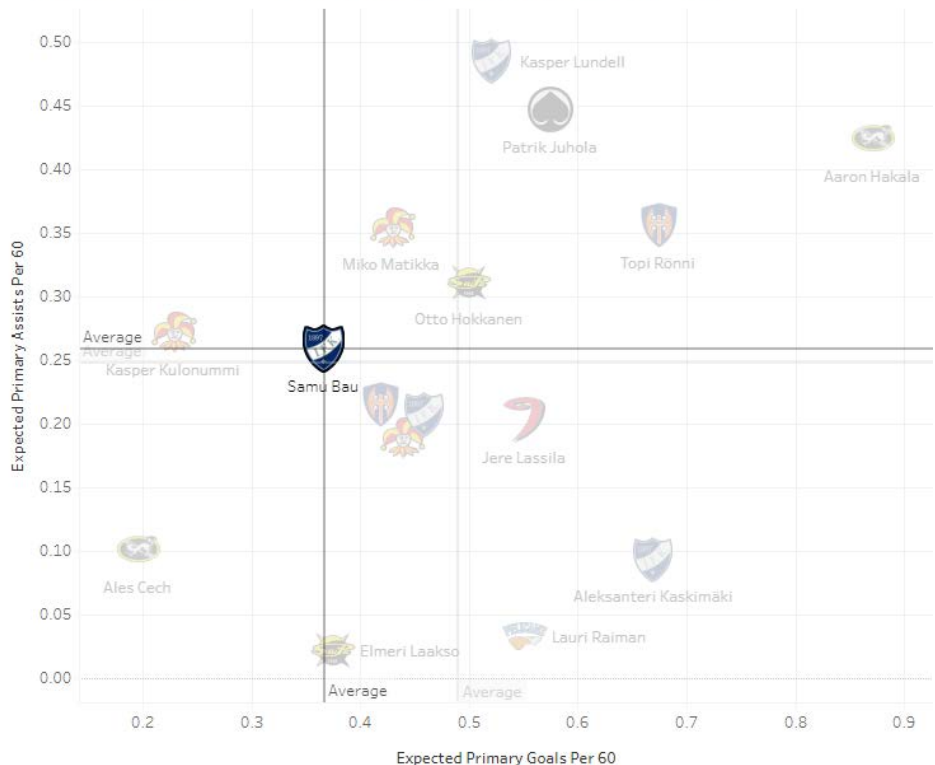
There's always a market for big hockey players, even in a contemporary NHL that's placing less of a premium on size than it has in the past, and that could pay off for Finnish forward Samu Bau in this July's draft.

For our team, though, Bau wasn't even a real candidate for the back end of our board. There just wasn't enough there to justify that sort of endorsement.

Bau's game is arguably at its best when he's furthest from possession of the puck. At least, at this stage in his career that's the case. He's more effective at finding space to receive passes and at driving the net than he is at making advanced plays himself.

"I give him credit for making some good off-puck reads and forechecking, especially at the start of the tournament," Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen wrote of Bau's work at this year's U18s. "But as the opponents got better, he wasn't even doing those things that consistently. Expected primary point output was among the lowest on the team among forwards."

U20 SM-sarja 2021-2022: Expected Primary Points (5v5 only)



Bau also provides some defensive value with his long reach, intensity, and the ability to anticipate opposing plays. This facet of his game and his developing physicality could net him a role as a checker in a professional league, even if it's not the NHL.



**Lassi Alanen:** April 23th - May 1st, 2022 - U18s

Bau spent the entire tournament centering Finland third line and received occasional usage on the penalty kill. I wasn't particularly impressed at any point of the tournament. Bau was clearly the third-best player on the line and hindered the other two a bit in the offensive end. I give him credit for making some good off-puck reads and forechecking, especially at the start of the tournament. But as the opponents got better, he wasn't even doing those things that consistently. Expected primary point output was among the lowest on the team among forwards. Below-average skating projection, not NHL-level skill as a passer or a shooter or a handler. He might still get picked late given the size appeal, but I wouldn't be the one to do it.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 5th, 2022

HIFK vs. JYP - U20 SM-sarja

Bau had been moved to the wing for this one and played quite a bit in every situation, amassing a total of over 23 minutes, the most I've seen him play this season. At 5-on-5, it was a very low event hockey for both sides, which is what usually happens when Bau is on the ice. He did only have one shot attempt at even-strength, carrying the puck to the OZ and shooting off the rush. Aside from that, he didn't have notable offensive contributions. He did some work in transition and made a few breakups defensively. Bau has a decent work rate, but most of it is probably because he's chasing the play so much instead of being ahead of it. Didn't show anything that would make me bunge from my previously formed stance.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 4th, 2022

HIFK vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

Bau continues to not show much that gives me reason to

be optimistic about his NHL chances. He's not an on-puck creator, lacking technical skating skill and puck skill and not showing much in terms of playmaking either. A couple of decent one-touch plays in transition. Had a 2-on-0 situation where he failed to handle the incoming pass in the slot without any pressure. The best-case scenario is that he develops into an off-puck scoring threat who can utilize his frame and reach along the boards and in the slot. He does bring a moderate amount of off-puck value, but that's not enough to be considered a legit NHL prospect.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 2nd, 2022

HIFK vs. Kiekko-Espoo - U20 SM-sarja

Bau's projection and current value are both coming down to his off-puck play, especially on the defensive side. He's got long reach, pretty solid work rate and diligent style of play, which are going to serve him well in pros and will likely help him land a spot in the upcoming U18s. One particular play where he took a big spurt to cover for his defenceman after a turnover and likely was able to prevent a scoring chance. On the other hand, he could work on his off-puck game on the offensive side to become a greater threat. He's too often just standing stationary in front of the net instead of trying to properly establish body positioning. A moving player is always more difficult to defend than a stationary one. Bau's on-puck offence is rather limited. His puck skills are not that great, evident by failed pass receptions and fumbles.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 4th, 2021

HIFK vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Bau centered HIFK's top line with a couple of notable forwards missing from the lineup, getting ice time on the second power play unit, too. Bau didn't stand out that much despite getting a lot of minutes. He's an okay skater for his

**"Bau's game is arguably at its best when he's furthest from possession of the puck... He's more effective at finding space to receive passes and at driving the net than he is at making advanced plays himself."**

size, having some speed explosiveness, but lacking balance and agility. I'm not sure what else he really offers, though. His handling didn't seem that good and he wasn't facilitating much offence either. There were some good off-puck moments utilizing his size in the neutral zone. There's a chance he gets picked as a 6-foot-4 center who can skate somewhat competently, but I wouldn't be the one making that selection.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 12th, 2021

U18 Five Nations, Switzerland

Bau centered Finland's third line for the entire tournament and saw ice time on both special teams. I wasn't that impressed. He had some moments in OZ cycles, playing well off of his linemates, but his contributions off the rush were lacking. He didn't display enough skill to break into scoring chances. He brought some defensive value and killed a lot of penalties, though. For a 6-foot-4 center, his skating is fineish but it's not a major strength either.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 30th, 2021


HIFK vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

Bau played over 10 minutes at 5-on-5, combined with pretty frequent penalty kill usage and the occasional PP

shift. On the offensive end, his best contribution came in the way of high-danger net-front chance where he did a nice job at shaking off pressure and getting open at the right time for a pass from behind the net. When it comes to on-puck play, there weren't much noteworthy stuff. He fumbled a few pucks in transition and couldn't protect possession once he entered the zone, even if he should have the physical tools to do so. Forechecking and being a disturbance off-the-puck is probably Bau's strongest suit, and he could carve out a pro career from it.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 22th, 2021

HIFK vs. Jokerit - U20 SM-sarja

Bau received decent minutes in this one. He made some off-puck breakups and had one nice play off the rush, carrying via the outside lane, cutting towards the middle with the puck in his hip pocket, drove into pressure and made a drop pass, creating an open outside lane for his linemate to use to get a dangerous look. Other than that, Bau's puck touches were very forgettable and he had some turnovers on awkward occasions. Straight-line skating is pretty solid for his size, but he lacks mobility and edgework. 

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Rank



Grade



Skating



Transitions



Hands



Tracking



Post



Depth

# MASON BEAUPIT

G | SPOKANE CHIEFS

HEIGHT 6'5" D.O.B. SEP. 23, 2003  
WEIGHT 185 CATCHES LEFT

LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
WHL	49	3.63	.893	1

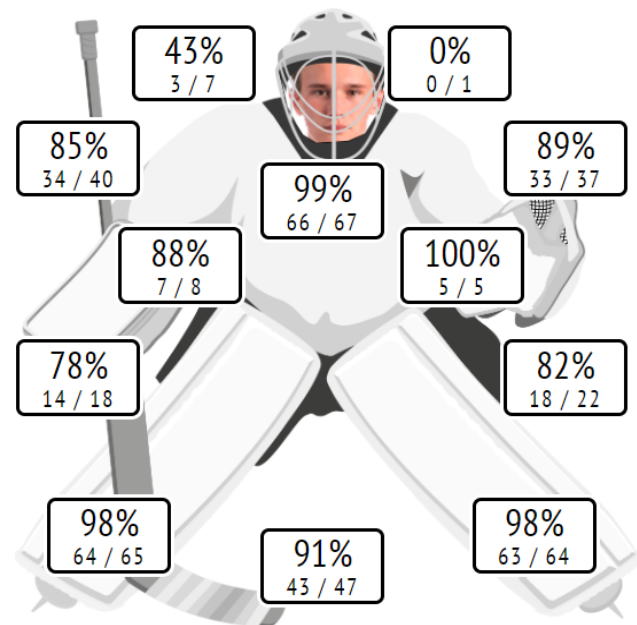
## Scouting Report

There's something about Mason Beaupit's game that we struggled to wrap our mind's around this season. He progressively improved over the course of the season, but still suffers some absolutely baffling gaffes.

The more you watch Beaupit, the more things start to come together, though. He's got the size and the agility that made Mads Søgaard such an attractive option in the 2020 draft, but also boasts the tell-tale loose-footed edgework that pushes his frame right out of position when he needs to be centred most.

The tool that's going to give Beaupit a chance to thrive at the professional level is going to be his speed. The Spokane goaltender helped get his team a surprise playoff berth this offseason as he found his footing and grew more confident darting into the line of fire, using that extra bit of reach and elusive flexibility that few goaltenders possess. But if he fails, it's going to be because he lacks that higher-end ability to slow the game down for himself and anticipate not just where pucks are headed, but where plays are going. He's got great recovery instincts, but still doesn't quite seem to have that ability to read his opponents well enough to be able to put his recovery game into his arsenal as a "sometimes-needed" trick instead of a necessity.

There's a solid chance that Beaupit was so puzzling this year because of the lost time due to the ongoing pandemic in his draft-minus-one season. He missed out on those crucial game appearances that would have granted him



experience anticipating play sequences from opponents and better equipped him to handle everything a game can throw a goaltender's way – and it shows.

This might make it tricky to determine just where to draft him, since scouts will lack that opportunity to better judge whether these flaws are a byproduct of missed experience or an inherent part of his game. But luckily, he played enough during the 2021-22 season to showcase a level of improved consistency as the months went by; that's not quite enough to go on with true confidence, but it's enough to suggest that he'll continue to get better in the coming years.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Transitions



Hands



Tracking



Post



Depth

# ALESSIO BEGLIERI

G | BIEL-BIENNE U20

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JAN. 5, 2004  
WEIGHT 165 CATCHES LEFT

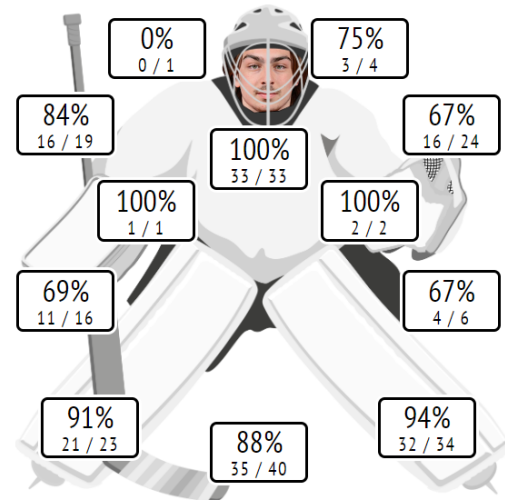
LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
U20-Elit	21	2.13	-	1
WJC-18	3	5.52	.831	-

## Scouting Report

The odds are you won't see Alessio Beglieri cross the stage at the Centre Bell in Montréal this July. There isn't a single outlet in the Elite Prospects Draft Center that has the Swiss-Italian goaltender ranked and not much hype about the undersized netminder from our industry contacts.

Lacking in a projectable build and raw, Beglieri still has so much in his game to work on that he's almost worth book-marking for another once over ahead of next year's draft. While clearly outclassed at this year's U18 World Hockey Championship, Beglieri's speed and anticipatory movement through the crease suggest that there may be something there with further refinement.

He recovers well from first shots, even those he's moved into with his almost-too-eager lateral movements and aggressive angles. And he's still working on his timing, but he isn't afraid to get his hands involved on higher shots; add in a seeming



inability to let a bad goal or two tank his energy level, and there's a chance he could at the very least make a good flier pick for a team looking to make a gamble in the very latest rounds this year or next.

## Game Reports

**Cat Silverman:** April 28, 2022

Switzerland vs. Czech Republic (U18 WJC)

It's incredibly apparent just how much Switzerland is still outclassed in the men's game by the world's hockey giants, which makes it hard to get a truly good read on just how much of Beglieri's struggles here are because of his own developmental shortcomings and how many are his teammates struggling to make his life a little bit easier. He's still clearly working on positional reads when it comes to trickier releases off the stick, which puts him at a disadvantage when it comes to shots through traffic that don't require him to move and adjust during the play itself.

He's got surprisingly good hands, which is something that stands out in his game in just about every clip I've watched so far, but was made even more apparent when watching an appearance of his from start to finish. He doesn't mind experimenting a bit with both his glove and blocker and with puck-handling during a game, which is exciting to see from a goaltender who likely knew that his appearance at the U18 WJC was about experience and not necessarily a shot at winning gold. Would love to see him make some more of the saves that you'd expect a goaltender preparing to be drafted to make, but think there's a lot of promise apparent when he's playing just for the chance to spread his wings.



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# JULIEN BÉLAND

C | RIMOUSKI OCÉANIC

HEIGHT 6'3"

D.O.B. JUL. 24, 2003

WEIGHT 183

SHOOTS LEFT

2%

2022 XLS

1%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

1%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	64	26	30	56

## Scouting Report

There is doubtless going to be a handful of NHLs who salivate at the prospect of bringing a developmental project like Julien Béland into their organization. His late-bloomer profile as someone with physical tools and runway to develop them further always has a market.

Béland is a draft re-entry, but a young one. He missed the cutoff for this year's draft by only a handful of months. Only adding to his relative greenness is that this was his first year in the QMJHL, in which he amassed 29 points in 56 games. That production may seem to be on the low side, but that looks better when one considers his rookie status and his infrequent usage on the power play.

The potential of Béland lies in his size and in his potential to be a power forward at the NHL level. He's still far from ascending to those heights at this stage of his career, but he has the enthusiasm for driving the net and the physical play coupled with the potential to grow as a skater that could get him there with time.

For now, though, Béland's only flashed brief moments of quality in our viewings, often leaving our staff with doubts about his processing ability. Specifically, a lack of vision with the puck kept him from our board.

Béland is the kind of pick an organization has to make in consultation with their development team.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** March 27th, 2022

Rimouski Oceanic vs Victoriaville Tigres - QMJHL

I can see why some teams might be interested in Béland. The size and the upward development curve, but he's just too raw at this point to expect an NHL player. It would require him to make both a massive technical and tactical leap. I'm pretty sure he gets drafted, however. He has some interesting moments: fakes followed by the creation of a scoring chance and hits on the boards.

**David St-Louis:** March 24th, 2022

Victoriaville Tigres vs Rimouski Oceanic - QMJHL

Béland is a large project...Literally. He wasn't playing in the Q before this season; it's his rookie year, and his 0.5 ppg are respectable considering the context. He isn't getting much powerplay time. The stride-form is pretty rough; wide and upper-body flailing, lack of flexion, especially at the ankles. But he had some decent moments. He looks to use teammates in the neutral-zone but doesn't always sport the best play. I liked his slot-drives away from the puck and his physicality. He established body positioning around the net.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

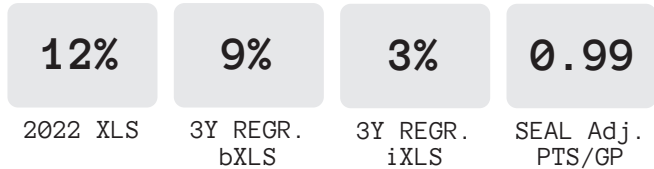


Physical

# PARKER BELL

LW | TRI-CITY AMERICANS

HEIGHT 6' 4" D.O.B. SEP. 26, 2003  
 WEIGHT 201 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	64	18	31	49

## Scouting Report

While Parker Bell's production might not seem impressive at face value, Tri-City won just 19 games last season. There wasn't a single point per game scorer on the squad.

Along the boards, Bell shows skill and intelligence. He waits for the defender to arrive, throws out a quick fake, then turns in the opposite direction. With the defender on his back, he shows finesse to attack the inside and a bit of playmaking to find teammates on the inside lane.

Everywhere else, Bell plays a simpler game, but remains effective. He makes the early pass in transition, then sprints down the middle. If the defence follows, he creates space behind him. If not, he's alone in the front of the net.

Bell's defensive impact comes in the same manner: motor and intelligence. He out-works players in pursuit. Off-puck, he supports down low, scans for threats, and sprints to close distance.

If Bell develops his lower-body flexion and outside edges to crossovers and turns, he could bring that combination

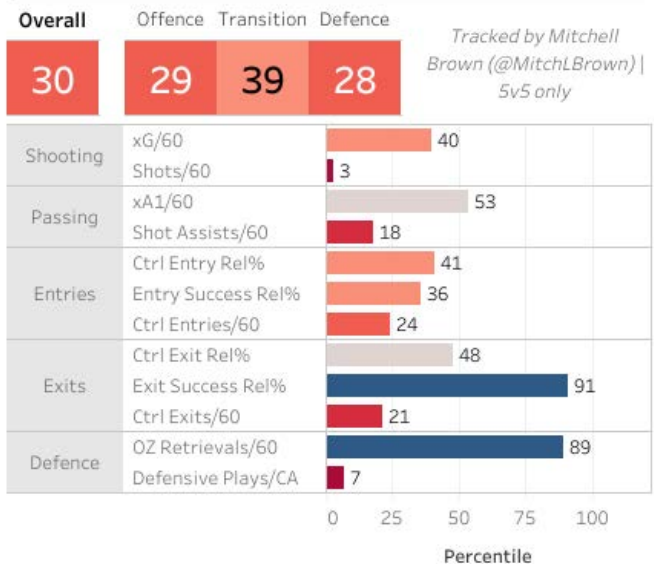
## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Spokane Chiefs vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Bell's most effective when he's playing a simple game: make the early pass, sprint to back off the defence or get open, and lots of off-puck movement. He's a hard worker, challenging shooters, disrupting entries, and sprinting to recover. The edges remain an issue, he can't change directions quickly.

Games Tracked: 5 | Minutes Tracked: 40.6



of board play and give-and-go puck plays to the NHL, likely in a depth role.

He also forces plays and regularly misses the best play. Board game could be strength at the next level, as he reads pressure, deceives a bit, and keeps them on his back. It'll depend on skating growth. Not a candidate for our board, but he could be a late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 25th, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Bell requires advantageous situations to create but he struggles to get said advantageous situations. He has the right ideas: getting open wide, give-and-gos, and quick passes from the boards. But he struggles to complete most of his ideas. If given lots of space, he changes direction with the puck, cuts inside, and makes easy, but positive plays. If not, he lacks the skating and skills to delay, cut inside, or deke through pressure – he just races to the next. The lack of ankle flexion is noticeable, impacting his ability to access his outside edges. He's skilled as both a shooter and handler. The handling's especially visible along the boards, where he waits for pressure to arrive, then uses a combination of body positioning and finesse to play keep away. Tricky player to project to the NHL. Maybe a late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 5th, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Bell generated little offence in this game because he couldn't gain the zone. On breakouts, he either made a tricky pass on the boards or threw the puck away under pressure. In the neutral zone, he was guided to the perimeter and thwarted without much friction. He's not changing directions, using his teammates, or delaying to avoid getting trapped. Upright's skating with flailing feet. Put in the work on the defensive end, but there's nothing that looks interesting about his game. Lacks tools and awareness. Not a prospect based on this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 28th, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

A quiet performance, largely from mechanical limitations. Bell's always off-balance because of his lack of ankle flexion. His strides and crossovers vary considerably when compared to the average prospect. Smaller players easily gain leverage and knock him over. Crossover-laden rushes doing little because he wasn't able to make defenders move. Apart from the odd clever breakout pass, this was a nothing performance. He works hard, but I didn't see any draftable skills in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 14th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Bell was probably Tri-City's most effective player in this game. Admirable work rate defensively, especially on the backcheck. He comes across the hips to the puck carrier to not only free the puck, but then establish body positioning. Three chances on one shift, highlighted by a contorting one-touch wrister to fire a tricky puck on net. Recognized a breakaway chance before most players, allowing him to

offset his skating limitations to get a clean look. Throws away the puck in transition without much pressure. No dynamic qualities. Mostly a straight-line attacker who prefers to offload possession to his teammates before getting open. There are draftable qualities, but I'm not sure he'll make our board without significant growth in the second half of the season.

**Cam Robinson:** December 14th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Bell has some redeeming qualities that showed out in this game -most notably the motor. He's tenacious off of the puck and blends smart positioning with overt willingness to engage. Was more dynamic in transition, but I use that term loosely as his toolbox appears mostly vanilla. Needs to develop more patience with the puck as he unloaded it like a grenade a few times as soon as he felt the pressure incoming. I could see a path to him making it as an energy line type, but he'll need to focus on his puck skills, patience and making decisions quicker. Looks like a late-round flyer type.

**Daniel Gee:** November 20th, 2021

Tri-City Americans vs Prince George Cougars -WHL

Bell didn't push the same sustained outside-to-inside on-puck activations as he did in the game previous, struggling to string plays together in sustained pressure. Whether it was Bell playing a more static game, or a lack of puck touches, he couldn't execute in this game. For example, Bell found himself in a net front battle in the first; as a rebounded puck arrived, he swung and missed, failing to capitalize on the bounce. Later in the second after supporting a puck that was lost in his forechecking teammates feet, he shifted to the bumper and tipped a puck wide, stick checked as he whiffed on a one-timed shot in the hash marks shortly after. He looked like half the player in sustained pressure than he did the night previous.

In transition, Bell was much more dangerous. He possesses transitional scanning habits on-puck, but always tends to pattern left and wide, limiting the potential of his carries. His best sequence was in the first; an outside carry 3-on-2 resulted in a Bell slip pass into the slot for a chance. Off-puck, he possesses some solid middle driving habits -- saw a bit of the pace increases from previous viewings, but it wasn't as near as frequent. Attempted multiple outside drives using the pace increases but like in sustain pressure, he couldn't string the entire play together.

Spent a tonne of time defending in this game, especially in the first and second period. Scanning and supporting habits allowed him to be fairly proficient. He engages in down-low battles, often winning pucks and escaping. Bell had a tonne



of backchecking impact -- more harassment pressure than anything with some effort to force on-puck opponents to take outside routes. Was ultimately part of a multilayered screen that resulted in a goal against late in the game -- became small when shot was loaded (he was the high man). Not the most inspiring viewing; needs to be on-puck more to be impactful -- tools looked average at best.

**Daniel Gee:** November 19th, 2021

Tri-City Americans vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Bell was Tri-City's best player by a wide margin, going out of his way to hold onto pucks, attack soft-areas of coverages, and produce high-danger chances. While he faded in the third period, he had a dominant first period of sustained pressure sequences, and flexed some transitional attacking in the second.

Leveraging his 6-foot-4 frame often, Bell produces chances through dotted-line activations, blending his size and sense. In the first he pressured Brennan, stealing a puck, executing a deke out of the far corner, weathering physicality. He managed to find a teammate backdoor for a high-danger chance. This play continued on a subsequent shift. Bell forechecked, grabbed a loose puck below the goal line, looped the zone from low-to-high, cutting through empty space down the mainstreet of the slot. Bell then passed backdoor again for another chance. Very creative play. Bell's ability to up his pace, especially on-puck was really impressive in this sequence, capitalizing on some staticness -- it looks awesome coming from such a big player. His stride has issues however -- very hunched due to a lack of ankle-flex and clunky edge-to-edge movements - below average right now. Off-puck, he finds soft-areas to plant in the

slot, activating to support when need-be.

In transition Bell was a bit inefficient, purposely sending hope-passes out of outside-oriented rush patterns. There is some passing skill however -- he implemented a slip pass to the high slot in one second period activation -- knocked away. His best sequence was a pressure play in which he created a turnover, leaving the Cougars puck carrier with no room on a near board entry; Bell was able to file off-puck on the right-wing and easily score on a rebounded puck. Other than that, he attempted some net-drives but was easily turned away and pushed to the end boards -- he fights through pressure and wins retrievals which helps the efficiency of the plays, but the lack of a separation gear and mechanical inconsistencies in his stride limit the prospect of power moves working against competent defenders. Looked like a D-grade prospect in this one. End of our board material. Sense and size are the draw.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Seattle ran over Tri-City in this game, but Bell had moments. Best play saw him skate up the boards, draw pressure, cutback and escape out the back door. Scanned in the cutback, saw his teammate activating down the weak side, and connected with a cross-slot pass. A slick breakout saw him attack the middle from the boards and go back against the grain, while one entry attempt, he passed through a defenders legs with an area pass for a teammate. Heavily involved in the back-check, sometimes through pursuit but often by getting above the puck. Skills are average at absolute best, but he seems intelligent and creative.

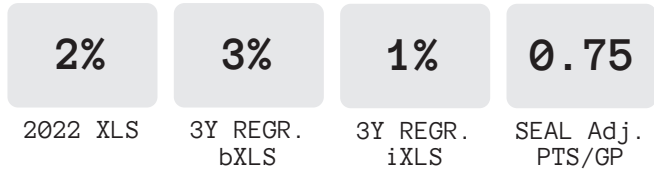




# BRADY BERARD

F | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. FEB. 26, 2004  
WEIGHT 179 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	47	4	6	10
USHL	22	2	2	4

> Committed to Providence College

## Scouting Report

Brady Berard didn't make a sufficient case to be drafted in this 2022 class. Not for our scouting team anyway. Low production and a season spent in the bottom-six of the US-NTDP U18 squad just aren't especially strong indicators of future success.

That said, there's always at least one player stuck down the depth chart of the program who surprises in his NCAA career and ends up signing an NHL contract somewhere down the line. That could be the case for Berard, even if we don't rate his chances of getting there as especially high.

For that to happen, he needs to develop his transition game both with and without the puck. Currently, he's a straight-line rusher who lacks the pace to beat defenders wide and the setup ability to feint or pass around them.

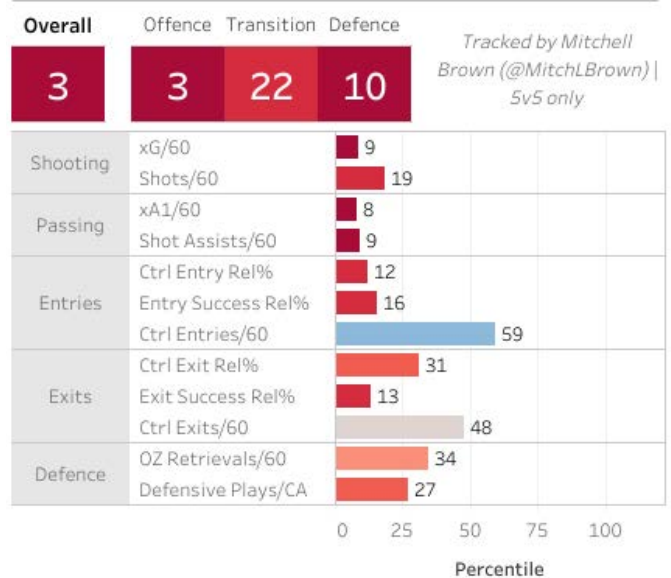
His hard work on the forecheck and when retrieving pucks on the back wall of his defensive zone will likely give him a role from the start in Providence college. He won't become

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022  
Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I keep waiting for Berard to turn his pace into offence, but it's not happening. He's a straight-line attacker who lacks the tools to make that style work in the USHL. The energy that appears in game at times wasn't here in this one. Very limited offensive player because (a) the limited transition

Games Tracked: 11 | Minutes Tracked: 90.9



a top scorer there unless he develops the anticipatory and processing abilities that characterize top scorers.

game, and (b) he's unable to find space off-puck, whether that's supporting or getting open in the slot. Not a pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021  
Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Berard has moments, mostly on the backcheck, down low in the DZ, or hanging around the net. He's a simple player

in every situation: it's all read-and-react instead of taking a more proactive approach. Offensively, that makes him mostly an off-puck threat who doesn't consistently find the space he needs to shoot. Sometimes, he's able to beat a defender in a non-projectable way before getting a chance. Didn't show any draftable qualities.


**J.D. Burke:** September 25th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

This was pretty garden variety Berard stuff. A lot of hard work on the forecheck, some blocked shots, a couple hits, and some decent penalty killing. He completed a really difficult one-touch passing play, though, and that was worth recording, especially in a contest in which he played so little -- he was the fourth-line centre for this one.

**Russ Cohen:** December 15, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Berard played third line left wing. He laid the body a few times. His wrist shot was working for him on this night and was coming in hard on net. Got his stick up on the power play. That was a bad penalty to take. 

**"[Berard] needs to develop his transition game both with and without the puck. Currently, he's a straight-line rusher who lacks the pace to beat defenders wide and the setup ability to feint or pass around them."**

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Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# ALEX BLAIS

C | CHICOUTIMI SAGUENÉENS

10%

2022 XLS

6%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

3%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.99

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

HEIGHT 6'0"

D.O.B. MAR. 3, 2004

WEIGHT 161

SHOOTS RIGHT

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	44	9	21	30

## Scouting Report

Alex Blais scores by outpacing the opposition, beating defenders with his speed and the rapidity of his passes. He attacks defences at their most vulnerable, before they can even regroup. When he stepped on the ice for the Chicoutimi Saguenéens this season, you could feel the tempo of the game take a step up.

That said, his play left us wanting a bit more this season.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** February 20th, 2022

Chicoutimi Saguenéens vs. Rimouski Oceanic - QMJHL

Not sure how I thought Blais's skating was an above-average quality in previous viewings...It's not. The ankle flexion isn't there. He recovers wide and his mechanics are a bit clunky overall. He's a passer. A great one at the Junior level, moving the puck with pace and precision. He's aware of teammates under pressure and can thread the puck under sticks. He under handles and understands offensive spacing to an extent. He might be a pick but the skating and handling looks average at best. He had a really nice assist in this where he

There is some skill in his game; he can pull off the occasional flashy move against defenders and can reach teammates with slip passes under pressure, but those displays were not constant. His relatively average tools and his low production didn't give us much hope of an NHL future for him.

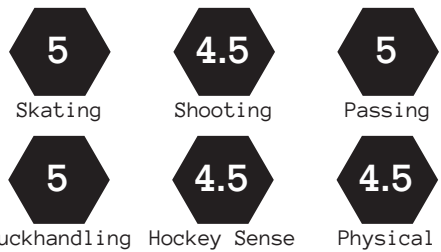
His skating especially will need to improve even further if he is to find success with his style of play at the next level.

toe-dragged around a defender, but he ended up missing his shot and indirectly setting up a teammate.

**David St-Louis:** November 20th, 2021

Cape Breton Eagles vs Chicoutimi Saguenéens - QMJHL

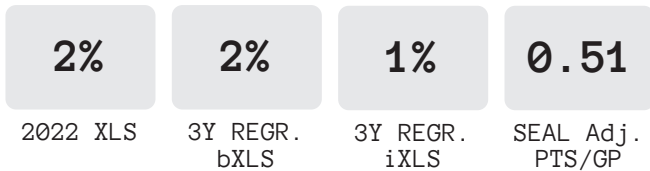
Blais is dynamic. He is a pacey rush attacker who looks to outspeed, but can also cut to the middle, through the line of defence. His skating projects as above NHL average in a few years and that gives him at least one draftable quality. He tends to force plays, a lot of them, instead of moving the puck in ways to keep it in possession of his team.



# PAVEL BOCHAROV

D | MEDICINE HAT TIGERS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. FEB. 21, 2004  
 WEIGHT 183 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	69	3	11	14

## Scouting Report

A mid-season trade took Pavel Bocharov from a mid-table WHL team to the league's worst team. In 69 games, he finished with just 14 points, but that understates his skill level.

A frequent activator, "Bocharov has modern details: move through receptions, look for give-and-gos, and accelerate through passes to activate," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a game report. He cuts around and away from forecheckers to find separation, and then looks cross-ice for a breakout option. And from the point, he uses space and occasionally fakes the shot to set up the pass.

Despite frequency, Bocharov's activation and breakout plays show little foresight. He passes to teammates more covered than himself and often activates without a purpose.

As a result of the wandering, Bocharov is often a non-factor when defending the rush. In-zone, his defensive skating and lack of angling make him beatable. But he's a proactive off-puck defender, eliminating threats, tracking players across the ice, and preventing deflections and shots with well-timed tie-ups.

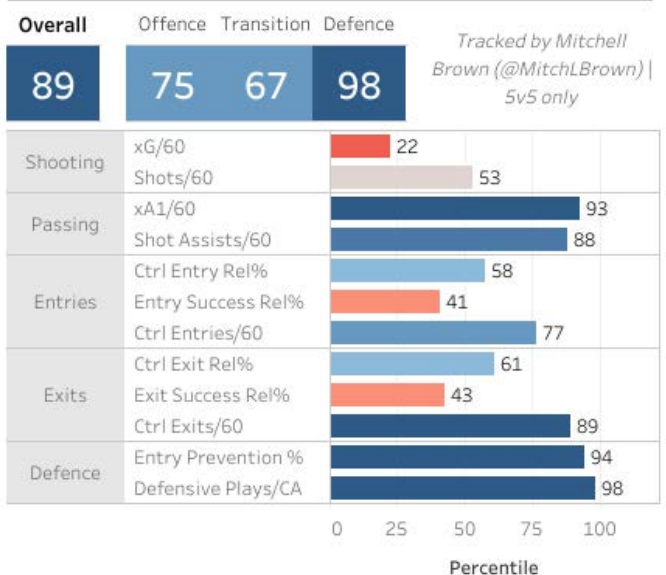
## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Calgary Hitmen vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

Bocharov tried to make skilled plays in this game, but they all failed. He moved through pass receptions, tried to fake out incoming pressure, and looked to the middle for options.

Games Tracked: 4 | Minutes Tracked: 57.1



Bocharov's defence improved through the season, and he has moments of skill that suggest NHL upside, too. If Bocharov refines his activation and breakout reads, he should become a big point-getter in the WHL - that's the first step.

Most attempts were either stopped or turned over. Too late to attack the space in some of these reads (as a result of relying on a pattern instead of hastening the process), many were just poor decisions with little foresight - he moved into space that wasn't available, trying to sneak through by the

skin of his teeth. Some reactionary and poor defensive zone coverage, too. But he stopped a couple of rushes by stepping across at the blue line and forcing a dump-in. Might be a late-rounder, but he's not a candidate for our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 25th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

Bocharov was overpowered physically, late to identify his check off-puck, and wandered in the neutral zone to defend nothing. Drifts too far to the outside. Closes space along the boards without angling. Showed some skill in this game, cutting inside before passing, using space to shoot, and activating regularly. Much of his activation served little purpose, however. And he usually passes to teammates with more pressure than himself. He has skill, but I don't think he's quite smart enough to make his game at the next level.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 16th, 2022

Red Deer Rebels vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

Bocharov has modern details: move through receptions, look for give-and-gos, and accelerate through passes to activate. All game long, he was accelerating through his passes to join the rush. Set up a goal with a cross-slot pass off a faceoff. Off-puck activation in the offensive end, although many of his pinches were poor. Passes into teammates more pressure than himself sometimes, suggesting a lack of foresight. Showed some handling skill but was just getting through by the skin of his teeth. Defence had moments, getting stops in the neutral zone and then finishing off the attack with a hit. Sometimes reactionary defensively, but he was mostly engaged and proactive. Skating, handling, and passing look like average projections, which just given the chaotic nature of his game and the lack of foresight, will make reaching the NHL a tricky task.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Saskatoon Blades vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

Bocharov handles the puck in rhythm with his feet, sometimes with a concerningly wide recovery and choppy motions. But he tightens it up as defenders close in, and is capable of beating the odd player. I like his passing ideas in the neutral zone and offensive zone. He's patient and looks for options on the far side, but he has some play connection issues. This was the best rush defence game I've seen from him. WPG's attackers made it easy on him, but he didn't overextend and forced the dump in against some skilled attackers. At this stage, he's still an ideas prospect. I like the decisions, but the execution lacks and he doesn't have the mechanical proficiency to make him a high pick regardless. Still, could

become a worthwhile later round gamble.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 13th, 2021

Brandon Wheat Kings vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

At face value, this was an awful game: Bocharov couldn't stop a rush, didn't generate much offence, and lost possession on breakouts no fewer than 5 times. Still, I liked the tools he demonstrated. Crafty handler who immediately chains together different moves and problem-solves to escape. Deceives on retrievals and looks for options up the middle. Steps into space to either make a decision or draw attention before moving the puck. Now, the net impact of all wasn't positive in this game. While he kept a tight gap off the puck, he committed to the outside too easily and got beat up the middle several times -- twice with the same move. He reaches and overreacts to fakes, but he's quite aware in coverage, scanning for threats, closing space, timing his checks, etc. He's a prospect, for sure.

**J.D. Burke:** August 6th, 2021

USA U18 vs. Czech Republic U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

This was a break from protocols for Bocharov, who left his mould as the team's defensive conscience to really make things happen in this contest. Better still? He made things happen without really surrendering much in the defensive zone. Showed some craftiness at the offensive blue line, using subtle movements east-west to open up passing and shooting lanes around the checking forward. Activated off of the blue line as if shot from a cannon to start a give-and-go chance at one point. Looked far more reactive than proactive as a defender in this contest, though, and I wasn't particularly fond of that. That's been the case for much of this tournament, too.

**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

USA U18 vs. Sweden U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

The one major takeaway from this contest is just how clumsy Bocharov is at this stage in his development. You hear a lot about players who make the game look easy... well, this is a player who makes even the simplest plays look inordinately difficult. Now, this fits with the rest of the American blue line in this contest, but it still bears mentioning. His shot mechanics are sloppy. His puck retrievals were choppy, including one instance in which he overskated the puck and it was in the back of his net within a matter of seconds. His hits all seemed forced. His best work came in the neutral zone, where he gapped up early, didn't commit, and closed physically with purpose on puck-carriers. In general, I thought Bocharov's best moments came when he had to defend in space. Strange performance on the whole.



# ANGUS BOOTH

D | SHAWINIGAN CATARACTES

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. APR. 27, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS LEFT

14%	9%	2%	0.61
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	42	1	22	23

## Scouting Report

A lower-body injury kept Angus Booth from the ice for a few weeks in the middle part of the season, and then, when he came back, he didn't get a lot of minutes on the contending Shawinigan Cataractes. There's a good chance that we didn't see his best this season as a result.

That said, it was hard to pick out the NHL elements in the Cataractes defender's game. He's effective at this level; a good enough defender and puck-mover. He controls the neutral zone, presenting a tight gap to incoming forwards, and the puck moves cleanly and quickly off his stick in his zone toward teammates, provided the forechecking pressure isn't too intense. Booth didn't really manage to show true playmaking or shutdown talents, qualities that would have indicated to

us that he could become a difference-maker on a blue line.

His high-stance skating also hurt his projection; Booth could very well have trouble escaping and matching the mobility of professional opponents.

"He's mobile, but not explosive," wrote Elite Prospects QMJHL regional scout David St-Louis in a May 15th game report. "He has trouble handling close pressure, but he's a good puck distributor with a little more open ice to work with, like on regroup. I saw one great stretch pass from him in this game."

Booth remains a player to watch. In the next few years, it's probable that his locked-in, conservative game will earn him a lot more opportunities on Shawinigan's blue line.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 15th, 2022

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

All these game reports look the same because Booth's game looks the same. He's effective at this level, but I still have some skating concerns due to his high-stance. He's mobile, but not explosive. He has trouble handling close pressure, but he's a good puck distributor with a little more open ice to work with, like on regroup. I saw one great stretch pass from him in this game. Overall, he could be a draft pick this year, but there is nothing in his game that indicates to me that he will have a future as an impact NHLer. He looks like

a future number 1 QMJHL defenceman, however, despite the limited minutes he's getting right now on the contending Shawinigan Cataractes.

**David St-Louis:** May 5th, 2022

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Rouyn-Noranda Huskies - QMJHL

Booth played a more effective game in this one. I liked his rush defence all game long, especially his tight gap and his puck distribution, quick and controlled. Nothing exceptional about his game, again, and the tools look below-average to average.

"A lower-body injury kept Angus Booth from the ice for a few weeks in the middle part of the season, and then, when he came back, he didn't get a lot of minutes on the contending Shawinigan Cataractes. There's a good chance that we didn't see his best this season as a result."

**David St-Louis:** December 11th, 2021

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Chicoutimi Sagunéens - QMJHL

I continue to not see it. Booth is a good Junior defenceman for me, but I don't see any exceptional trait in his game, or even above-average. He understands the game, plays physical, has passing skills, positions himself well in general, distributes the puck... The tools are below-average to average to me, too. The skating, especially, is a limiter - really high stance - and the handling doesn't compensate for it, even if it is better.

**David St-Louis:** December 10th, 2021

Baie-Comeau Drakkar vs. Shawinigan Cataractes - QMJHL

Booth's tool-set doesn't seem all that impressive. The skating, especially, is problematic with his high-stance that limits his acceleration and output. He moves at the offensive blue-line, but always in the same ways, without a plan, and he can't process the unfolding play all that well as he shifts. His decisions are slower paced, in fact, he looks like he wants to slow down the game. In transition, he was at his best, scanning

for his next play, using deception to beat forecheckers, and generally passing to open, in-flight teammates. Defensively, he is physical, can hold his ground, he anticipates passes, and can surf to defend the rush (which helps him alleviate the backward skating problems), and his risk mitigation was generally on point.

**David St-Louis:** December 5th, 2021

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Sherbrooke Phoenix - QMJHL

I don't really see a path to the NHL for Booth. He's a little too basic, skill-wise and game-wise. He distributes the puck, plays a nice collective game, making picks for teammates, sets them up for shots on the powerplay. His high skating stance...It could be fixed, but usually those players don't turn into above-average skaters in the NHL. His decisions under pressure have to improve. He slows down the game. I have a lot of concerns about his overall play. I think he is mostly a good Junior defenceman, but not a real prospect.

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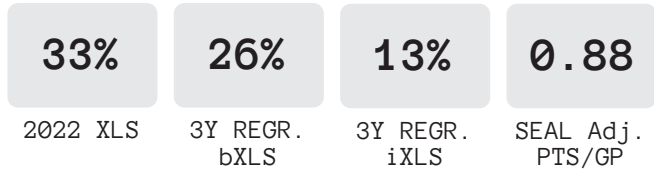
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# VINCENT BORGESI

D | TRI-CITY STORM

HEIGHT 5'8" D.O.B. MAR. 2, 2004  
WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	57	5	32	37

> Committed to Northeastern Univ.

## Scouting Report

At first glance, Vincent Borgesi's 37-point, 57-game stat line might seem mediocre, especially for a 5-foot-8 defender playing on a top USHL team. Watching the tape, it's clear that this always-activating defenceman deserved a much better fate.

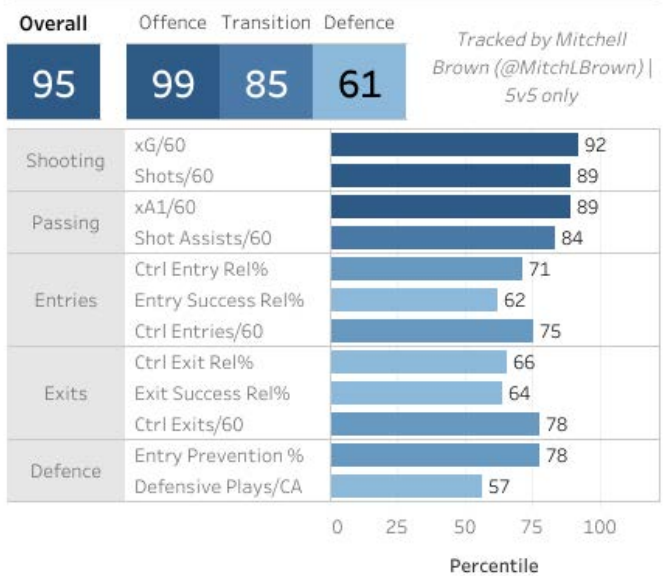
Whether it's up the weak side, off the point, or up the middle - Borgesi's always looking to join every sequence. NHL details, including in-motion pass receptions and passes, frequent scanning, and a preference for give-and-gos over handling, give his activation a distinct refinement over many of the draft's other activating defencemen.

Once Borgesi gets the puck, he demonstrates both shooting and passing skill. He always uses space before firing, sometimes beating defenders in the process. If he has to fire from the perimeter, he fakes the shot before turning into a shot-pass or a tippable puck. He's a high-volume passer in the offensive zone, trying to hit teammates in the slot from just about every position.

To make this playmaking work in the NHL, Borgesi has to tighten up his decision-making and add layers. In an April game report, Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote, "right now, he creates like a AAA player - it's just all pace. No timing, no misdirection, no manipulation." Those limitations extend to his breakouts, as he's heavily reliant on up-the-boards plays, even with options accessible with a low-risk pass to the inside or far-side boards.

By looking off his passing target, passing into space to lead his recipient, and changing speeds pre-pass, Borgesi

Games Tracked: 12 | Minutes Tracked: 176.2



would become one of the draft's better playmaking blueliners. Improved breakouts won't be optional for Borgesi, either. The good news is that he's starting using cutbacks to escape forecheckers more regularly. The next step is attacking the feet of forecheckers to make them move in the opposite direction he's heading.

Given Borgesi's lack of explosiveness, getting on his check early is integral. Borgesi's rush activation helps that by ensuring the gap's always tight. He times his stick checks with the pass to minimize the need for physical engagement. He eliminates off-puck threats and pressures the puck carrier in defensive zone coverage, but he lacks a recovery gear. A lack of ankle and hip flexion prevents him from using his



stature as an advantage by getting low and driving his hips into the opponent's legs as they enter a puck battle.

Given Borgesi's profile, he's hardly a lock to hear his name called at the draft. His skating, defensive details, and

playmaking require significant refinement. But his activation means that the base to play in the modern NHL is already there. His odds are slim, but he's a player to watch.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Nothing new to add about Borgesi's game, so here's a summary. Borgesi's defining attribute is activation. He sprints down the weak side, up the middle, off the point, and attacks space with the puck. Habits – in-motion pass receptions, pre-scanning – continue to impress, and he's primarily looking to pass over handle. But he's not a manipulative or patient player. The odd cutback and cross-lane pass gives way to mostly up-the-boards, hurried passes or D-to-D passes with options on the inside. Uses space before shooting, but he needs to turn those shots into passes. Defensively, he's engaged, sometimes proactive, and looks to get on his check early. When he does, he's effective even if prone to getting boxed out and lacking a recovery gear. When he doesn't, his skating and lack of length become limitations. He's roughly an average projection across the board for me, but with the addendum that the activation could lead to better habits. I doubt NHL teams will be quite as optimistic.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Omaha Lancers - USHL

Some better habits are emerging in Borgesi's game. He uses cutbacks. When he activates, he scans the slot for options before passing. And he's more consistently joining the rush, and when activating, choosing better routes. He still plays too fast with the puck. And too often, he passes on the heels of his desired target. On breakouts, he's still prone to needless dump-outs and clearances. Getting closer to manipulating opponents, but he's still not there. Right now, he creates like a AAA player – it's just all pace. No timing, no misdirection, no manipulation. Some deception, and he's increasingly willing to make cross-lane plays. At this stage, he's unlikely to become an NHL player. His projection is all about activation and offence, and given his inability to connect plays, he won't play the minutes required to make an impact. Not a pick, but he could get there next season.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Omaha Lancers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Borgesi's breakouts have improved a lot this season. Instead of forcing plays up the boards, he reverses or cuts to the middle. Doesn't manipulate pressure, but he's aware of options

and threats. Activation remains his best element. Joined the play a bunch, especially by activating up the weak side. Connected with a backhand pass to the inside for a scoring chance, but his activation didn't generate anything else. Still, his activation ensures he gets touches. Times his engagements well and has some proactiveness defending the rush. In-zone, he moves, scans, and eliminates threats at times, but usually chases the play. His extensions are short, despite projectable posture. And he's not a high-level offensive creator. It's all activation. Doesn't manipulate or create advantages; lacks the skill to prolong or create passing lanes. Tough to see him becoming an NHLer without learning how to make the next play while activating.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 11th, 2022 - Tri-City Storm vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Borgesi's a fun player. His rush activation is a bit inconsistent, but he's always moving off the point. Anticipates handoffs, activates on the weak side, and looks for teammates on the inside. A bunch of shots in this game, mostly for deflections or shot-passes to the net-front that didn't work. A bit more patience in building up the play would've led to better opportunities. Rush defence is best off-puck, where he keeps a tight gap and times his check with the pass reception. Some off-puck defensive value through scanning and awareness, but he's mostly a reactive defender right now. There are draftable qualities, but he doesn't manipulate and his skating isn't quite good enough to offset the flaws.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Des Moines Buccaneers - USHL

I'm still unsure what to make of Borgesi. The activation is a huge plus; he's always in the play. He's not making the best play, but he's clearly aware of positive plays and tries to make plays without hesitation. Scored on a 2-on-1 and set up a point-blank chance while falling. Slip and hook passes don't feature in his game, and are necessary to access the lanes that he sees. Moves through pass receptions. Wasn't deceptive in the normal sense, but used his lateral movement to draw defenders before passing in the direction he came from. Has to add eye and puck position deception to make his breakouts work at the next level. Right now, they're too simple – just passes up the boards or reverses, no advantage

creation. Better off- than on-puck defender, using a tight gap to remove his check from the play. If a pass comes anyway, he's there to poke possession away. On puck, he concedes ground too easily and can't manage contact in the way that other shorter defenders do. Tends to lean rather than getting low and trapping the feet. Drafting him is a bet on pace and activation. He doesn't have the additional skills to make his game work at the next level, but his activation means that he's always going to be getting touches. Perhaps a late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

Borgesi moves through his pass receptions, but doesn't always pick the right space to move into. Still, he looks for teammates around the net, and occasionally connects. Created a deflection opportunity from the point and nearly a goal by joining the rush and passing inside instead of shooting. His activation is relentless. His breakouts compromise the rest of his game. He doesn't manipulate incoming pressure, defaults to low-skill reversals or up-the-boards passes, and doesn't have a small-area give-and-go game. There are moments where he seems to understand how to create advantages, which makes me wonder if his breakout limitations are the consequence of coaching. Might be a fine late-rounder because of his involvement, defensive instincts, and playmaking. Lacks the high-level details to make his game work at the next level - development feels especially important with Borgesi.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 17th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

A more nuanced game from Borgesi than usual. When activating, he backed off defenders, creating space behind him. Delayed with the puck, then stepped to the middle before making the kick out pass. Looked off a couple of passes before connecting. Suffocating gap established in the OZ, then getting the break up at the red line. Mostly c-cuts instead of crossovers to manage the distance. Follows stick with shoulder, but never introduces needless risk. Gap off turnovers tends to sag because he doesn't make up ground - adding a pivot-and-surf would help. The deceptiveness comes and goes, but it feels like a key part of his projection. Without it, he won't play - his breakouts and offensive zone playmaking are too

limited. But his activation suggests he's an intelligent player and there are moments. A fine end-of-board player.


**Mitchell Brown:** November 26th, 2021

Tri-City Storm vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Dynamic. Borgesi set up a number of teammates in scoring positions. He activates into the play at the right times, exchanges with his forwards, fills space in the rush, and does it all without hesitation. Some of his passes are a bit optimistic or away from their target, but it's clear he sees the best play. More skill development will help him connect. His breakouts are mostly long-range passes that missed their target and poor decisions off retrievals. Tries to use the inside - should become average or a strength over time. Manages fast attackers by establishing gap early and angling the attack to the outside. Lacks quickness, but he times his engagements at the right moments. Tightening the gap further and connecting his OZP to rush defence is key. Skating's an interesting projection. He pushes his knees past his toes and engages his hips, but he's not exactly fast. Need to play closer attention to his skating going forward. He looked like a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Omaha Lancers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Borgesi has the potential to become a projectable offensive creator, but he doesn't manipulate right now. He plays fast, anticipates openings, and looks for teammates constantly. In one sequence, he drew a defender to the middle, beat him to the outside, and then set up a chance in the slot. When joining the rush, he always looks for the middle-lane driver. From the point, most shots are passes to teammates for deflections. But he can't connect most of these plays because he doesn't alter puck positioning pre-pass and relies on pace, rather than manipulation to prolong lanes. In the USHL, his skating isn't a significant advantage, so out-pacing doesn't work. The same issue exists in his breakouts, where the ideas are often sound and advanced, but he doesn't have the skills to complete his desired play. A capable rush defender who gets stops with timed stick checks, but he's easily overpowered. Tight off-puck gap helps him avoid battles entirely (because he removes his check from the play). Projectable stride posture but he doesn't finish his strides. Could be a late-rounder. 

# DANIIL BOUROSH

C | ROUYN-NORANDA HUSKIES

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. APR. 15, 2004  
 WEIGHT 187 SHOOTS RIGHT



12%	8%	5%	0.97
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	67	29	15	44

## Scouting Report

Daniil Bourosh built his game around his shot. Every play he makes, every pass, and every route he takes toward the offensive zone, they all serve one purpose – getting open to fire from the faceoff circle. When he does reach that spot, every puck that touches his stick is immediately fired on net.

Volume shooters like Bourosh usually find success in Junior hockey. It's likely that the forward's production will increase quite substantially as he becomes more comfortable in the league, and his supporting cast with the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies improves, but an NHL future won't be possible for him unless he improves his skating. It re-

ceived a significantly below-average grade from our staff. His lack of mobility even has repercussions on his biggest asset, his release.

“The mechanics of his shot, especially his footwork, remove some precision,” Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in a May game report. “The agility is very limited. He turns in one-block, no lateral hip hinge and he constantly has to catch himself.”

Due to his limitations and style of game, it's more likely that Bourosh will find success in a European professional league than in the NHL.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 1st, 2022

Victoriaville Tigers vs Rouyn-Noranda Huskies - QMJHL

Bourosh is still hyper focused on shooting. He's at his best on the powerplay, where he has the open ice to create passing plays and install himself at the faceoff circle, his favorite spot. There he can hit one-timers. The mechanics of his shot, especially his footwork, remove some precision from his shot. The agility is very limited. He turns in one-block, no lateral hip hinge and he constantly has to catch himself.

**David St-Louis:** 27th February, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs Rouyn-Norande Huskies - QMJHL

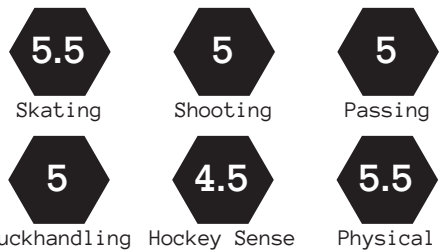
Bourosh has some physical and shooting talents. He can bait pokechecks, drag the puck around it, and fire somewhat

precisely on net. But he forces so many plays that I'm not sure he will become efficient enough to score highly even at this level. The skating is a giant limiter. He has no four-way mobility, can't fluidly pivot or crossover. He's a straight-liner.

**David St-Louis:** 26th February, 2022

Blainville Boisbriand vs Rouyn-Norande Huskies - QMJHL

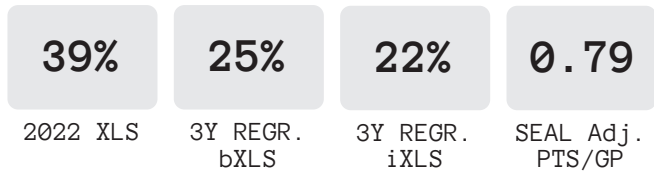
Bourosh is purely a shooter. He's entirely focused on the net, sending every puck down the ice toward it. His game is all straight lines, probably due to a lack of agility and peripheral vision. He has some tricks in his bag, like toe drags, to beat defenders and he can hold his own on the boards and finish his check. The skating is a 4 grade for him and the hockey sense, too, probably.



# MICHAEL BUCHINGER

D | GUELPH STORM

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. APR. 25, 2004  
WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	63	5	39	44

## Scouting Report

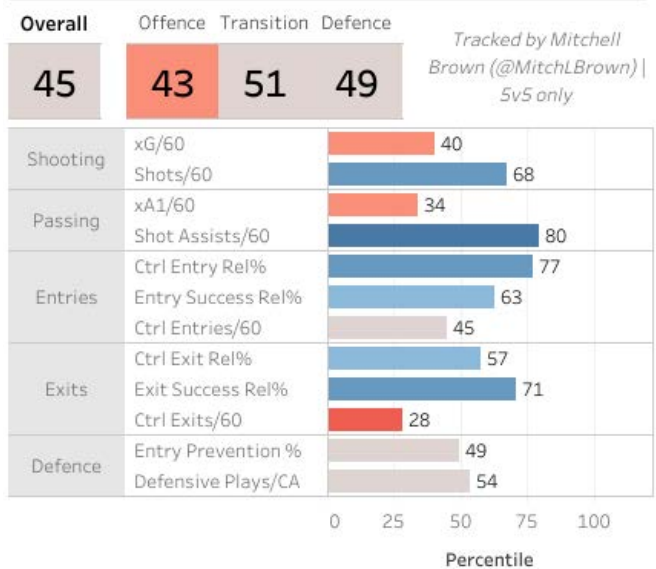
There might not be a prospect that stumped our scouting staff more than Michael Buchinger this season. One game, he's a volume shooter glued to the point. Next, he's making advanced activation reads before stepping in and shooting. By the end of the season, it became clear that Buchinger has tools and often the proper setup but lacks execution.

When activating into the play, there's plenty of reason to be optimistic about Buchinger's NHL odds. He's not just supporting the play or pinching; he's deking defenders, attacking the middle, and setting up teammates. After beating one defender, he passes and then sprints into space. On the power play, the additional structure sees the passing and activation-focused Buchinger thrive. As he grows more confident in the OHL, those skills should feature more regularly at 5-on-5.

The well-set up, poor next play phenomenon is most visible in Buchinger's retrievals. He wins body positioning, glances over his shoulder to identify options, and points his toes in the direction the puck's headed. From there, he can continue forward, cutback, or make a quick play up the middle. Instead, he often reverses the puck to the other team, skates directly into pressure without an escape route, or passes to a teammate more covered than himself.

There are moments where the handling skill beats a forechecker, and then allows Buchinger to access a tricky passing lane to start the rush. Then, he joins the play and the flashy skills appear.

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 145.8



As Buchinger's pivots improve, his play-killing potential will rise with it. Right now, he's a passive, but solid 1-on-1 defender who kills plays at the top of the circle. There are moments of proactivity - taking away the middle, angling, and eliminating off-puck threats - but they're met with just as many reactionary sequences.

While Buchinger didn't make the Elite Prospects board, he's a possible top-64 pick. While he's a bet on improving execution, he has tools and habits that most prospects don't. Those alone could get him to the NHL. With better decision-making with the puck, he could become an effective bottom-pairing defender.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Buchinger often has the right set up, but the wrong idea. On retrievals, he scans, establishes body positioning, and angles his feet in the direction the puck's headed. It creates opportunities. But he usually just throws the puck away immediately. When he activates, he shows handling and passing skill. He dekes around defenders before throwing a puck to the middle. Not accurate, but he's sometimes let down by his teammates by not skating their routes. But he's also not a predictable factor because his activation's inconsistent. He doesn't have the pass receptions to consistently access space. And he doesn't read off-puck activation opportunities. He just pinches. He's a solid 1-on-1 defender but his passive gap gets exposed on occasion. I don't think he's a candidate for our board, but I see why teams value him. There's a lot to work with here.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 10th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

At this point, I have a full season of viewings from Buchinger and I'm still not entirely sure what to think. He often looks like he's going to do positive things. On the PP, he zips the puck around. He's deceptive and sometimes precise. In transition, he activates up the weak side, holds the blue line, and looks cross-ice passing for options. But many of his passes don't reach their target because he doesn't read the defender in the lane. He activates and then throws pucks away instead of making a play. In the OZ, he's a simple player: D-to-D passes, rims, point shots. In one sequence, he joined the rush then connected with a quick cross-slot pass, suggesting awareness of options and skill. That's evidence that there's more here. Defensively, he's mixed. The defensive skating needs work, as does the gap. But he's a reasonably sound 1-on-1 defender who gets inside on players and dispossesses them. No over-committing, even if it's a bit messy sometimes. Maybe a late-rounder, but he's going higher.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 16th, 2022

London Knight vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Buchinger played half the game, but somehow, I have very few notes on his performance. The breakouts are messy. Either he gets the puck and passes up the boards, or he throws it away if pressure gets too close. No foresight. On retrievals, he scans, wins body positioning, and even marks the odd deceptive play, but doesn't know what to do with the puck afterwards. Passive gap, although he's more willing to step up and gamble than earlier in the season – not necessarily a positive. The odd proactive defensive sequence is met

with chasing or uncertainty. From the point, he's just basic plays – point shots, D-to-D passes. No off-puck activation, individual skill plays, or using space. I still don't see enough to justify a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

All of Guelph's draft eligibles are tricky evaluations – Buchinger's no exception. I haven't seen his rush defence look this good before: his gaps were tighter earlier, he angled out the odd play, and showed a bit of timing in his engagements. Not sure if he lacks some explosiveness or just urgency, but his pivots lack push off and he's late to close space laterally. Pokes at the puck instead of establishing body positioning and doesn't jump into supporting position quick enough. In this one, it hurt his breakouts. From the point, he was just blasting away without much thought, not using space, teammates, or even building offence around the shot. The mechanics – handling and skating in particular – are NHL-worthy. The rest of his game? I'm still not sure.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 21st, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Buchinger picked up an assist on Guelph's first goal, but this was a pretty rough showing. He's mobile, but he's constantly moving and taking himself out of position in the defensive zone when there's no need for him to be leaving the front of the net. He had a couple of good rushes, including one where he carried the puck into the OZ before sending a pass through the slot (shot rang off the post). There were capable puckhandling abilities on display in this game, but there were far more questionable decisions when it came to defensive positioning and actually playing the puck. I don't know if he's worth a draft pick at this point, but he'll probably end up being a midrounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

I'm not entirely sure what Buchinger is at the OHL level, let alone the NHL. He's a reasonably fluid player, able to knock pucks from his backhand to forehand while stepping to the inside or occasionally peel a tricky puck off the boards in movement. He handles the puck in rhythm with his feet, which limits his ability to shift weight and explode into space. Crafty on retrievals, but wilts if he's forced into making a decision immediately. He's a relatively solid defender, mostly through stepping up at red line. I don't see a ton of projectability to his game. Not sure he's a draft pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 5th, 2021

Soo Greyhounds vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

I may have jinxed Buchinger after that first viewing because he was... far from good in this game. He took a hooking penalty on his very first shift. Then he rushed the puck up the ice and after he turned it over, he was gassed trying to get back. He played physical, delivering crosschecks while boxing players out in front of the net, and had a nice chance for an assist by jumping up into the rush. But he also had a couple of passes that went awry, including one pretty obvious no-look pass that went right to an opposing player. Buchinger was stung on a shot block near the end of the second period and took a long time to get up - he was not moving well afterwards but did come back and play the rest of the game. He got caught puck-watching on the Soo's 6th goal and allowed Bryce McConnell-Barker to blow right behind him for a tap-in. He defended the rush fairly well, but he made a ton of poor decisions with the puck and was out of position defending on multiple plays.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Guelph Storm vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

This performance was some kind of awful. Buchinger made the crafty retrievals, but then immediately gave the puck away. Poor reversals, passes to no one, failed dump outs -- he didn't manage the puck at all. I'm not even sure he scanned more than a handful of times when skating back in total. Concerning. With his top hand locked to his feet and preference to handle on his inside edges, he was easily forced into turnovers and couldn't problem-solve a new play. He had one quality sequence with the puck, beating the F1, working the give-and-go, and turning a touch pass into a scoring chance. Pivoted the wrong way while defending the rush, committed

his weight to the outside lane too early, and wasn't aware of off-puck threats in transition. Very aggressive in defensive zone coverage, perhaps without much impact as he was chasing/reacting. I didn't see an NHL prospect in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 28th, 2021

Guelph Storm vs. Windsor Spitfires - OHL

Buchinger had a slick retrieval in this game. Angled his feet in one direction, waited for the forecheck to lean on him, and then cut back the other way. That was about it for NHL qualities. Very simple offensive player: get the puck, stop it dead, pass or take a low-percentage shot with little thought. Mostly deferred in transition and missed opportunities to join the rush. Passive rush defender, getting beat several times and lacks corrective ability. He's a reasonably fluid skater, showing edge-to-edge quickness and stability, but his stride lacks hip flexion with kicking feet. I didn't see a draft pick in this game.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 8th, 2021

Kitchener Rangers vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Buchinger has NHL-level potential for sure. He's a smooth-skating defenseman who doesn't make too many positional errors or poor decisions with the puck. He quarterbacked Guelph's second PP unit in this one and didn't look out of place or out of his depth. There was one somewhat unnecessary pinch that went awry and took him out of the play, but for the most part he was smart with when he jumped up into the play. At one point it looked like he was going to lay out an open-ice hit, but decided against it after realizing it would take him out of the play. Buchinger controls the puck well and as a puck-moving defenseman, he looked solid.



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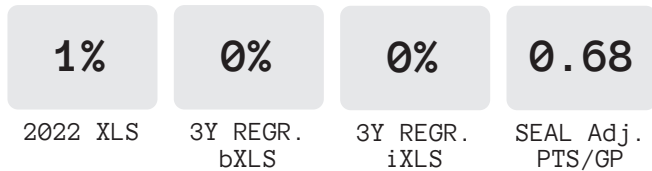
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# BEN BUJOLD

C/LW | LONDON KNIGHTS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. MAR. 3, 2004  
 WEIGHT 179 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	47	2	5	7

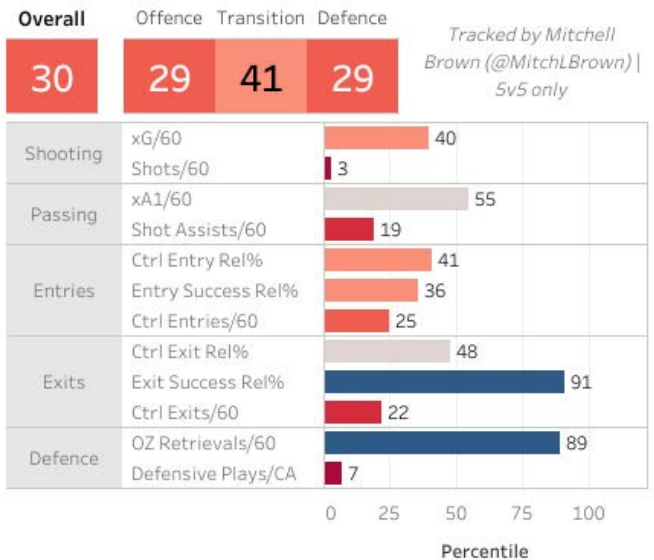
## Scouting Report

On most CHL teams, a first-rounder would be playing top-six minutes with power play time at this stage in their career. On a deep London Knights roster, Ben Bujold played just nine and half minutes per game at even strength with almost zero power play time.

Despite the limited role, Bujold's clearly a skilled player. He takes passes and makes the next play at full speed with his head up. Weaving rush patterns combine with his desire to attack the inside. His top hand stays free from his side, instead moving to increase his puck control. While he lacks mechanical consistency, his outside edges are developed. That allows him to exit his cutbacks with speed and attack the inside with a sudden change of direction.

While Bujold didn't receive much ice time with the man-advantage, he was a regular on London's penalty kill. His aggressiveness creates turnovers, and he's not shy to follow through with his shoulder. The physical game combines his handling skill to win battles along the boards and drive plays to the inside. Given his limited opportunity, Bujold's

Games Tracked: 5 | Minutes Tracked: 40.6



projection isn't easy. He's clearly skilled enough to justify a draft pick, even though he scored just seven points this season. But without the ability to properly evaluate his tools and playmaking, it's unclear just how valuable he could become.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** February 9th, 2022

London Knights vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Bujold probably had the most memorable shift of the entire game. He chipped the puck in, won the race, threw a puck out into the slot, stole away possession at the blue

line, and then set-up a goal from behind the net. Lacks ankle flexion and mechanical consistency, but he's still confident handling the puck at full speed and even throws in the odd cut-and-cutback retrieval under pressure. Really, Bujold's all projection.

He doesn't play much, and when he does, it's usually in more of a checking role that he clearly embraces. He obviously has the skills to create more offensively. Maybe an end-of-board type.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

Aside from a scoring chance via deflection, this was a quiet game for Bujold. In one sequence, he took the puck in motion, used a jab to slip inside combined with stick fake, but then turned the puck over. The skating lacks mechanical consistency, but he almost achieves proper depth. Maintains depth through crossovers. Keeps hands in front of body while handling, with his head up and feet moving. He barely plays. No idea how to project him, but he has interesting tools.


**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

A quiet game for Bujold and his linemates. A couple of zone entries, a couple of steals in pursuit, and a consistent defensive presence. Not much impact with the puck, both from his inability to get open and his teammates not showing much awareness of ability to pass. Overall, they didn't have the puck much in this game. Tools looked around average or a bit below, but he hardly played.

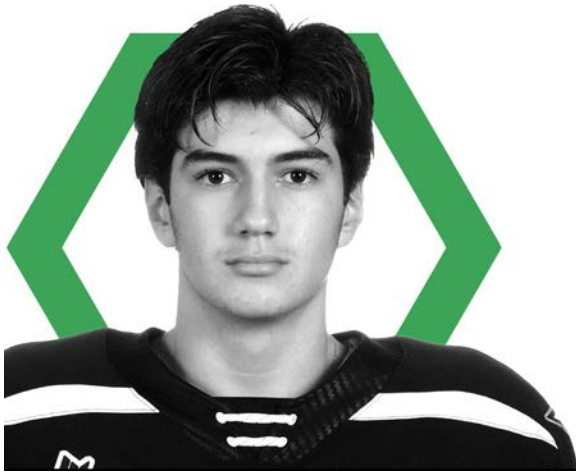
**Lauren Kelly:** October 16th, 2021

London Knights vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Bujold wasn't all that noticeable early on, but he turned it on in the second half of the game. He pressured a puck carrier well shorthanded and forced an offensive zone turnover, which led to a scoring chance. He also had a goal disallowed that would've given London a 5-1 lead (due to goalie interference), where he showcased a quick release snapshot. He's a solid skater and moves around the ice well, and is also difficult to push off pucks when he has possession. Could definitely see an NHL team snag him as a mid-to-late round pick. 

"While Bujold didn't receive much ice time with the man-advantage, he was a regular on London's penalty kill. His aggressiveness creates turnovers, and he's not shy to follow through with his shoulder."





Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

## FRANCOIS-JAMES BUTEAU

D | CAPE BRETON EAGLES

HEIGHT 6' 4"

D.O.B. APR. 28, 2004

WEIGHT 194

SHOOTS LEFT

4%

2022 XLS

4%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

2%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.47

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	67	5	12	17

### Scouting Report

If an NHL team wants to add some physicality to their system, then they could set their sights on François-James Buteau in the later rounds of this year's draft.

The Cape Breton Eagles defenceman plays a robust defensive brand of hockey at this stage in his development. As he gets older and fills out his 6-foot-4 frame, opponents will only come to fear him more. Of course, Buteau will also have to learn when to take his shots and when to rein that part of his game in a bit.

"He goes out of his way to hit opponents and places himself into trouble," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in a November 20th, 2021 game report. "He is active and engaged in the game, but he lacks the awareness to

jump up or back off at the right time."

It would be wrong to characterize Buteau as just a hammer, however, as he also brings handling and passing skills to the table. He can slip pucks to teammates on breakouts, activate with teammates up-ice and create passing plays alongside them, and even fires the odd hard shot from the point.

The main limiters of his game are his reads and, to a lesser extent, his skating. Buteau is more of a reactive player, someone who lets the opposition dictate his movement more than the contrary. This flaw can come to bite him on defence, especially because he lacks the agility and explosiveness to rapidly correct mistakes.

### Game Reports

David St-Louis - April 26th, 2022

Cape Breton Eagles vs. Charlottetown Islanders - QMJHL

Buteau would make a fine NHL pick if a team is looking to add size and physicality to their pool near the end of the draft...but there are probably better targets for that. Buteau has some handling skills, but limited agility and he isn't all that creative offensively, only capable of layering shots on nets and making the occasional slip passes. The aggressiveness is really his selling point.

David St-Louis - February 19th, 2022

Val D'Or Foreurs vs. Cap Breton Eagles - QMJHL

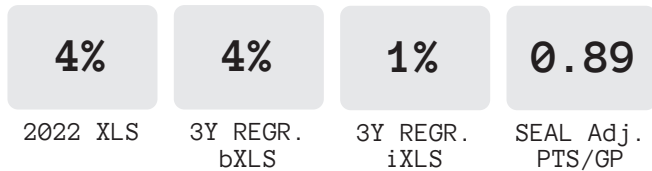
Buteau's physicality and occasional flashes of handling skills are interesting. He's aggressive defensively and offensively, but I have some pretty big doubts about his ability to take his game to higher levels. He uses what the game gives him at this level, reacts to rotations, and he has some mechanical flaws. He isn't all that aware and I don't see anticipation in his game. There is nothing truly special about his game apart from his size.



# ATLEE CALVERT

RW | MOOSE JAW WARRIORS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. SEP. 17, 2003  
WEIGHT 194 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	65	15	25	40

## Scouting Report

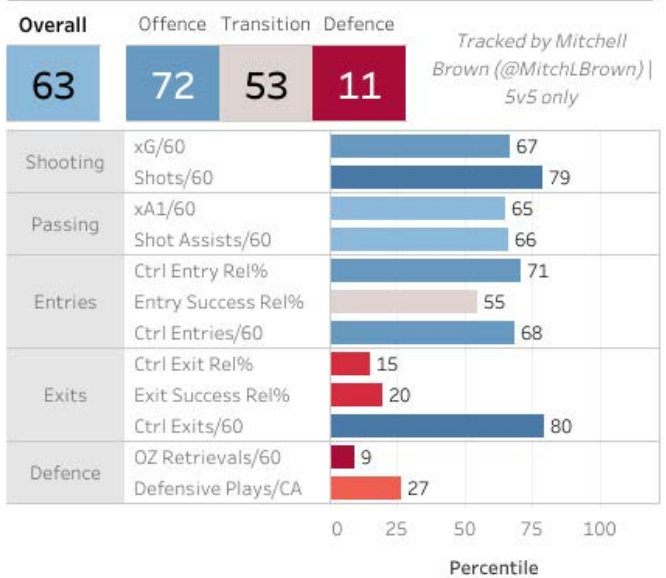
Playing on a team full of NHL draft picks and picks-to-be, it wasn't always easy to notice Atlee Calvert. But by the end of the season, he amassed enough standout plays to believe he has NHL upside.

Those flashes aren't just generic skill plays. Calvert shows manipulation ability, one-touch playmaking, and deception. He slips pucks through defenders and passes while looking off his target. Intelligent off-puck positioning and frequent scanning place him in the middle of the action, and he's adaptable, never locked into a play. Where many players shoot, he finds a teammate in better position, often misdirecting a defender to create the passing lane.

Those flashes are just flashes for a couple of connected reasons. First, Calvert's decision-making and awareness falters under pressure. Without pressure, he makes inside-lane plays, showcasing his skills in the process. With pressure, he defaults to up-and-outs and outracing defenders along the perimeter.

At least some of those decisions are attributable to his mechanical foundation. Neither a skilled handler nor skater, he lacks the tools to consistently navigate pressure at the WHL level. He has some solutions, like the beginnings of a

Games Tracked: 11 | Minutes Tracked: 153.8



delay game, deception, and a give-and-go game, but none are refined enough to make him a consistent threat.

Still, Calvert's flashes of high-level thinking are too numerous and too precise to be coincidence. He could be one of the WHL's breakout stars next season, or he could remain an interesting, but unrefined attacker for the next few years. It all hinges on development.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 13th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

Calvert manipulated a defender from the side, turning a pass reception into a deke, getting the reach, then passing

off the backhand for a chance. Probably the best flash I've seen from him this year, and there have been a lot. Scored with a deflection on the powerplay. Used his hands to beat defenders several times, but wasn't setting up his moves in

projectable ways. Still, he primarily looked for the early pass. Several with off mark, but he's still looking inside and trying to create advantages up the ice. Doubt he's a pick this year, but he'll score a lot next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 11th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

As a secondary piece, Calvert performs well. He's a skilled playmaker who recognizes opportunities before the puck lands on his stick. Deceives when necessary. Lacks a true delay game, but he'll gear down to wait for the defender to outshoot or his teammates to catch up. Some off-puck instincts and supporting reads that he turns into scoring chances. On breakouts, he makes simple, puck-advancing plays, using the middle when possible. Good chance he explodes offensively next season. But the tools probably aren't NHL-calibre. Skating lacks refinement and quickness. Hands, too.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

No change in projection. Calvert's a solid player with interesting flashes of skill, but lacks the mechanics to bring his game to the NHL. In this game, he was mostly getting open inside the slot and adjusting his positioning according to the play. Links together supporting and scoring positioning. In transition, he defers when possible. On breakouts, he completes the odd crafty pass to the inside if under limited pressure. With pressure, he's mistake-prone and defaults to up-and-outs. A much tighter defensive game than normal. He closed out on players fast, worked on the backcheck to get above the puck, and scanned before moving to eliminating threats. He has some potential to become a creative scorer. I don't think this is his year, but points should come next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

Calvert was effective early in this game, but tapered off as the game opened up. He's a system player, which that reflects. If his teammates give him a puck with space in the NZ, he completes the entry and moves possession at the right time. If not, he defaults to straight-line attacks that are likely to result in turnovers. Best chance was a two-touch shot, the first touch knocking the puck between a defender's legs. Between that play and the passing skill, it's clear Calvert has the potential to become a more creative attacker. But he's an '03 with skating and defensive limitations. Probably not a pick, but I wonder if he'll get there next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 31st, 2021

Red Deer Rebels vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

Regular performance from Calvert: one notable play. In this game, it was an off-puck movement into space timed with the

play around him for the chance. There were some smaller plays: passing at the right times, looked for the cross-lane option in transition, and moving pucks from the boards to a teammate on the inside without much risk. Consistently looks like a player on the cusp of a breakout, but he's an '03. Not sure he gets there this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Prince Albert Raiders - WHL

Calvert was the best of Moose Jaw's draft eligibles in this game. Three assists, highlighted by a wicked two-touch look-off slip pass under heavy pressure to his teammate cross-slot and a cut to the inside with a rebound-generating wrister. Some other quality looks, including a pass after winning a battle from behind the net. This is a level of passing skill and foresight that I haven't seen from him previously, and he's a pesky net-front player with a dash of off-puck instincts. At some point his impact will have to lead to points, but a trio tonight was a good start.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 6th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

Calvert played a fair bit at even-strength this game, but it wasn't exactly noticeable. He kills his own plays in transition. He runs into pressure with no escape route, doesn't use his teammates enough, and doesn't have the puck skills to problem-solve. As a passer and shooter, there's a bit more reason to be optimistic, but I don't think he quite gets to the NHL average. Not a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 15th, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Prince Albert Raiders - WHL

Quiet game from Calvert, with the odd moment. He popped into pockets of space at the right time, getting a scoring chance for his efforts. He's very much a straight-line attacker, but I like his vision and awareness in transition. Plays with a bit of pace, has the right idea with his cross-lane passes on the breakout, and isn't a negative on the defensive end. He looks like a solid WHLer, but the rest of the game doesn't pop enough.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 2nd, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

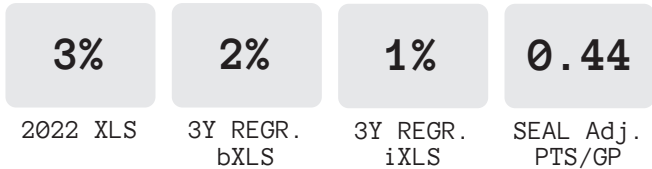
Calvert had moments in this game, showing a bit of skill as both a shooter and passer. He spun pucks into the slot and found some space around the net-front to get open. Doesn't scan before passing when pressured, but also showed awareness to fight to face the slot along the boards. That skill was his primary way of getting pucks to the inside, but he usually did it flat-footed. Inefficient in transition, failing to connect with passes or failing to identify better options altogether. I didn't see NHL skills here.



# ADAM CARDONA

D | WATERLOO BLACK HAWKS

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. OCT. 5, 2003  
WEIGHT 196 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	42	3	5	8

## Scouting Report

Eight points in 42 games isn't usually suggestive of a player with NHL upside, but Adam Cardona isn't your typical low-scoring defenceman.

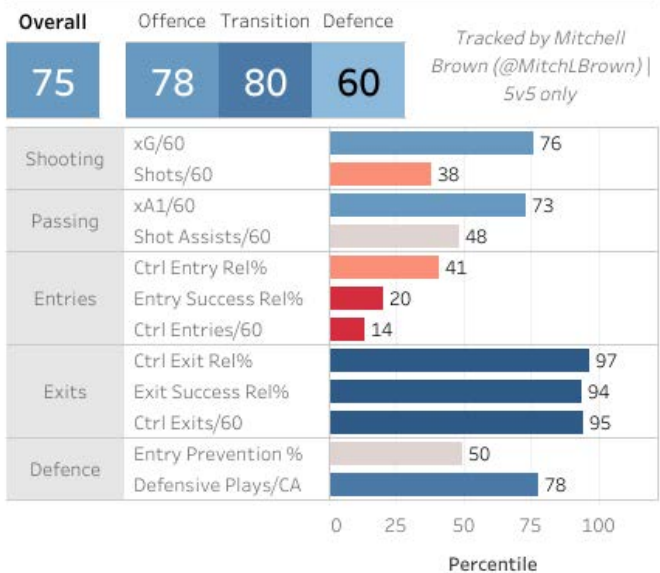
"Cardona's way more skilled than the points suggest," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in an April game report. "He activates at the right times, dekes around incoming defenders, and stays activated to make the next play."

In low-volume, Cardona showed point-getting skills. Instead of forcing points shots, he uses steps inside or works laterally to find a better lane. He takes passes inside crossovers to the middle, waits for the defender to commit, then slides back down the outside.

So, why doesn't Cardona score more? Some of that's likely just bad luck, but he's failing to make the best play once he's activated, missing opportunities to set up teammates in scoring position to instead start the cycle. Even though he puts himself in positions to create, he defaults to the simple play on most touches.

That skill also only appears in spurts, more commonly in the offensive end than on breakouts. On breakouts, he opts almost exclusively for passes and carries, but it's rare that he uses the same skills that get him off the point. As a result,

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 126.5



he's never creating advantages up the rink.

As Cardona develops his offensive game, his work in the defensive end will keep him in the lineup. He's a physical force, running over opponents trying to gain the zone or in the corners.

Cardona didn't register on many radars this season, but he could be an interesting late-round selection for a development-focused team.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

A quiet game from Cardona. Didn't see the skill or activation I've seen previously. Mostly made simple plays and off-loaded possession as soon as possible. The rush defence was solid once again, but he wasn't killing plays early. Physical, but reactionary in defensive coverage. Didn't see a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Cardona's way more skilled than the points suggest. He activates at the right times, dekes around incoming defenders, and stays activated to make the next play. Well-timed pinches extend offensive zone time and combined with rush defence to kill plays early. Mostly deferred on breakouts. The skill from the point hasn't transferred to exits. He doesn't manipulate incoming pressure or even try to create space up the ice. Still, he has a lot of interesting qualities. I wonder if he gets drafted.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 28th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Back to doing nothing with the puck in this game, unfortunately. Cardona has more skill than this – he just chooses to make the simple play at all costs. To be fair, he also has difficulty managing incoming pressure. He doesn't know how to manipulate forecheckers. Lacks patience with the puck; a single cutback might completely change of he approaches the breakout. Beat off the rush a few times, and didn't have the same physical game as normal. No NHL qualities shown in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 16th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Fargo Force - USHL

A physical force, Cardona ran over some players on the defensive end and smoked players who attempted revenge. Slightly passive gap in this game, but he closes space around the blue-line without overcommitting. Quite simple on the

breakout at times, but he makes controlled plays up the boards to his teammates – probably not enough for the next level. Offensively, he activated at the right times and nearly hit a teammate with a pass into the slot. Nothing complex, but it shows that he's trying to get involved. A slick deke and cutback sequence, but that was it for puck skills. Probably not a draft pick, but his combination of physicality and play involvement will keep me watching.


**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

Des Moines Buccaneers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Cardona did everything in this game. He broke ankles from the point, stepped into space, and fired. He ran over players behind his net, killed rushes in the NZ, and made clean breakouts. Skating's not so much bad as it is inconsistent. In several instances, he flashed a projectable knees-over-toes, hips-tilted-back skating posture. Activation was a constant in this game. There were some poor breakout attempts (he has difficulty reading incoming pressure and defaults to clearances when pressed). He's not much of a playmaker, missing opportunities to pass to a better-positioned teammate or activate to become a proper option. This was a fun performance, but little about it suggested NHL upside.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Cardona brought nothing offensively, but had a solid game in the other two zones. Mostly makes controlled plays under pressure, looking for teammates on either wing. Doesn't rush plays. He's not deceptive, but he's patient and has some foresight in his decisions. Physical defender, leading engagements with his stick. Maintains backwards momentum while closing space without crossing over or planting his feet. Established gap early (compared to his teammates) but would benefit from closing space earlier. Mechanics seemed more like weaknesses going forward, but he had enough interesting plays on the breakout to keep me watching. 



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

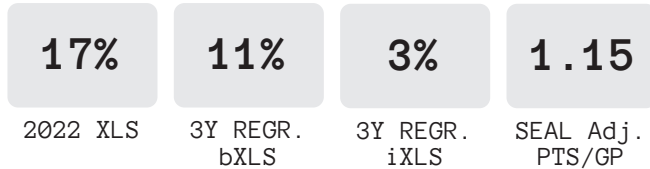


Physical

# AIDAN CASTLE

LW | NIAGARA ICEDOGS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JAN. 8, 2004  
WEIGHT 168 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	15	28	43

## Scouting Report

Projecting Aidan Castle to the NHL proved to be a tricky task for our scouting staff this season. In most viewings, he played a secondary role on his line, preferring to offload possession and play off his teammates whenever possible. But he clearly has NHL qualities, the first of which is his off-puck game.

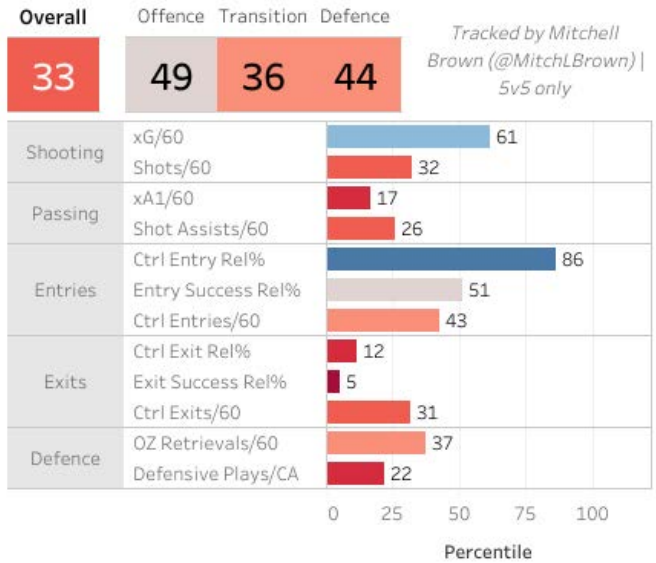
Castle impacts the defensive end through energy, pressure, and awareness. He sprints his off-puck routes, pushing back the line of defence to create space in his wake. When many players just skate up the boards, he swings across to become short support. In the offensive end, he supports the puck, then dashes into the slot for rebounds and deflection opportunities. He slips behind defenders for backdoor opportunities and establishes body positioning on those that he can't outwit.

Right now, Castle's shot proves to benefit the most from his off-puck game. "His shot's best off the pass, taking the puck across his body as he loads up the shot," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown wrote in an April game report. "Hands in front, elbow up for a fast, adaptable release. Adjusts to the pass to shoot immediately."

There are moments where Castle's passing also benefits from his off-puck game, using his space-finding ability to become the link between two teammates.

To turn those moments into regular plays, Castle must develop his passing skills. He identifies high-value lanes, but lacks the pre-pass setups to slip pucks through defenders.

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 125.9



While he flashes a give-and-go game, he also puts himself into disadvantageous situations with the puck in transition. After building speed and breaking one layer of the defence, he often "takes it wide and limits his options to either a weak outside shot or a poor passing lane," OHL regional scout Lauren Kelly notes.

Since the passing doesn't provide many solutions for managing pressure, Castle's largely ineffective with the puck in small-area play. He makes simple, low-value plays, even if better options are a quick turn and pass away. There's no disputing that he has NHL qualities, but his skills and small-area game could prove limiting.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Moved away from Gushchin and Fimis, Castle showed more puckhandling and transition ability. It wasn't perfect, but he used weaving patterns and tried to gain the zone with control. Still defaults to the outside and too turnover-prone on breakouts. The shot remains the most interesting skill. A sound, powerful shooter off the pass who gets inside positioning before getting the puck. Only makes the basic pass. I don't see much upside here, but he has moments of more. Not a candidate for our board, but he could make for an interesting late-round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Castle's an intelligent player with shooting ability, but lacks the skill to execute the opportunities he identifies. Shot's at least a 5. Could be a 6. His shot's best off the pass, taking the puck across his body as he loads up the shot. Hands in front, elbow up for a fast, adaptable release. Adjusts to the pass to shoot immediately. Often identifies the best space, either by swinging laterally across the zone to become strong-side support or moving between checks to get open for a shot. With that comes some forechecking and defence potential. Passing skills lack. Doesn't adjust puck positioning before releasing the puck, preventing him from accessing many of the lanes he identifies. In transition, he mostly defers or sprints into defenders. Lacks the handling skill to escape, and since his playmaking doesn't provide many solutions, he's a passenger in transition at best and a turnover machine at worst. Fascinating player. He has pro potential. But I haven't seen enough adaptability to rank him.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Castle was mostly the tertiary threat on his line, but his distribution was working in this game. Nothing too advanced in terms of pre-pass set ups, but he combined off-puck skating with vision effectively. Where most shot, he slowed down and found a teammate on the weak side. Recognized options immediately and didn't waste time before passing (a couple of two-touch passes in this outing). The motor on the defensive end is there, but he ends up chasing. Not much of a shooting threat or transition player. Requires pre-existing space/advantages for his playmaking to function. Seems like the standard CHLer with skill, but perhaps there's more here.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 16th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Castle was quiet in this one. He whiffed on a one-timer on an odd-man rush and his scoring chances weren't dangerous. He has good rushes with the puck but takes it wide and limits his options to either a weak outside shot or a poor passing lane. The one good chance he had to get on the board was a tap-in on the doorstep that was stopped. His off-puck habits were an asset, but I don't know if I'd draft him based on this viewing.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

At the moment, Castle's relatively nondescript for projection purposes, but there's a clear path for improvement here. He has already the skills, usually in open ice. He doesn't manipulate pressure in the normal way, but he attacks wide, draws defenders in, and then makes the early pass to a teammate on the inside. Consistently finds ways to get open and support the play across the ice. Occasional creative solutions along the boards, and he'll use look offs to prolong passing lanes on the PP. Take that space away, and he's a very simple player who avoids trying anything other than the safe play. But, he clearly understands how to protect the puck (get low, free bottom hand) and manage pressure. I wonder if he's still uncomfortable with the speed of the OHL. We'll see what happens in the final two months of the season.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 30th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Castle scored the IceDogs' first goal in this game, picking up a rebound and spinning to fire a perfect snapshot in the slot on the power play. He was also on the receiving end of a pretty bad interference hit in the slot in the third period and missed a bit of the game in the locker room (he did return though). Other than those two incidents, there just wasn't a lot else to evaluate on. He was good in a forechecking role and not out of position defensively from what I saw, but likely not more than a third-rounder at this point.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 25th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

A quiet game from Castle, which is a theme in my viewings this season. There's clearly a lot to work with here, however. He attacks the inside early in transition, looks for passing targets through layers and across the rink, and brings puck protection and defensive ability. When beating players 1-on-1, he cuts across or delays to encourage a reaction – that's good. The issue is that he doesn't give himself the proper space or speed to beat the defender. Otherwise, he's too simple with the puck. He'll make the odd skilled pass in open ice, but

otherwise prefers to make the easy short-range option and relocate. Likely a draft pick because of his tools and clear path from improvement, but likely an end-of-board pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Castle's a solid defensive player and a crafty playmaker. He understands how to engage his teammates with give-and-gos. Consistently moves after passing to get open again, which led to his best scoring chance of the game. A simple attacker in all other facets: defaults to the outside lane, mostly relies on outracing defenders, and doesn't have notable passing skill beyond the awareness of options upon reception. Perhaps there's more here. After all, playing with Fimis wasn't exactly an easy task in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 11th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Castle was more in the way of Fimis and Gushchin than helping them in this game. He supports the play well enough, but didn't make any plays to advance the puck. In one sequence, he delayed until he found a point shot, but the give-and-go was there the entire time. That inability to make the best play is the theme of his puck game. He has tools, he understands how to get open and protect the puck, but his impact is very limited. Didn't look like a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

I liked Castle in this game mostly a forechecker with some passing ability. He pre-scans on retrievals and spots open teammates. Doesn't force plays, but doesn't try many with any degree of difficulty. Accurate passer, for sure. But I didn't see any standout skill. Skating: adequate ankle flexion, hips are integrated but not fully, and under the shoulder recoveries. Doesn't drive his recovering leg forward, mostly kicking his

feet and dropping it back onto the ice. Acceleration is mostly clean with a narrow, powerful sprint phase. I think he projects as an average NHL skater. Disruptive stick on the forecheck, timing his engagements well and ripping away possession a number of times. Looked like a draft pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 22nd, 2021

Niagara IceDogs vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

Another good showing for Castle in this one, including two brilliant set-ups to Pano Fimis for breakaway attempts, feeding the puck through multiple players. He was consistently a threat on the ice, drawing defenders to him while he maintained possession before passing off to open players, or driving to the net with the puck himself and getting off scoring chances in tight. Castle was constantly battling for pucks at both ends of the ice and fared well in board battles. He was also coming back to help his defensemen and at least so far, looks like the IceDogs' strongest draft-eligible player.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 7th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Castle was far and away the IceDogs' best and most consistent player in this game. He was flying up and down the ice, and he opened the scoring with a snipe on the power play. Castle demonstrated his confident puck carrying abilities, while being able to maintain control and keep his head up while he stickhandled around defenders. He played some really long shifts and didn't appear to be fatigued at the end of any of them. Castle reacted and adjusted to changes in plays very quickly, and he's a great, shifty skater who hinted at some very lethal manipulation in his offensive wheelhouse. He doesn't need the puck to help create offense though, as he was constantly driving to the net. Castle was also reliable in his own end, whether it was being the first forward back to help out the defense, backchecking to help prevent an odd-man rush, or being a menace in puck battles.







Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# ALES CECH

D | KÄRPÄT U20

HEIGHT 6'2"

D.O.B. JUN. 1, 2004

WEIGHT 192

SHOOTS LEFT

0%

2022 XLS

1%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

0%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s.	38	0	7	7
U18 SM-s.	4	0	1	1
WJC-18	6	0	1	1

## Scouting Report

A cursory glance at Ales Cech's stats line will tell you that his strengths lay more on the defensive side of the game than the attacking one. He only put seven points, all assists, in the U20 SM-Sarja, one of Finland's Junior leagues.

Cech positions himself well in the defensive zone. He engages opponents along the walls and near the net. He can restrict the movements of attackers, contain and pin them to the walls, and maintain a tight gap off the rush to prevent them from entering his zone cleanly. He's a disturber and a checker.

"To sum this up, he was really reliable defensively, made

a couple of effective poke checks, the gap control was ok and his ability to break up plays thanks to his reach also showed up," wrote Marek Novotny, Elite Prospects Czechia and Slovakia regional scout, in a October 31st, 2021 report.

The next step for him is working on his play with the puck, especially under pressure, and also on his off-puck defensive game. While the defenceman can close on opponents and separate them from the puck, he lacks the awareness and the anticipation necessary to spot attackers rushing behind him, which can leave his team vulnerable.

## Game Reports

**Lassi Alanen:** April 24th, 2022

USA vs. Czechia - U18s

Czechia got rammed by the USA for the entire game, and Cech's line was not an exception - it was a one-way traffic for pretty much all of his ice time. Cech is an okay defensive defender at this level. He does have a decent understanding of positional play in the DZ and can pin up players along the boards. He did get beaten cleanly off the rush once. There was also another occasion where his off-puck NZ defence failed as he was leaving too much open space in the middle. Cech can move the puck well when not pressured, but under stress his decision-making with the puck left to be desired. Not a lot of puck touches in the OZ.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 16th, 2022

Kiekko-Espoo vs. Kärpät - U20 SM-sarja

Cech has improved his play quite a bit during the past month, churning out more intriguing performances compared to the past season. It was kinda unfortunate he got punished for making a great stop at the DZ blue line and activating deep into the following rush, but his linemate turned it over at the blue line and Kiekko-Espoo scored the game-winning goal late in the third from the ensuing counter attack. Cech's offensive game is still very meat and potatoes. He almost never activates from the point and just fires the occasional point shot or passes deep or to his partner. He did carry the puck through the neutral zone a bit more often than previously, but then just shot from a low-percentage angle after crossing the blue line. Still, he

might get picked in the later rounds if a team values his defensively responsible skill set and attitude.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 10th, 2022

Kärpät vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

Cech remains a solid defensive defenceman who can break the puck out pretty well in most scenarios, but lacks higher end skill or offensive ability. He does activate on the weak side to support the rush when he sees the opportunity, but lacks the timing and the skill to take full advantage of it. Rush defence looked pretty clean in this one, making well-timed pokechecks to break up plays and pre-emptively taking out his side of the ice if the winger was too far up the ice.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 4th, 2022

HIFK vs. Kärpät - U20 SM-sarja

Cech's work in transition was a lot cleaner in this compared to my previous viewings. He didn't make any notable mistakes with the puck and actually flashed some decent passing skill, making a very nice stretch pass to split the defence that should have resulted in a breakaway but was later fumbled by the forward. That being said, Cech's skill set is still rather limited. He prefers to dump the puck in even when he has room to carry it in to the OZ. He's not a high-end playkiller either. He reads situations defensively pretty well and his off-puck rush defence had solid moments, but his pairing still got hammered in by the HIFK forwards because they couldn't make the necessary stops.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 9th, 2022

JYP vs. Kärpät - U20 SM-sarja

Cech seemed to have injured himself at some point, as

he only played in the first two periods of the game. It was a pretty typical showing from the young Czech. Kärpät had some defensive issues while he was on the ice and had trouble stopping the cycle, which led to a lopsided on-ice stat line for Cech. Not sure how much he could have done off-puck to influence that. What he could have done was to move the puck more effectively. I don't see him as a particularly confident with the puck. He often tries to make a quick and early pass rather than drawing in the pressure before making a move. One mishandling sequence ended up in his line spending another 30 seconds in the DZ. Didn't have any 5-on-5 puck touches in the offensive end. He did make a few aggressive pinches in the OZ that worked out fine.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 21st, 2022

KalPa vs. Kärpät - U20 SM-sarja

Cech's start to the game was pretty horrific, consisting of defensive lapses, bad OZ anticipation and even getting cleanly beaten off the rush, which doesn't happen to him that often at this level. Kärpät was playing a very man-to-man focused defensive scheme and Cech had some bad communication moments with his partner, which led to some awful-looking situations where he wasn't covering after his linemate lost his 1-on-1. Cech's puck play wasn't much better at the start, although it got a bit better as the game progressed. Though he scans a lot on retrievals, he sometimes freezes or doesn't have the handling skill to pick the loose puck and move it accurately enough. When not pressured, he can make the simple play well and even carry it himself at times. Skating is fineish, lacks ankle flexion and two-step quickness. This game definitely didn't make me think that he's a legit NHL prospect.

**"The next step for [Cech] is working on his play with the puck, especially under pressure, and also on his off-puck defensive game."**

**Lassi Alanen:** November 27th, 2021

KalPa vs. Kärpät - U20 SM-sarja

Cech played pretty big minutes in this one, getting quite a bit of power play time and obviously a good minutes at 5-on-5. Cech's still a defensive defenceman in my eyes. He's done a pretty good job at limiting scoring chances, killing some plays early when the opposition hasn't established OZ cycle. He's got decent awareness, scanning often, though there was one occasion where his man got a dangerous chance when he was a bit too late at reacting. He's also scanning a lot on retrievals, but his puck skills were a big downfall and inhibited him from making a positive impact in transition while pressured. OZ game remains a bit simple, though he seems to be able to make some reads and spots activation windows, even if his linemates weren't on the same page with him. Probably not a pick still.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 26th, 2021

Tappara vs. Kärpät - U20 SM-sarja

Cech's value seems to come mostly from the defensive side of the game. He kept his gaps tight when he was facing a rush, though his off-puck rush defence could have been a bit more center lane focused. In the DZ, he was able to contain the play well along the boards and was pinning forwards with good success. There were a few situations

where his reads weren't perfect, but his on-puck defensive skills seem to be good for this level. With the puck, he kept his play rather simple and had some ups and downs in breakouts. Some easier passes missed their targets, but most of them advanced the play quite nicely. One good OZ pinch and pokecheck that not only kept the play in the OZ but also created a decent scoring chance. Didn't provide much on the offensive side of things, though.

**Marek Novotny:** October 30th, 2021

Kärpät vs. Pelicans - U20 SM-sarja

Overall, it was not an "ok" performance from Aleš Čech. He played a very good and tight defensive game and made it very difficult for Pelicans' wingers to make some offensive plays and to threaten his goalie. There are many things to improve, but fighting for loose pucks is not one of them. He also did some solid job at keeping eyes on the players he was supposed to defend/cover, so I would also highlight his sense of reading and reacting to what's happening around him. So to sum this up, he was really reliable defensively, made a couple of effective poke checks, the gap control was ok and his ability to break up plays thanks to his reach also showed up. On the other hand there was no impact offensively.

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# KYLE CHYZOWSKI

F | PORTLAND WINTERHAWKS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. AUG. 16, 2004  
WEIGHT 157 SHOOTS LEFT

7%	9%	3%	0.93
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	68	13	22	35

## Scouting Report

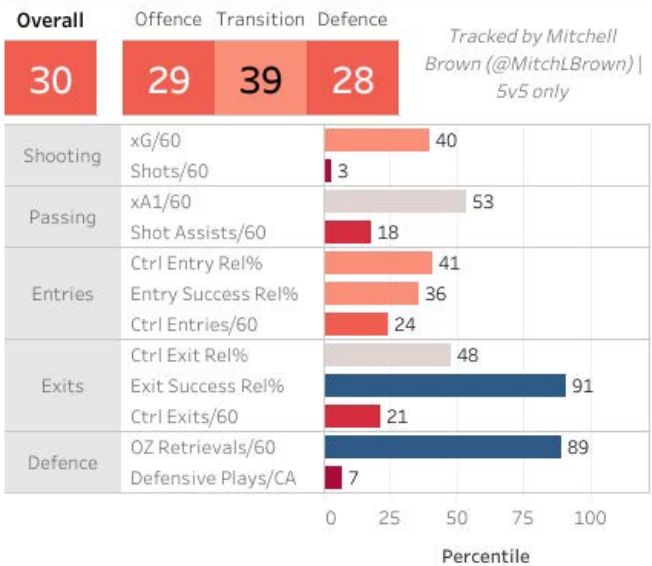
Buried in the Portland Winterhawk's depth chart, Kyle Chyzowski has the skills to double his point totals in a bigger role.

Given his bottom-six role, Chyzowski was often most effective away from the puck. In the defensive end, he closes passing lanes and forces turnovers, and he's a non-stop nuisance in pursuit. Once his team recovers possession, he gets open by shrinking the distance to the puck-carrier when possible and getting open at the top of the circle for a one-timer or catch-and-release wrister.

In most of our viewings, Chyzowski struggled to make impactful puck plays beyond shooting. He sprinted down the boards until he ran out of space and turned the puck over. Moments of playmaking only appear in spurts, usually only after beating a defender along the perimeter.

However, that changed late in the season. "He got open inside the slot, slipped pucks to the middle proactively, and delayed instead of forcing entries up the boards," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a late-season game report. "In the corners, he waited

Games Tracked: 5 | Minutes Tracked: 40.6



for the defender to lean on him, then cut back into space."

If those late-season flashes are Chyzowski's actual game, he could become quite the late-round find. Ultimately, the uncertainty led to his omission from the board, but he has some NHL skills.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: May 8th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

The most skilled performance I've seen from Chyzowski. He got open inside the slot, slipped pucks to the middle proactively, and delayed instead of forcing entries up the

boards. In the corners, he waited for the defender to lean on him, then cut back into space. And he was a monster on the penalty kill, he took away passing lanes, forced turnovers, and even started attacks the other way. Shooting skills: one-timer, outside leg wrister, and catch-and-release shots.

Some of the previous issues appeared, still failing to read the feet of defenders and getting stuck to the outside. But this was a standout performance from a player who doesn't receive much ice time. Looks like a breakout candidate next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

An efficient low-minute game. Chyzowski showed a projectable wrister and one-timer on several occasions, along with some passing skill. The shooting's complemented with some off-puck movement and timing, usually as the F3 at the top of the circle. He doesn't make advanced reads, he's constantly moving to stay in the passing lane. He's not deceptive, but he makes quick plays to the inside. Used the middle on breakouts, brings pucks off the boards to the inside lane. Might be an interesting late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 20th, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

Another game with flashes. Chyzowski connected with a long-range pass to set-up a scoring chance, broke up plays on the backcheck, and intercepted a few breakout passes. Wraparound opportunity could've become a scoring chance had he stepped into the slot instead of jamming the puck into the pads. But he's mostly an off-puck player at this stage.

Finishes his routes, swings down low to become an accessible passing option, or finding space in the slot. Nothing too advanced, but good enough to suggest there's some scoring upside here, despite the limited minutes. Time to watch more.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

As usual, Chyzowski did well with the minutes given to him. He had his gamely scoring chance with a one-timer in the slot, outworked players on the backcheck, and grabbed a couple of steals. He's inefficient, highlighted by a botched pass reception for a high-danger chance, and then took too long to identify the next play, leading to a turnover. For most prospects, that's not just another shift. For Chyzowski, that killed one of his two favourable touches all game - mistakes are magnified in limited minutes. I still don't know what to make of his game. He could be a late rounder, but I don't have a solid sense of his tools yet.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

Chyzowski's mostly a forechecker and off-puck threat. A knack for getting steals on the forecheck, mostly through a combination of pace and timing. The odd pass to the middle, but he's mostly just extending OZ time. The off-puck move-



ment in OZP is usually at the top of the slot or attacking as a shooting threat in a sort of short support role. Timed movements into the slot would help him make better use of his one-timer. Looks like a player who will score plenty in the WHL in upcoming years, but I'm not convinced he's a pick this time around. There's just not enough NHL skill being shown.

**Daniel Gee:** February 25th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Hard to get a sense of Chyzowski's game from this viewing -- he faced limited minutes and long stretches of time without seeing the ice. The entirety of his game against the Cougars was on and off-puck transitional attacks. Some of Chyzowski's off-puck habits are generally positive -- he drives the middle to push defenders back, and he pushes pace to create havoc. He had an interesting play where he created a turnover on the far boards, jumped into the rush, found open ice on the top of the left-hand circle, but was reaching on the pass reception, sending a slider 5+ feet wide. Not sure he has much, if any, real separating tools. On another 2-on-1 rush, he attempted to force a puck through a sliding defender, killing the chance. Some eye-line manipulation on a first period entry pass and some ability to slip the puck, but his entries are so perimeter it's hard to see translatability. Other than that, there wasn't a lot here. He looks tiny on the ice, and he doesn't really extend as he snaps back to recover, losing power as he pushes up the ice.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 29th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Chyzowski scored with a wrister off the rush. Had a couple of other chances, including one after slipping behind the defence and getting open for a through pass. Consistently supporting the play, building speed underneath the puck

when possible, and anticipating space. Not an instinctual scorer or particularly skilled playmaker, but his skill set is quite diverse. Skating and handling project as average or a touch below it. In this viewing, there just wasn't quite enough to justify a draft pick, but he could get there.


**Mitchell Brown:** January 8th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Chyzowski was mostly effective on the penalty kill, closing lanes and then applying pressure at the right moments. Created a chance by forcing two turnovers in quick succession. At 5-on-5, he was largely ineffective. Not involved offensively or defensively, mostly preferring to coast rather than demanding the puck through movement. Threw a big hit, but then immediately threw the puck away instead of making the open cross-ice pass for a clean entry. Other rushes were straight line attacks, and even when the defender pivots early, he tries to outrace rather than manipulate to gain the inside. Didn't look like a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 1st, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

This game was a shootout, which worked in Chyzowski's favour. Finds space at the top of the slot, although he's not particularly good at getting inside the hashmarks. One-timer's definitely legit, as is his catch-and-release wrister. Leans a bit too far over his outside edge on inside leg shots. The skating lacks depth. Acceleration phase is a series of crossovers with his head in the air and knees too straight -- all his momentum is going upwards. It'll limit his ability to make plays along the board at the next level, which might be his best attribute after the shot. Still, he understands when to funnel plays to the inside. Not an advanced player by any means, but he could be an interesting late-round pick. 

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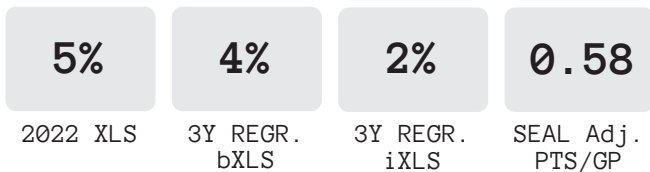
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# NOLAN COLLINS

D | SUDBURY WOLVES

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. APR. 28, 2004  
WEIGHT 192 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	65	4	14	18
WJC-18	4	0	1	1

## Scouting Report

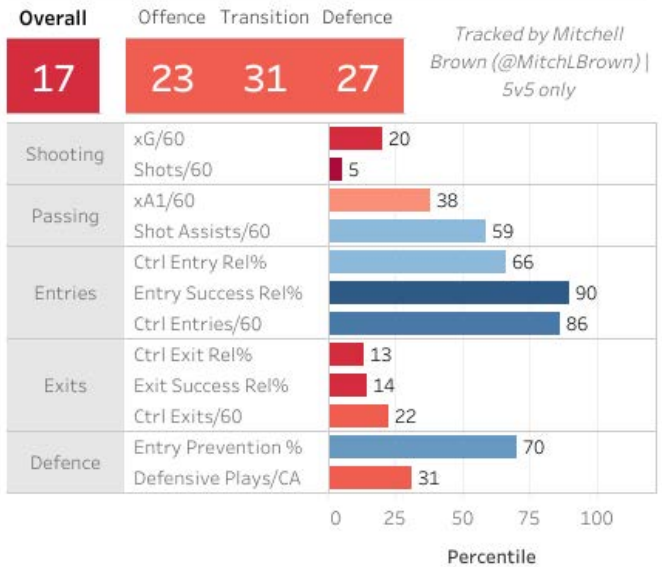
Nolan Collins wasn't on our radar coming into the season, but after solid growth and an eventual spot on Canada's U18s team, he should hear his name called in Montréal at the 2022 NHL Draft.

Like many mid-to-late candidates, Collins' game is limited by a lack of consistency, particularly with the puck. Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown described those issues in a game report: "When he gets a bit of space, he shows vision and awareness. He'll hit teammates on the inside and weak side. With pressure, he defaults to simple plays and forces pucks up the boards." Collins' ability to find space is linked to his skating: "There's no acceleration phase to his skating - it's straight into his stride posture. And his stride posture lacks ankle flexion and the mechanics require refinement."

Collins' upside comes from his flashes of activation, an NHL shot, and moments of creativity. He jumps into space off-puck, then hits the brakes inside space to become a shooting threat. When the puck arrives on his stick, his hands are already positioned to shoot. Because of his narrow posture and elevated elbow, there's potential for him to develop more shooting skills like a curl-and-drag wrister, too.

The skating limitations appear in Collins' pivots and lack of recovery ability, which offers an explanation for his tendency to concede the zone too easily. To correct it, he tends

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 120.1



to overcommit to the outside, allowing skill attackers access to the inside lane. He scans for threats, but he's often late to get the stop. Throughout the season, there flashes of projectable NHL play-killing through taking away the middle, heel pushes instead of crossovers, and well-timed stick checks.

With skill development and patience, Collins could be a useful piece on a bottom-pairing. More likely, he's a depth player. Still, the combination of activation, shooting, and physical play will be a worthwhile investment in the later rounds.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 13th, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Collins moves much better with the puck, using crossovers in place of his upright, short strides. He's still not generating much power out there, but he's able to find a bit of separation. When he gets a bit of space, he shows vision and awareness. He'll hit teammates on the inside and weak side. With pressure, he defaults to simple plays and forces pucks up the boards. The defence isn't too notable, either. He concedes too much ground too early. Over-commits to the outside. Don't see him as a candidate for the board, but he'll get picked.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Collins' skating is already problematic in the OHL. His pivots are sloppy and slow. There's no acceleration phase to his skating – it's straight into his stride posture. And his stride posture lacks ankle flexion and the mechanics require refinement. Despite his upright stance, he has some skating skills and awareness of when to use them, like the punch turn.

He also moves through passes and pass receptions. But even when he finds a bit of space, he's turnover-prone. He passes to teammates more covered than himself, missing inside-lane and cross-ice options in the process. He doesn't skate with the puck at all. If he gets a pass further up the ice, he shows more vision. The defence has potential because of, again, details, but lacks upside because of the skating and lack of proactivity. That's largely what the projection looks like: some upside through habits, but he lacks awareness and tools.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Back to the usual stuff from Collins. He didn't show any notable puck skills or ideas. The puck game is just simple plays that suggest a lack of awareness. The skating proved to be a bigger issue than in previous viewings. While his mechanics aren't awful, he lacks a bit of ankle flexion – and he's lumbering. He can't recover once beat, and while he wasn't beat much in this game, his passive gap will expose his skating at the next

level. Zero offence. Didn't see a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Collins had more interesting moments than normal with the puck. On a breakout, he faked a stuff, got the reaction, then continued forward. A pass would've had the same impact, but any puck plays from him are notable. Activated into space off-puck. Nothing complex about his reads, but he was prepared to shoot off the pass. Projectable form: chest up, elbow up, hands in front of his body. Receives the puck with his hands already in position to shoot.

Passing and breakouts are quite limited. He passes behind his target and he tries to force plays up the boards. Defensively, he was solid. Stopped a couple of entries by taking away the middle and forcing a dump-in. A bit reactionary in defensive zone coverage, but he emphatically gets the stops that he recognizes. He might a late-round candidate.


**Mitchell Brown:** November 14th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Collins wasn't a factor in this game. Too passive through the neutral zone. Rarely beat cleanly, but ceded the zone (and scoring chances) without friction. Spent most of the game chasing. There was one interesting moment where he got above the play, gained the zone, cut inside, and dropped the puck behind him. High crossover integration with the puck, although his crossovers are barely crossovers. Didn't see anything to suggest a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 28th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Collins was a more aggressive rush defender than his partner and fellow '22 draft eligible, Joshua Hoover. Several projectable NZ stops through timed engagements, quiet footwork, and a tight gap. Some less flattering sequences because he gives speed way too room and he can't make up space. Doesn't scan on retrievals and consistently throws the puck away under pressure, even if there were options. But he activated into the play once. He's solid, but too risk-averse to even get a bearing on his puck skills. Worth watching more, but I don't think he's a notable prospect at this stage. 





Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# JUSTIN CÔTÉ

C | DRUMMONDVILLE VOLTIGEURS

HEIGHT 5'6"

D.O.B. JUL. 11, 2004

WEIGHT 163

SHOOTS LEFT

11%

2022 XLS

18%

3Y REGR. bXLS

6%

3Y REGR. iXLS

1.12

SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	64	26	30	56

## Scouting Report

The first thing that stands out with Justin Côté is his speed. It's easily his best attribute and a comfortably above-average projection. You tune in for a Drummondville Voltigeurs game, and he's the player sprinting up and down the ice two or three times a shift at a breakneck pace.

That's about it for the translatable parts of Côté's game, though. Standing at just 5-foot-6, his projection is fraught for reasons that are largely beyond his control.

To overcome that significant hurdle, Côté will have to become an exceptional player in every facet of open-ice play, especially rush attacks and on the power play. The likelihood of his game translating to the small area in the NHL just isn't

all that high with his physical limitations such as they are.

And unfortunately, Côté isn't on track to get there. His shot and the way that he creates shooting opportunities off-puck have already made him a strong power play forward at the QMJHL level, but his playmaking instincts lag far behind. You won't ever mistake him for a dual-threat forward, by any means.

The most likely career outcome for Côté is that of the prolific junior player. Perhaps he can one day score his way to an entry-level deal as a CHL free agent, but we haven't seen enough yet to place him on our board.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 6th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Drummondville V. - QMJHL

It's tough to see Côté in the NHL, but he looks much better later in the season. Set up a goal in a spot where he normally shoots. He's slowing down his decisions and trying to find better plays in the offensive zone. In transition, he's still the pace-only attacker who gets locked along the boards and can't escape. Forechecking and some defensive value. Doubt he's a pick this year.

**David St-Louis:** April 14th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Drummondville V. - QMJHL

I saw a different side of Côté in this game. He used his

teammates to create scoring chances for himself a bit more, which is a change from his straight-line rushes down the board. He still does a lot of zooming around the ice and he doesn't get many pucks, but the surfacing playmaking side and the one-timers from the circle give him some value. I could see a team drafting him, but I'm not all that interested in his profile.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Drummondville V. vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Côté didn't accomplish much in this game. Missed passing opportunities. Lots of straight-line attacks that got killed along the boards. Some forechecking. Had a pair of high-danger

chances by getting open in the slot and deflecting the shot. The first deflection had a high degree of difficulty, deflecting it around his body as he jumped in the air. But I didn't see anything else to suggest a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Drummondville V. vs. Baie-Comeau Drakkar - QMJHL

Côté was on fire in this game. He must've had five or six scoring chances at 5-on-5 alone. The individual sequences where he beats defenders with his hands and pace are cool, but won't work at the next level. They already hardly work here. Attacks head on instead of at angle and never creates any advantages for himself. But he's also a skilled off-puck shooter. He fires off the pass, even adding a little curl-and-drag in the process. Gets space by arriving late, or sneaky away from defenders on the far post. Adding more between checks and timed dashes to the slot in offensive zone play will get him even more looks. Breakouts lack patience and he's rarely making plays off the boards to the middle. Ultimately, there's probably just not quite enough here with his skating, inefficiencies, and reliant on pre-existing advantages. But the shooting element could make him a top finisher in the Q as soon as next season. Might be worth another look.

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Québec Remparts vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Côté still plays with a lot of pace and speed all over the ice. He outmanoeuvres opponents sometimes in tight quarters, had a great sequence where he bounced the puck to himself on the net-frame to move it around a defender before hitting a teammate in the slot. What I liked about this game in particular is Côté's defensive engagement. He used his speed to cut off opponents attacking. I'm not sure if he's a pick at that point because I don't see his game as translatable, but he's improving in some ways. I want to see more of his passing game and him building and manipulating defenders. At 5'6", it's a sad reality that he just has to do more than others to become an NHL pick.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2021

Québec Remparts vs. Victoriaville Tigres - QMJHL

Côté is a Junior scorer. He speeds up ice, plays with pace, and sets up inside space to wait for shooting opportunities. He scored a goal in this game by going to the net, but it wasn't a real net-drive; he stayed on the periphery of it and the puck made a favourable bounce to him. He has to show more to really become a legitimate NHL prospect in my mind. The numbers are interesting, however. I won't ignore those.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 9th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Côté connected with a crafty pass to the trailer after retrieving possession. The playmaking only appears at short-range. Although it's becoming increasingly clear that he sees options, but chooses to shoot. He gets to the net, sometimes in NHL ways. He'll push off a defender and get open in space, or stay in front of a defender to deflect a shot. He's a worker, too. But there's probably not enough skill to justify a pick at this stage.

**David St-Louis:** December 4th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Côté reminds me of a lesser Malatesta. He is all straight-line speed and poor decisions with the puck. He tries to be overly deceptive in his passes or rushes himself. He is scoring and did score in this game with a one-timer at the half-wall. His form was sound on that shot. He got some power. His combination of below-average size and hockey sense doesn't make him an interesting NHL prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Pace and perimeter shooting in this game. Moments where Côté looks creative and adaptable are few and far between. He's not much of a playmaker, forcing him to play a game that isn't all that effective in the Q, let alone the NHL. Adding simple delay and scan to his transition game will probably help a lot. The pace makes him effective on the forecheck and backcheck. Highly disruptive on the forecheck, especially. Some off-puck instincts, but mostly used to get open outside the slot. Nothing that suggested a draft pick.

**David St-Louis:** October 1st, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Val D'Or Foreurs - QMJHL

Côté barely got the puck in this game. He was still zooming all over the ice, speeding in transition, but he didn't manage to get open. His off-puck timing and support was lacking. The plays he did try were overly fancy or too slow. His awareness will probably have to improve if he is to score more this season.

**David St-Louis:** April 30th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

Skate, skate, skate. You can tell how Côté found success in his career as of now. He was simply more pacey than everyone else. He is still fast at this level, but his game will need more control, more change of pace, more connection with teammates. Right now, he is just a ball of energy with



occasional flashes of skill. Not a very translatable player. His head is down in many plays as he tries to accelerate to the maximum of his ability. He needs more awareness.

**David St-Louis** - March 4th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Blainville-B. Armada - QMJHL

Not much control in Côté's game. A bit of a frenetic offensive player, zooming up-ice without planning. His motor is impressive, but he is on the smaller side with skating issues, a hunched over stride, which forces him to expend more energy. I liked the couple of drag shots he attempted, but those were his only two good offensive chances. He didn't create much.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 17th, 2021


Drummondville V. vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

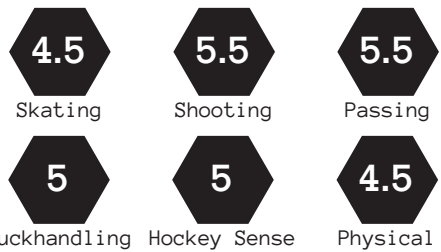
Impressive performance from Côté, mostly from what he did without the puck. He's very obviously a secondary player on his line, leaving most of the transition and playmaking duties to Xavier Simoneau. He finds space off-puck, timing his movements into pockets. Dangerous shooter, especially

off the pass: Distance between feet to generate downforce, elbow up, hands in front, and a really fast weight transfer. He's pretty slick on retrievals, using some deceptiveness and cutbacks to escape pressure. Stride lacks refinement (elevated hips, kicking heels). Consistent energy and brings some defensive value. Not quite sure if he has NHL skill beyond the shooting component but I like what he brings.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 24th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Drummondville V. - QMJHL

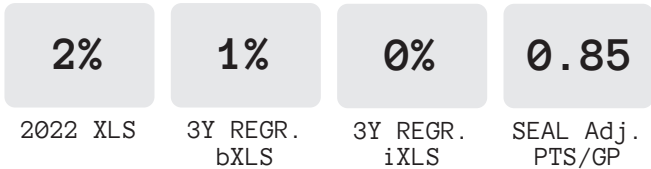
Justin Côté's going to be a very popular player on Draft Twitter next season. He's short, an average skater, and loves to play inside. Maybe average skater is overselling it a bit: he lacks lower-body engagement with a significant heel kick and a wide recovery. But he plays fast, even if he's noticeably slower than many other players out there. He has some finishing instincts and he's clearly a skilled shooter -- elbow up, very quick to organize his feet in the release, and some power, too. He's a pest on the forecheck and shows anticipation and timing to steal possession. Hardly a transition player right now. Looks like an interesting player for next season. 



# BRODY CRANE

LW | LONDON KNIGHTS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. MAY 29, 2004  
 WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	56	8	7	15

## Scouting Report

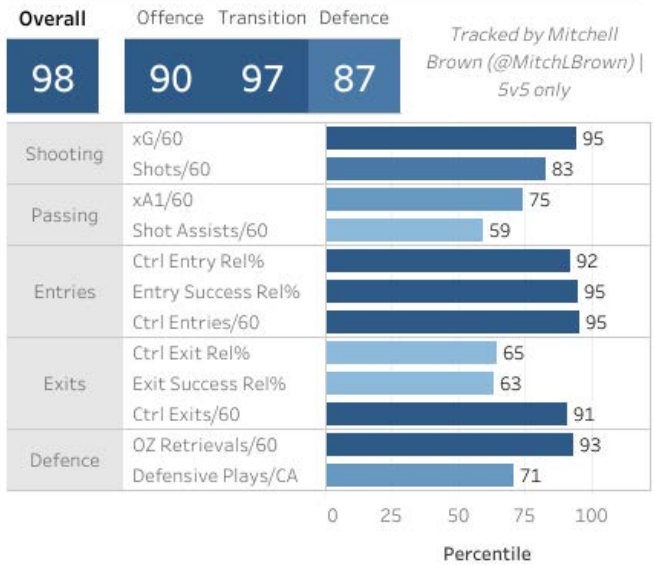
15 points in 60 games across the regular season and playoffs don't scream NHL draft pick, especially for a forward. But Brody Crane wasn't the usual low-scoring, low-minute player on a stacked team. In nearly every one of our viewings, he was one of the London Knight's most effective players, showing skill and details.

This season, Crane was among the OHL's best puck retrievers, combining pressure and anticipation. The instant he wins possession, he makes a play to the inside. Sometimes, that's by driving the net for a chance. Increasingly, he's passing to a teammate in the slot, even on the backhand. When defenders lean on him, he cuts back and dashes to the net.

The second key part of Crane's success is his off-puck game. "He consistently finds space behind or inside defenders in the offensive zone, often inside the hash marks," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a February game report. "If possible, he shoots immediately off the pass but also demonstrates a quick two-touch release and a power curl-and-drag wrister around defenders." If he's not hunting for opportunities, he's hitting, winning battles, and supporting the puck.

In transition, Crane's skill stood out on a skilled London team. Where most of his linemates dump the puck, he makes a quick pass through the defender to the middle. If a play isn't available, he cuts back to reset. From there, he uses

Games Tracked: 11 | Minutes Tracked: 117.8



weight shifts, dekes, and well-timed heel-to-heel skating to slither through the neutral zone.

With the departure of three of London's top-four scorers, Crane will likely play a top-six role next season. His point totals will skyrocket. But his NHL odds will depend on skating improvement. While he sinks into a knee-over-toes stance while striding, he lacks lower-body flexion with the puck. That reduces the effectiveness of his dekes, puck protection, and transition game. If the skating improves, he could become a solid piece on a team's fourth line down the road.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 10th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

At this stage, there's not much more that I haven't already said about Crane. Off-puck instincts led to his goal and another chance. Timed movements into space: (1) supporting the play by spacing, and (2) converging on the net while maintaining body positioning on the defender. Timing isn't always perfect, and his high stance limits the effectiveness of his shot, but it's there. Playmaking has improved. He's always been willing, but it's no longer a problem-solving tool. He actively seeks out passing opportunities as the primary play, connecting with slip passes and look-off plays to the inside. Misses tons of his transition passes, but his ideas are sound. Sneaky physical game, mostly on retrievals. He's a limited minutes player with a big impact. He's going to score a ton next year. But to make the NHL, he'll have to deepen his skating posture, developing his skating skills, and become more of a give-and-go player. Early third.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 6th, 2022

London Knights vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Crane played EIGHT shifts in this one and didn't even break 7 minutes of ice time. What is the point? It's baffling that London doesn't play him considering how effective he is when he's on the ice. Excellent off-puck instincts, supports and tracks players well in his own end, breaks the puck out and finds teammates for scoring chances... The skating needs fine-tuning, because he's not accelerating on the rush at all. He needs to play more. Hopefully that becomes the case next season.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 2nd, 2022

London Knights vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Crane did a lot of skating around early in this game, but at least he played 10 minutes. Still, I'm not sure how much there's to glean from this showing. He put himself in the right areas to support his teammates but did cheat the offensive zone a couple of times. Chased after puck carriers and finished his checks. I just wish he played more... it's hard for any player to really get into a game when they're going so long without getting shifts. To Crane's credit though, his effort level was never in question in this one. I don't know why London doesn't play him more. Could be a solid mid-round pick though, because the tools and processing are there.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

Finally, a game where Crane didn't do everything on the

ice. Still, he had a solid game. The skating's likely an issue going forward, as he struggles to engage his edges because he keeps his weight on his heels. That doesn't stop him from cutting inside and finding teammates, but it prevents him from exploding to the middle. There are a lot of subtle handling tricks to his game: fakes, pivot turns, and heel-to-heel skating (with back facing the defender) to slip pressure, and he draws pressure in before speeding up.

Created a chance with a clever pass to the net front. High work rate in pursuit. Disrupts plenty of exit and entry attempts. Doesn't over-extend, either. Threw the puck away a few times in transition, but it's nice to see a bottom-six forward actually trying plays off the boards to the inside and cross-ice passes. There's a lot to like in his game, but in limited minutes. He'd be a fine early-third. It's easy to see his game taking off next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 16th, 2022

London Knight vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Crane brings a lot of different elements. He has some passing skill, some off-puck offensive potential, and a physical style. He sprints at the puck carrier with the purpose of forcing a turnover and then running them into the class. Generally knows his next option when getting the puck. His creativity on the breakout continues to stand out on this London team, using the middle and trying cross-lane plays. Nothing too interesting in this performance otherwise. He's definitely going to score a lot next season. But I'm unsure if he's a generic junior skill player or something more.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

This is just getting ridiculous. Crane hardly plays despite doing everything possible to earn more minutes. He runs into defenders at full speed, establishes body positioning on the backcheck and gets steals, intercepts passes in all three zones, and creates advantages up the ice with his transition passing. While he sinks into a projectable knees-over-toes stride, he's most comfortable in a glide on his heels when handling the puck. It limits the effectiveness of his hands and ability to change directions. Off-puck ideas aren't advanced, but he stops at the net and sneaks around behind defenders.

More playmaking from Crane that in previous viewings. Now, he's scanning (usually) and then executing immediately. No delay game, but he reads passing lanes. Set up a trio of chances, each in different ways: from the boards, behind the net, and cross-slot pass in transition. The projection isn't an easy one, given his limitations and limited role. But



he's going to score a ton next year. Could be late-second or early-third in this class.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 9th, 2022

London Knights vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Crane got his ice time in this game and delivered. Well, mostly. There was the usual Crane negatives: the leaning back on his heels and entering a glide to set-up a no-chance deke, passes to no one, and a few missed options. But there were tons of great plays. He denied entry a bunch of times by getting above the play and then not committing too early. He racked up a game-high eight controlled entries with just two fails. Hot on the forecheck, as usual. Flashes of advanced shooting: off-the-pass catch-and-release and a two-touch (foot-to-stick) chance. Consistently finds space, although he's not a high-end off-puck threat. The usual clever breakout plays where he kicks the puck to the inside from the boards and throws a high-to-low pass to get his defenceman activating up the weak side. Crane's almost certainly going to score a ton next season, but the skating might be limiting at the next level. Perhaps a late-second or third rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

No idea why Crane doesn't play more. He scored with a one-timer off a cross-slot pass after leading the breakout with a cross-ice pass under pressure, intercepting a pass,

then dropping the puck back for a teammate and getting open. Played the other end of the passing sequence, being the middle in a give-and-go sequence. Between the legs feed off the boards to the inside.

Consistently attacks the middle, both with the puck on his stick and by passing. Lacks some defensive refinement, but the energy's there, he anticipates interception opportunities, and gets back to play above the puck. Lacks some pace with the puck. He slowed down and leaned on his heels when attacking a group of defenders - and quickly lost possession. If kept his knees bent and feet moving, he'd have easily slid past the back pressure and set himself up for a scoring chance. Really though, this only stands out because his minutes are so limited. He has the makings of a big-time scorer in the OHL. Top-50 skill.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

Crane was once again one of London's most effective players, and he once again barely played. He had three scoring chances in the first period: two from finishing his routes to the net and getting loose pucks, and the third from a broken play at the top of the slot. Nearly set-up three more scoring chances. Pre-scans on retrievals before passing to the inside, which allowed him to set up a teammate with a spin pass off the boards through layers. Even a bit deceptive on retrievals by angling his feet in one direction before going the other as the defender leans in. There's a

tiny bit of defensive value here from his timing up high, but he's best in puck pursuit. Biggest issue remains his poor dynamic posture while engaging in 1-on-1s. He straightens his legs, leans on his inside edges, and puts his weight on his heels. Fast hands, for sure, but he struggles to cleanly beat players in the OHL. He has second or third-round skill.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 3rd, 2021

Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

Forget NHL ability for a minute, I really don't understand why Crane doesn't play more. He had several chances in this game, demonstrating individual skill and off-puck instincts. Shows a playmaking mind, even if he's inefficient. Consistently makes clean breakouts and entries under heavy pressure, often taking tricky pucks off the boards and easily funnelling them to the inside. Physical and anticipatory on the forecheck, too. The biggest issue with his game is lack upright stance. He often leans back and slows down to set up his dekes or make decisions. There are moments where that's not case, usually under pressure, that suggest this part of his game will improve. As a passer, he misses options not because of poor ideas or timing, but because he passes too hard when it should be soft and vice-versa. Needs to scan more regularly, too. Crane clearly has NHL potential. He should be on our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Nine minutes of ice time from Crane, and what a nine

minutes they were. Crane showed NHL skill in a number of facets. His stride looks projectable to NHL average or even above it, with his knees pushed over his toes, hips tilted back and engagement, and toe snap and near-optimal recoveries.

A bit more hip engagement and upper body control should make his skating an advantage at the next level. Both shooting and passing skill on display in this game, including a wild saucer pass through multiple defenders. Leans a bit too far back while setting up his shots, but shows the beginning of a curl-and-drag wrister and a projectable outside leg shot. Consistently uses the middle in transition, even delaying while pressured to ensure that his target gets space upon reception. Forced a play or two that wasn't there, mostly because he didn't scan first. Lacks strong defensive posture (legs straighten when not near the puck), but his speed and anticipation allow him to deflect nearby passes and challenge the point at the right time. Overall, a skilled player with NHL tools. Possibly a second-rounder.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 16th, 2021

London Knights vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Crane really didn't play much in this one, but he made an impact when he did take the ice. He was constantly pressuring puck carriers, keeping up with his speed, back-checking hard, pointing out open players and moving to cover them. There could be something here, but I'll need some more viewings and hopefully he gets to play more.



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**"With the departure of three of London's top-four scorers, Crane will likely play a top-six role next season. His point totals will skyrocket. But his NHL odds will depend on skating improvement."**



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# BLAKE DANGOS

D | MADISON CAPITOLS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. APR. 8, 2002  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT

0%	0%	0%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	59	2	21	23

> Committed to Arizona State Univ.

## Scouting Report

Between Ben Dexheimer, Luke Mittelstadt, Tyler Haskins, and Blake Dangos, it's a good year to be a re-entry on the Madison Capitols. While he's the least impressive of the quartet by points, his tools pop the most.

Fluid and potentially explosive skating define Dangos' game. In space, he separates from defenders and corrects mistakes with speed alone. In-tight, he uses textbook punch turns to cut away from pressure, then uses a series of driving crossovers to pull away. As he continues to get stronger, his edge-to-edge quickness and speed will only improve.

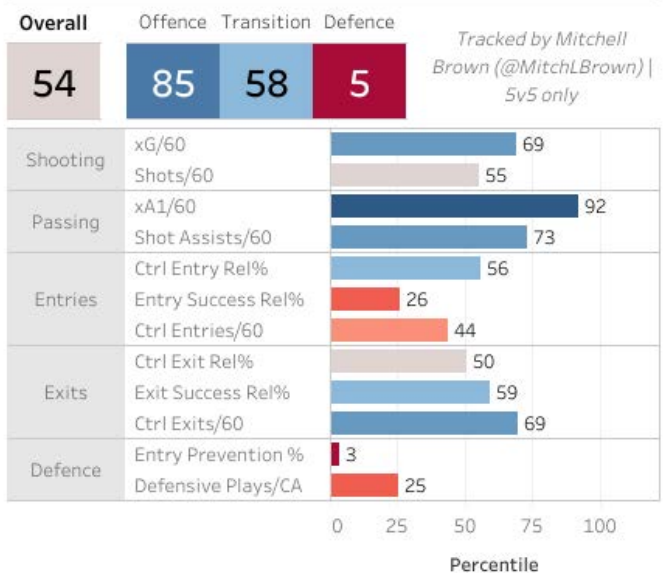
Dangos' handling skill nearly matches the skating, with his hands and feet working together but never locked in rhythm. That allows him to change directions without any tell and access passing lanes inconceivable for many blue-line prospects when activating.

Despite Dangos' age, he's still learning how to best use his tools, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown explains: "He doesn't use those tools to beat incoming forecheckers. Give-and-gos don't feature regularly. He throws pucks away on the slightest sign of pressure. Instead of using his skating to mirror footwork, he backs away. In transition, he just concedes space to threats."

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 30th, 2022  
Chicago Steel vs. Madison Capitols - USHL  
Dangos' flashes remain incredible. In one sequence, he

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 111.4



Brown noted Dangos' improved breakouts and defence throughout the season. In the latter's case, he's become quite the physical force along the boards.

On tools alone, Dangos is a draft pick. But he's 20 without much history of scoring. If he goes unpicked, he could become an exciting NCAA free agent in a few years.

pulled a puck off the boards, stepped to the middle, then spun back to beat multiple forecheckers for a clean exit. Cutbacks are sound, and he exits them with crossovers to separate.



Hands work in unison, but aren't dependent on his feet. He underhandles in his movements. Breakouts looked better in this game than normal, using the middle before making the next play. From the point, he's mostly just shooting. And the defence isn't great. Reactionary and passive, although he'll step up in untranslatable ways sometimes.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 5th, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Dangos is largely a passive defender with questionable breakout skills, but his flashes are incredible. Anticipates hand-offs and fills space. Always gets the puck moving downhill, and then his hands do the work. Dangled around a defender in-tight for a point-blank chance. He's a fluid, mobile skater who will benefit from additional strength improving his posture. Defence has improved. Physical along the boards now, and he got a couple of stops early in the NZ. Still, he's reactionary and concedes ground too easily. He's old with mediocre point totals, but there's a long-term potential here given his dynamic style and handling + skating combination.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2022


Madison Captiols vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Dangos should be amazing at this level. He's not. But he has moments. Twice, he created a high-danger chance. For the first, he activated, beat a defender under their stick to gain the inside lane, then went backhand under a stick. The next, he won a footwork, threw out some deception on the retrieval, cutback, and passed through a small opening to a

teammate in front. Handling skill, passing skill, edge-to-edge quickness, and activation all look like NHL-calibre skills. But he's a mess everywhere else. He doesn't use those tools to beat incoming forecheckers. Give-and-gos don't feature regularly. He throws pucks away on the slightest sign of pressure. Instead of using his skating to mirror footwork, he backs away. In transition, he just concedes space to threats. While he recovers with a reaching stick check or a hit, he'll get cooked in the NCAA for this. Is he a draft pick right now? Maybe for the tools. But he's old. Probably an NCAA free agent signing down the line.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 8th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Dangos is fun to watch. Edge-to-edge quickness stands out; cutbacks create separation at this level. Body control and coordination ensure that his hands and feet operate at different rhythms, even under pressure. Underhandles with necessary. In transition, he looks for cross-ice passes or up-the-middle rushes. Connected with a three-line aerial backhand pass for a breakout. Took a handoff and cut inside for a goal, and nearly set-up another chance by beating a defender, cutting back, and finding the trailer. He's dynamic, even if there are limitations. He's a poor rush defender who defaults to simple plays on retrievals and breakouts without much reason. For that, I doubt that he gets drafted, even if the skill really pops in the USHL. He's going to be a great NCAA free agent signing in a few years. 

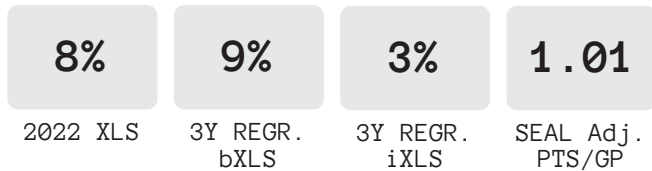




# JOSHUA DAVIES

C | SWIFT CURRENT BRONCOS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. MAR. 24, 2004  
WEIGHT 196 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	64	16	20	36
WJC-18	3	0	1	1

## Scouting Report

It's no secret what Josh Davies wants to do when he steps on the ice. That something is to inflict pain. No one is safe when the coach calls his number.

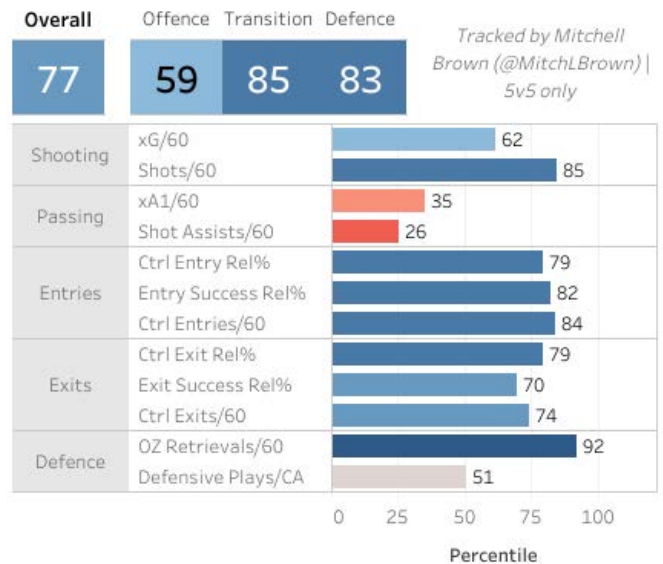
He tries to send players into the fourth row of the stands on the forecheck and forces them into a line change on the backcheck. In the defensive end, he sprints directly to the point, leading with his stick and following with his shoulder. Simply put, he's a menace.

But Davies brings more than just an insatiable hunger to hurt, showing several intriguing NHL qualities. For one, he's a diverse shooter with an arsenal that includes a booming one-timer, a quick in-stride wrister, and a powerful angle-changing wrister off his outside leg. With quick hands and a high pace during attacks, he beats overcommitted defenders to gain the inside lane.

Using those skills effectively will likely be Davies' biggest developmental hurdle. He's overly reliant on outside lane attacks and hand speed in transition, making him turn-over-prone in the worst games and stuck to the perimeter in the best. As Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown details, he lacks foresight: "[his] game is highly reactionary; he'll deke through one player without realizing there's another right behind."

However, Davies can be that player and still find success in the NHL, provided he finds ways to use his shot. He tends to position himself high and away from the play, which

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 115.0



increases his space for the one-timer but reduces his odds of the shot becoming a goal. If he's playing off-puck on the inside, he's planted to the net-front instead of pushing off defenders and timing his movements through the crease. And he doesn't play a give-and-go game, which would create more opportunities for him to use his shot in transition.

Towards the end of the season, Davies flashed playmaking skills and improved defence. He's a solid bet to make the NHL for his physical game alone. But to become an effective player, the awareness with the puck and off-puck offence must improve.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Davies took a couple of healthy runs at opposing players and continued to show playmaking improvement. He looks for teammates in advantageous positions across the ice. He makes plays from the boards to the middle. Identifies cross-ice options. Spots teammates through defenders. Nothing too advanced in terms of execution, but this improves his projection. Davies still needs to figure out what to use his shot. Whiffed on a catch-and-release shot, suggesting an inability to shoot off the pass (and the continuation of the poor first touch). Game is highly reactionary; he'll deke through one player without realizing there's another right behind. I doubt he makes our board, but he's a pick this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 11th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Davies is Davies. His game looked a bit more nuanced in this one. He looked for teammates on the inside a few times, connecting with a one-handed backhand pass while fighting off a defender. He's skilled, there's no doubt. NHL shooter, but has no idea how to get open. Too often, he plants himself along the perimeter waiting for no-chance one-timers or tries to deke through the opposing team with passing options. Instead of just running through players, he anticipated their movements and tried to pickpocket them or force a clearance. Still crushed a couple of players in the first period. That's probably his game going forward. But his impact might be negative unless he figures out how to use his shot and his teammates. Moving in the right direction.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

Davies just keeps increasing the physicality. He's destructive. Probably the most physical player I've seen in the draft class. The timing of his hits is solid too, but he leaves himself chasing the play to throw them. He's a frustratingly skilled player. Too reliant on individual skill for stretches and then too reliant on outside lane shooting other times. The best sequences are ones where he has the puck for a second, after stealing possession or getting a chance around the slot. While his motor ensures he gets plenty of the former, his off-puck movement inhibits getting the latter. Nothing new here. He's a solid player with big-time physicality and draftable shot, who clearly wants to be a difference maker. Plenty of refinement necessary to become a consistent offensive threat in the WHL. Definitely getting picked this year, but not sure if he'll make our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 28th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

What a menace. Davies threw a couple of big hits behind the play, and consistently looked to make contact whenever possible. It doesn't matter: backcheck, forechecker, DZC, and even with the puck on his stick, he looks to inflict pain. The stride looked better than in previous viewings, getting to depth almost projectable NHL average. He's not fast by WHL standards, and he's already quite filled out – concern is how much more his skating will improve. With the puck, he relies on hand speed moreso than give-and-gos and proper deke set ups. It works sometimes. The shot's NHL-calibre, but his over-reliance on his hands and tendency to flare wide to get open (poorly, at that) limit his chances of using it. He's an interesting prospect, probably the trickiest projection in the WHL. The physicality and shot are worth picking, but will he be able to use the rest of it at the next level? And he's not scoring or consistently creating offence in the WHL, although some of that might be linked to his team.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Davies hasn't really improved since the start of the season. The physicality, shot, and forechecking look like NHL abilities. The rest of his game doesn't look close, save for the odd flashy move. Can't manipulate defenders in transition, and he doesn't look for passing options or give-and-gos. Difficulty getting the puck back because of where he positions himself in the offensive zone. I can see an argument for picking him, but he has to score at some point, too.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Regina Pats - WHL

For all his limitations, it's shocking that Davies doesn't score more. He has an NHL shot, and although he struggles to find space on the inside, he has some off-puck instincts along the perimeter. Also loves to drive play to the inside, often pushing himself beyond his skill level in the process. He's a relatively fluid handler and skater when he gets moving, and shows some craftiness to beat defenders – just takes the space too late. Without the puck, he's a menace. Constantly looking to step into someone or run them over. Pesky and the opposition responds wildly, taking a penalty in this game. At some point, he has to score. For now, he's probably an end-of-board type.

**"Towards the end of the season, Davies flashed playmaking skills and improved defence. He's a solid bet to make the NHL for his physical game alone. But to become an effective player, the awareness with the puck and off-puck offence must improve."**

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Prince Albert Raiders vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

When Davies isn't open for the shot at the top of the slot, he's hardly effective offensively. He had a slick pass from behind the net to the slot for a point-blank chance, making me wonder he's not looking to set up his teammates more elsewhere. He's a straight-line attacker who skates until he runs out of space before shooting. The shot's definitely NHL-calibre. The physicality, even more so. He wants to inflict pain constantly, trying to line people up on the back-check, running through them to prevent entries, and shoving the opposition with every possible opportunity. As a pesky shooter with some playmaking flashes, I like him. Could be an end-of-board prospect for us.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Regina Pats - WHL

I have no doubt that Davies can shoot at an NHL level, especially with the one-timer. Powerful, controlled, adaptable -- checks off a ton of boxes. He lacks some shooting diversity,

but the far more pressing issue is his off-puck game. Lots of hanging out in low-danger areas waiting for the one-timer. Doesn't have much off-puck instincts, and he's not a particularly inside-driven or creative attacker. Some give-and-goes, some hard skill elements (retrievals), some physicality. He screams depth piece; just not enough individual skill.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 16th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Davies has an NHL shot. He scored with a bullet from the periphery and fired off a mechanically sound inside leg wrister in transition. Now, his ability to use the shot is questionable. Finds space, but only along the perimeter -- that's not sustainable for scoring in the WHL, let alone the NHL. Lacks some shooting skills (in stride). The skating lacks lower body flexion across the board, hindered by short strides and limited forward drives on the recovery. He's a straight-line attacker and doesn't show much playmaking ability. There's some forechecking skill through anticipation and motor, but I didn't see an NHL draft pick here.

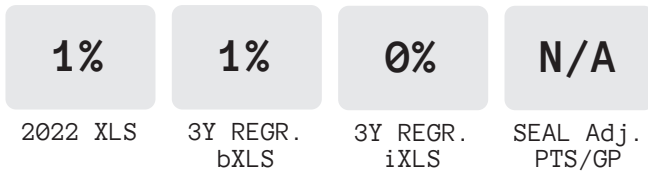
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# BEN DEXHEIMER

D | MADISON CAPITOLS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JUN. 21, 2002  
WEIGHT 165 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	60	8	39	47

## Scouting Report

Whether it was High School, the UMHSEHL, or the NAHL, at no point didn't Ben Dexheimer's production suggest a legitimate NHL prospect - until this season. Passed over twice in the NHL draft, he stepped up in competition to the USHL and his game took off.

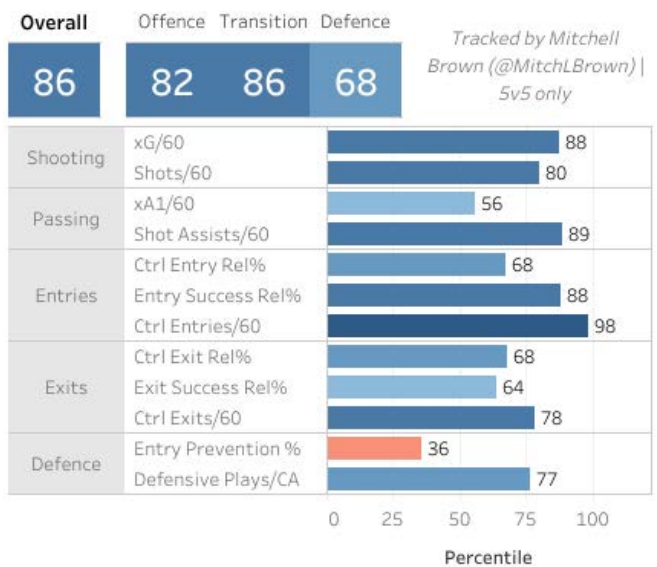
When Dexheimer's not joining the rush, he's leading it. He uses the middle to draw pressure, then passes through it. He's always looking for a cross-ice pass to change the point of attack and create numbers up ice.

From the point, Dexheimer takes every centimetre of space defenders concede. He steps inside before shooting, initiates give-and-gos to slip behind defenders, and combines handling and in-motion pass receptions to misdirect defenders.

While Dexheimer's defensive skating would benefit from fewer committing crossovers, he closes his gap early, eliminates off-puck threats, and stops plays with well-timed poke checks.

Despite the obvious skills, Dexheimer might not have the mechanical foundation to make the NHL, Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown explains: "He can't fully shift his weight or explode from one move into the other because he's too upright. Movements are short,

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 132.4



choppy, and inconsistent. Attackers easily shield the puck from him because he lacks the skating to mirror their footwork along the boards."

The mechanics combined with his stature could lead to Dexheimer going undrafted for the third time. Regardless, his activation, skill, and flashy style will make him effective in the NCAA, and perhaps, an exciting free agent signing.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: April 30th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

The tamest viewing I've had Dexheimer, but he still created

a fair bit. Used space before shooting. Jumped into the rush constantly. In one sequence, he denied entry into the zone, stepped inside to start the breakout, then passed on the

heels off the defender to give his recipient time and space to shoot. Rush defence sees tons of crossovers and committing movements, but he looks to kill plays early. Refining that aggressive with better habits should make defending the rush a strength. Scans regularly off-puck, but he's outmatched in many battles. Attackers easily shield the puck from him because he lacks the skating to mirror their footwork along the boards. I doubt he's a pick, but he's fun.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Chicago blew out Madison in this game, but whenever Dexheimer was on the ice, the ice tilted in Madison's favour. There was the usual stuff here: the point activation, handling skill, lateral movement, and pressure management on breakouts. Best sequence saw him work a give-and-go from the point, deke around a flat-footed defender to the slot, and then get a chance. Nothing translatable skills-wise, but he's clearly an intelligent activator. The tools are the most concerning part, especially skating. He can't fully shift his weight or explode from one move into the other because he's too upright. Movements are short, choppy, and inconsistent. His handling range is small as a result, despite his hand speed and puck control.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Okay, maybe Dexheimer is just a fun USHLer. The breakouts weren't as strong in this game, and he's mostly just a shooter. He misses opportunities to use his teammates in the offensive zone. A fun handling sequence led to a low-percentage shot. Another shot was blocked because he forced the play instead of passing across to a teammate with a better look. He continues to defy convention with his rush defence. He gets stops without over-extending. He's better in battles than the

size and skating combination would suggest, too. But I doubt he keeps these going forward. And without more emphasis on building the play, he's unlikely to carve out a lower-end offensive role.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 5th, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Alright, Dexheimer could be something. He's dynamic from the point, although he often relies on USHL space. Takes passes in motion, fakes out incoming defenders, reads their feet, then attacks in the opposite direction. Scored his goal with that exact set up. Lateral movement and patience to open lanes. Needs to use the pre-shot skills to set up teammates. On breakouts, he uses the middle, draws pressure, passes through it. Lots of cross-lane passes. Changes the point of attack. If he doesn't have an advantage, game falls apart a bit. Skating development will be key, but he's an intelligent attacker overall. Defence has the same strengths and weaknesses. Skating is a limiter, but he engages at the right moments and eliminates off-puck threats. Not sure if he's a pick. More playmaking would probably make him an end-of-board type.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 8th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

The beginnings of some good stuff from Dexheimer. He activated regularly by anticipating hand-offs along the boards, finding space up the weak side, and trying to beat defenders with his hands. Used space before shooting, although he could push inside a bit more with the puck. Defensively, he engages at the right moments. Gets on his check early. Some angling ability but might lose it as he advances the levels. Tends to keep his weight on his heels. Hips stay too high. Elevates when entering battles instead of getting low. He's an average skater and doesn't have much track record. Still, I'm curious.

•P

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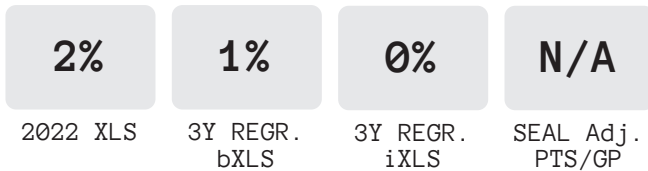
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# NOAH DOREY

D | KELOWNA ROCKETTS

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. JAN. 21, 2003  
WEIGHT 192 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	60	3	18	21

## Scouting Report

Despite appearing in just nine games last season, Noah Dorey made the 2021 Elite Prospects Draft Guide – his tools were just that exciting. A full season later, and Dorey remains largely the same player: toolsy, but requiring refinement.

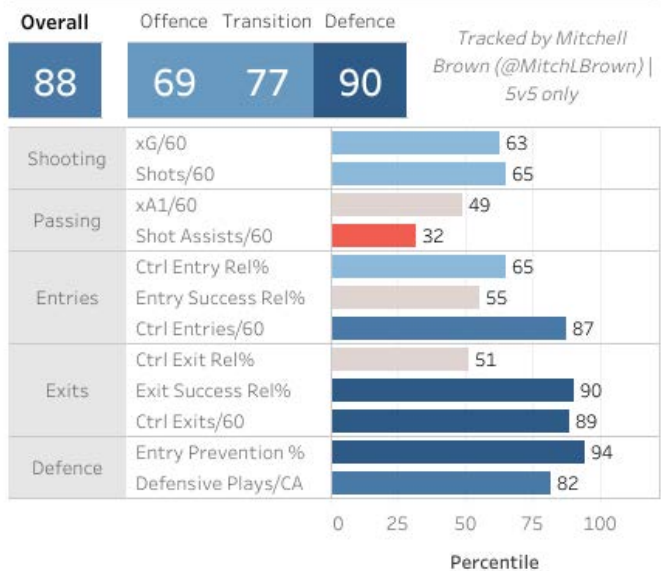
A powerful stride propels Dorey past forecheckers, while no-tell punch turns provide in-tight separation. Whether he's moving laterally, backwards, or forwards, he shows NHL fluidity and movement. On retrievals, he uses his edge-to-edge quickness to deceive – angling his toes in one direction, then cutting back the opposite way.

Handling skills combine with the skating to make Dorey an effective creator. He cuts away from one defender, then dekes around the next. In moments, he even manipulates incoming pressure, before passing cross-ice to create an advantage up the rink.

While activation doesn't feature regularly in Dorey's game, he uses space before shooting and occasionally shows play-making ability after beating a defender down the boards.

Despite these tools, Dorey remains an unrefined player. In transition, he's a reactionary player, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown explains: "He's largely coming up with solutions on the fly – dead-ending himself in the process. It directly impacts his breakouts, where he evades pressure, but then throws away possession with op-

Games Tracked: 4 | Minutes Tracked: 71.5



tions or skates directly into the next layer without a plan."

Defensively, Dorey's similarly reactive and inconsistent. His best reads combine his mobility with a tight gap, but he lets off-puck threats slip behind him and takes himself out of the play to dive on the ice.

Envisioning Dorey in the NHL isn't difficult because of his physical gifts, but to become an effective player, his details, reads and proactiveness must improve.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Hardly a notable performance from Dorey, who was beat off the rush several times and struggled on retrievals. The skill level was still visible, from the edges to the puckhandling. Gained the zone with a cross-ice pass, activated, then found a teammate with a backhand pass through a defender. When he's looking to create, he activates properly, shows backhand skill, playmaking, and space management. Too often, he's not – although, that's common for Rockets' defencemen. He remains one of the most interesting prospects in the WHL.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 22nd, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

Dorey's most effective when he's rushing the puck. He sprints past defenders, gains the zone, and looks to set up teammates. Game's mostly reacting, rather than anticipating or planning. He runs himself into pressure and throws pucks away. From the point, he shows some patience, activation, and creativity. It wasn't completed, but he tried a give-and-go activation. Used space before shooting. Defensively, the gaps were tighter than usual. Killed several attacks in the neutral zone. In-zone, he was reactionary. Lacks consistent scanning. He's an exciting player but there's a chance that he's not intelligent enough to make it work. However, he has moments of more proactive play and it appears Kelowna's blue-liners are limited by structure.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Dorey is still fascinating, even though he's a draft-plus-one without any notable offence. The skating and handling are still the selling points. Stride isn't perfect, but he gets his knees past his toes and engages his hips. Edges are the best part. Proper punch turn: sticks the lead leg in front, uses his shoulders as counterbalance, moves his hand away from his hip, and pushes off laterally instead of upwards. Two-foot and one-foot stops, using handling skill along with both to beat forecheckers back into space. Cuts back in both directions. Toe cap deception on retrievals. Making the next play is tricky for Dorey, but Kelowna isn't exactly a modern transition team. He's not planning; he's just reacting. His reactions are mostly good. Fake until he gets a lane or has to offload. Better players know their target(s) in advance, but there's no doubt that Dorey still has NHL tools. Offensively, he sometimes uses space before shooting. But mostly simple plays and some pinching. Defensively, he kills the cycle with mirroring footwork and anticipates passes. Reactionary positioning, but he looks better than last year, at least. His

skating should lead to better rush defence going forward. He could be a pick this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 16th, 2022

Prince George Cougars vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

The best rush defence performance I've seen from Dorey. He took away space early, pushed plays wide, and then got the break up at the blue line. Threw a massive hit, showcasing a side of his game I haven't seen before. With the puck, this was sloppy, inconsistent performance. Late in the game, he started activating, showing both an ability to get inside and set up teammates on the other side of defenders. With the puck, he's largely just reacting and coming up with solutions on the fly – dead-ending himself in the process. It directly impacts his breakouts, where he evades pressure, but then throws away possession with options or skates directly into the next layer without a plan. The tools are exciting; he's fluid, coordinated, and skilled. But his ability to impact the game with them remains low. He should get picked this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 5th, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Lots of concerning plays from Dorey in this game. He randomly dove on the ice as the last defender back, removing himself from the play and conceding a chance. Failed to establish body positioning on retrievals and cutback into pressure. Threw pucks away on several occasions with better options. Went for a couple of skates but failed to accomplish much with them. Showed nothing offensively. Gap control was tighter with better details (early, middle-protecting stick, angling), but that was about the only positive from this performance. He has tools, but this wasn't a draftable performance.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 8th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Dorey's exciting for his physical tools: he's fluid and skilled. Tries to cut away from pressure, often timing his moves perfectly. Other times, he cuts back into pressure and doesn't exit his cutbacks with crossovers, leading to turnovers. Similarly, inconsistent scanning habits on retrievals and a lack of adaptability lead to turnovers in on exits. His game's largely reactionary – see pressure, beat it, then figure out what to do next. Defensively, the gap control's highly variable but he has moments where he gets on his check early and forces a play to the perimeter. Mirrored footwork along the boards to close space, wrapped up the player, then killed the play. Some concerns: he takes poor routes to support the play which limits his teammates' options and doesn't demonstrate



much playmaking ability. There's potential here, but he needs to develop his reads and habits.

**Daniel Gee:** November 12th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

This viewing probably represented a mix of the good and bad habits that we keyed in on with Dorey's game from the hub last season. Involvement in all aspects of the game started out high, but dipped considerably as the game concluded.

Dorey was inconsistent in transition and sustained offensive pressure plays. In the first he executed a high-end stutter stop manipulation play on the left point, deking past a Cougars defender and releasing a shot. As the game progressed, manipulation was barely incorporated, more pushing a volume of shots of the point. His shot is still mechanically weak -- top-arm-locked to his body, unable to leverage downforce. He managed to record a secondary assist, by virtue of running the top of the point on a powerplay -- to his credit he executed a one-touch play to Flamand. In transition there were just some very weird decision making when outlets extended in distance. On one outlet he logged an absolute grenade waist-level to a teammate trying to tip-and-chase, leading to an icing. When simplifying, Dorey was executing a bunch of in-motion breakouts, scanning and spinning off forechecking pressure. He had one carry and it was egregiously bad. As Dorey carried the puck up the middle of the ice, he executed a tonne of shoulder shimmies, but skated right directly into pressure leading to a turnover.

While Kelowna dominated possession in this game, the Cougars had numerous counter-attacks on the rush -- Dorey's aggressiveness on these plays was impactful. Often attacking puck carriers in the neutral zone, Dorey limited numerous attacks before they could even start with a blend of mobility (gapping up) and physicality. In the first he tracked and buried a Cougar attacking through the middle of his defensive zone, laying a pretty mean crosscheck on him after. There are some question marks about secondary threat mitigation -- on that same play, he wasn't able to disrupt a pass leading to an unassisted Reichle goal. He overplayed his aggressiveness in the second and was danced by a chip and chase play. After containing that same man on the end boards, he took an awful high-stick retaliation penalty.

In general he looked very mobile and his 6-foot-3 frame blend makes him really interesting. Felt like he could have done more with the puck given his age and ability. Unfortunate that some of the poorer habits still exist -- will require more check-ins this season to see if there is some real growth.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 12th, 2021

Victoria Royals vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

What a difference from the start of the season. Dorey looks like a different player, for the better. The skating remains the biggest selling point, and now, he's finding ways to really tap into the advantages that tool creates. He took passes in motion, beating his defender into space, then pulling the trigger. Pre-scanned on retrievals, threw out deception with the head and feet, then turned and escaped. Looked inside on exits, looked off his intentions, then fired the pass off the backhand or forehand to an open teammate. Skated at forecheckers skating at him, faked them out, beat them, then continued forward for the entry. Area passes for entries, one of which lead to a breakaway chance. Perfect amount of patience to draw in forecheckers, before turning back up the middle. Physical on retrievals, trapping their feet before cutting off the hands. Engaged defensively, but he's too puck-focused. Misses opportunities to eliminate his man -- too much time trying to read the pass rather than removing the option altogether. Consistently tight off-puck gap through the neutral zone, often eliminating his man entirely. He keeps his top hand and elbow locked to his body when shooting, completely erasing his control and power. Only really shoots off the inside leg, too. He's not a first rounder, but he certainly looked like one in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 1st, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

It's basically the same stuff from Dorey from every game: he's mobile, looks to activate into the play, has the very beginnings of manipulation on exits, and pre-scans on retrievals. Very little impact with that, however. While he moves the puck effectively from the point, he's very static. The lack of movement limits that distribution going up, especially because it's all simple plays apart from the odd head fake. Tough game defensively, beat wide a couple of times and passively gapped through the NZ. Turns into pressure without an escape plan. Forces transition plays that aren't there. Not a pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 30th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

There are NHL tools here, but Dorey doesn't play like an NHL prospect. He pushes his knees over toes, loads up on the pivot, and has some skating skills to escape pressure. The top hand got some movement off his hip in this game, increasing his range of motion to beat forecheckers and get the inside lane. But with all that, his manipulations are limited to weight shift moves without an end goal, he's exceptionally turnover

prone, and gets locked into catch-and-shoot rhythm from the point. Transitionally, his inefficiency offsets his skill. It's about projection, yes, but his inability to read forechecking pressure from the F1, let alone the next layer, is a huge issue. He's physical and interested defensively, but he doesn't really scan for threats. He spends a lot of time standing around, waiting for an opportunity to join the rush instead of eliminating threats. On one hand, his tools scream NHL pick, but he's so far off it's tough to envision -- very similar to Tyrel Bauer in that regard.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 27th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

Dorey looked like an NHL pick in this game. The skating's the best attribute still, but in this game, he used it to create offence. He faked before receiving the puck, then beat his man down the boards a few times. Too outside lane focused, but he managed to turn the corner and get the puck inside. The hands look nearly NHL average too, throwing out some deception and weight shifts. Top hand stays locked to the hip, mostly, and he lifts his blade way too high over the puck. Activates into the rush, usually a fourth option rather than properly filling space. Looked for a give-and-go on the breakout in one sequence. Engaged defensively, positioning himself to get into the play while also maintaining his gap. He's not a lockdown defender -- he lets players slip behind him, doesn't process multi-variable situations, and doesn't have noteworthy physicality.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 19th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

Dorey's an NHL calibre skater: knees pushed over toes, hip flexion, and chest up. Recovers under the shoulders and extends most strides, and gets some push off from the inside leg on crossovers. Flashes some separation ability with punch turns and cuts, and he looks inside on exits. But his awareness of pressure's pretty much non-existent. He turns into pressure and can't read beyond the initial pressure. His delays on exits are mostly scripted plays that don't improve the condition of the puck, setting up a turnover or a clearance. Activated into the rush frequently, directly leading to a goal for. Much better gap than last game, getting in early while respecting threats. Lots of shoulder checking plus a decent defensive posture. Maybe an end-of-board type.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 17th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL


Dorey looks really good doing things, the issue is that he doesn't do that many things. In this case, he followed a proper punch turn escape by skating up the middle and right into two forecheckers and lost the puck. His patience is, at times, commendable, and also infuriating -- I'm not convinced he reads the play at an NHL level. Defensively, he broke up several rushes early, but also found himself defending nothing, gapped up to one threat with another behind him. He doesn't really scan, and that severely limits his ability to read multi-variable defensive situations. I'm not sure he's a pick. 



Photo Credit: Steve Dunsmoor - Kelowna Rockets



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

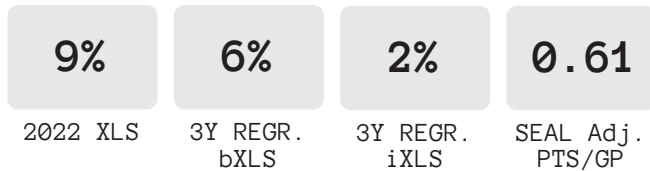


Physical

# JACKSON DORRINGTON

D | DES MOINES BUCCANEERS

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. APR. 13, 2004  
WEIGHT 192 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	41	3	8	11

> Committed to Northeastern Univ.

## Scouting Report

Weighing flashes versus constants is one of the trickiest parts of evaluating prospects. In Jackson Dorrington's case, the flashes becoming constants could make him one of the better defencemen in the 2022 NHL Draft.

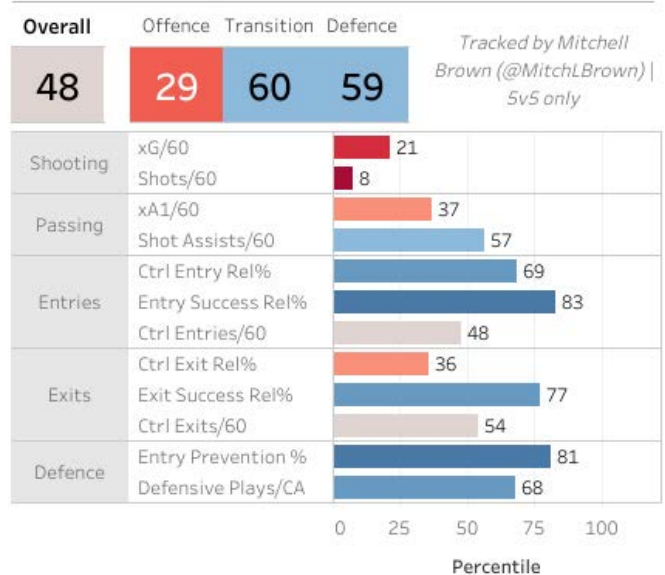
The constants in Dorrington's game are the intelligence across all three zones. Defensively, he eliminates off-puck threats and times his engagements at the moment of least resistance, complementing his robust style. In transition, he steps inside, cuts around forecheckers, and passes to the middle - he's an advantage creator up the rink. And he's an instinctual activator, defined by his constant weak-side activation from the point and bolstered by his give-and-go style.

Omitting Dorrington from the board was a decision based on tools. "Pucks roll off his stick, pass receptions fail, and he's beat in foot races when he has the advantage," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in the middle of the season. "He straightens his legs and leans on his heels anytime the puck arrives on his stick."

The elevated stance and inconsistent feel for the puck limits every aspect of Dorrington's game, preventing him from making the most of his defensive instincts and accessing the passes lanes he identifies.

The flashes, however, were encouraging, enough to raise some doubt in the decision to not rank him. "With space

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 124.6



and at low speeds, he escaped pressure with punch turns over either leg, a spin from the boards, and a double cut on a retrieval," Brown wrote. "In one play, he stepped inside, read the forechecker's feet, deked to attack the space on their heels, then connected with a long-range slip pass."

If those flashes become the norm, Dorrington could become an NHL player, with punishing defence and a facilitating activation game.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Des Moines Buccaneers vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

The most fluid and mobile performance I've seen from Dorrington. He was still fighting the puck, falling, and struggling with defensive skating. With space and at low speeds, he escaped pressure with punch turns over either leg, a spin from the boards, and a double cut on a retrieval. He even shows a bit of deception with the puck. He's still an ideas projection, but the ideas are exciting: deceive then pass through a defender, draw pressure towards him, give-and-go, and activate into the play. He looked like a top-three rounds prospect in this game. Lots of upside here, dependent on building mechanical ability with speed.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Des Moines Buccaneers vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Lots of minutes, but little impact from Dorrington. The skating's a major hole. He lacks ankle flexion. Struggles to change directions. Crossovers are basically strides and pivots lack power. Struggles to build speed backwards. Attackers continually punished him for it. He activates, but struggles to make plays with the puck. I don't see a prospect here.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Des Moines Buccaneers - USHL

There were moments in this game where Dorrington looked like a top-two round prospect. In one play, he stepped inside, read feet of the forechecker, deked to attack the space on their heels, then slipped pucks through up the ice. Used give-and-gos to break the puck out and join the rush. Combined handling and a cut to escape and went end-to-end. He's an intelligent player overall: he activates at the right moments, often in proactive and creative ways. Uses the weak side to become a shooting threat. He uses the inside on breakouts, doesn't rush plays, and generally looks to create advantages. Defensively, he's physical and proactive. But he has so many mechanical breakdowns. Pucks roll off his stick, pass receptions fail, and he's beat in foot races when he has the advantage. He stumbles through his pivots. Defensively very beatable, despite his best efforts, his handling skill doesn't allow access to the passing lanes he sees, unless he's slowly gliding up the ice. Drafting Dorrington is a bet on tools improving considerably. He could be an end-of-board player.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Des Moines Buccaneers - USHL

Dorrington is limited by tools, not by his brain. He looks inside for options, deceives a bit, activates, closes his gaps early (when possible), and delays to draw forechecking pressure toward himself. But his stiff skating posture limits his backwards skating and speed. Ends up lunging at players. He's constantly fighting the puck, causing him to enter a glide before making the next play. Touches were limited in the offensive zone. He could be an interesting end-of-board type. Some upside but requiring lots of development.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

Des Moines Buccaneers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Dorrington's hands failed him this game. The puck rolled off his stick when handling and bounced it over when receiving passes. He straightens his legs and leans on his heels anytime the puck arrives on his stick. His breakouts and OZ play suffer as a result. When defending the rush, his stance becomes more upright. He falls into the lunge-or-retreat gamble as a result. He usually lunges, and to his credit, he times his engagements well and throws the odd hit. But he's an intelligent player. He looks inside for passing options, pre-scans before receiving the puck, and proactively activates into space. And since he has some defensive instincts and a knees-over-toes skating posture (when he's not near the puck), he seems like he could be an interesting project. A team that works on his mechanics could be rewarded with an intelligent, physical defender. Fascinating player.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 1st, 2021

Omaha Lancers vs. Des Moines Buccaneers - USHL

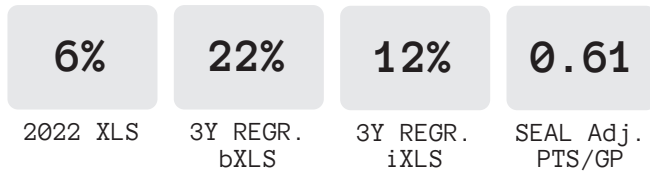
Dorrington's really limited on tools. He struggles to pivot, turn, and handle the puck. Depth isn't there at all. Pivots lack push off, strides lack power, and his crossovers are little jumps. The skating impacts everything, from his rush defence to breakouts. But he's an intelligent player overall. He activates at the moments (doesn't get the puck, however), makes plays to the inside, and manages risk in defensive zone coverage. Too limited to be a pick right now, but he's worth checking in on throughout the season.



# KEATON DOWHANIUK

D | PRINCE GEORGE COUGARS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. FEB. 8, 2004  
WEIGHT 165 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	64	1	21	22

## Scouting Report

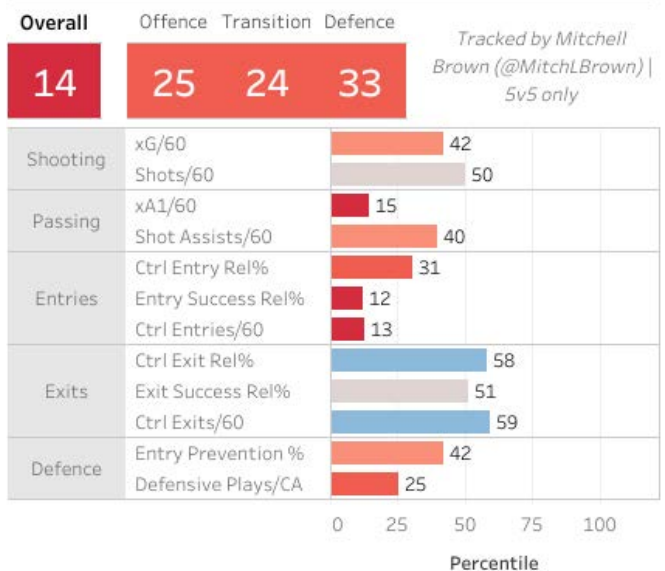
The third-overall pick in the 2019 WHL Bantam Draft, Keaton Dowhaniuk, understandably, entered the WHL with plenty of hype. Since arriving in Prince George, however, his game has largely stagnated. Still, he brings a draft-worthy package of skills.

Physicality defines Dowhaniuk's defensive game. After funnelling the puck carrier to the outside, he pivots and hammers his opponent into the boards. In the defensive end, he's best as the on-puck defender, using his physical game to demolish the cycle and trap attackers along the boards. And he's only listed at 165 pounds – expect the physical game to improve even further.

With the puck, Dowhaniuk only makes basic plays: D-to-D passes, point shots, and up-the-boards passes. But there are moments of projectable details. He takes passes and makes the next play without breaking his crossovers. With the puck, he scans and occasionally delays to outwait pressure before finding a passing target.

Those details could make Dowhaniuk effective in the offensive zone, too. However, he rarely activates or even holds the puck for more than a split-second. His shot isn't good enough to justify the shooting volume, and he rarely builds

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 125.9



offence with passes. The occasional in-motion shot-pass shows that he's not devoid of skill, however.

To make the NHL, Dowhaniuk must tighten up his off-puck defence while developing his puck skills. He's a long-term project, but his flaws aren't uncommon for Prince George blueliners. In a different environment, those details and flashes of skill probably feature more regularly.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL  
Dowhaniuk's too simple with the puck. There's the odd

moment where use space or waits a split-second to allow the forechecker to overshoot, but he's not deceptive, particularly pacy, or creative. His path to the NHL is likely defence,

and there's not much more than hitting. He overshoots, struggles mirroring footwork, and commits to the outside too early. The tools project as average-to-below-average. Don't see the upside here.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Not sure what Dowhaniuk is supposed to be in the WHL, let alone the NHL. He doesn't make anything happen with the puck. Just throws the puck up the boards or off the glass. Doesn't scan or identify options. He hits sometimes, and he has some play-killing ability in open-ice. But he's easily beaten on the cycle and loses track of his check off-puck. Doesn't look like an NHL prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 16th, 2022

Prince George Cougars vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Dowhaniuk threw a massive hit at the red line. He grabbed another stop at the blue line later on in the game. Still, his defensive skating is exploitable. He crosses over too much and concedes space to speed. Pivots have limited push off power. On breakouts, he throws away possession without considering options. Doesn't scan, doesn't use the middle, and doesn't try to outwait pressure. There's the odd clever play, but nothing that will work in the NHL. Offensively, he's not a factor. He doesn't move on pass receptions, instead stopping the play to wind up a shot. Connected with a shot-pass after some lateral movement in one sequence - needs to do more of that. He doesn't look like a draft pick at this stage.

**J.D. Burke:** December 18th, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Not what I would call an especially strong performance for Dowhaniuk. Now, granted, the Cougars placed him on the right side, opposite Jaren Brinson, but I'm not sure that's to blame for his poor puck management, low pace, and reactive defensive game, one which has him constantly chasing the play. Made the most bizarre play on the one goal against, essentially swatting at a puck that his teammate could've easily corralled to lead a breakout, sending it to his opponents stick for the easy counter goal. I can't think of any reason to spend a pick on this player as currently constructed. Hockey sense can't be much higher than a 3-grade, if that.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 17th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

I'm not sure there's anything that I haven't said about

Dowhaniuk at this stage: occasional exit craftiness, plenty of physicality, and some DZC value. There's nothing here offensively: he misses passing options, doesn't use space before shooting, and doesn't activate. He struggles with puck control, turns, and managing pressure. Not a draft pick.

**Daniel Gee:** December 14th, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

This was a very typical Dowhaniuk viewing, who essentially faced an under-manned Giants team.

Paired with 2005-born, Bauer Dumanski, and playing on his wrong side, Dowhaniuk conceded less space transitionally than I have seen before. While it still happened, the most egregious being a very passive third period sequence, he had some genuinely good plays in this viewing. He rejected a couple of inside passes in-motion, and even killed a 2-on-1 odd-man rush by heavily swinging and guiding off the puck carrier. Dowhaniuk's play in sustained pressure was somewhat typical to his previous patterned play; physical on the perimeter and net front, all while clogging lanes. Looked much more composed in this viewing. He made a wonderful read and intercepted a pass behind his net on a third period penalty kill. He had far too many sequences where he just failed to clear pucks in his vicinity -- not sure why it was such a struggle, but he just failed to work through the pressure/battles. Doles out a solid amount of punishment while locked to his net.

A lot of two-touch and first option transitional passing in this viewing. Noticed his scanning more so in this game than previous. He can become predictable though, eye-line misdirection not really present. Really not a fan of his carry attempts. Stride is limited, handling is below average, and he has poor rush patterns. In the third he had a pretty brutal carry-in on the far boards that he turned over almost instantly on the entry as he faced pressure from in front and behind. Dowhaniuk recorded his second point of the season - a primary assist after ringing the puck down the end boards. Really limited in the offensive zone through -- he can execute D-to-D passing plays, but a lack of manipulation, play within the dotted-lines, and a conservative approach to activation just makes him a non-factor. He was pushed down on the right-hand circle as a one-time option on the powerplay but he didn't really take any passes. Not sure he is a pick at this point -- at least for our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 19th, 2021

Tri-City Americans vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Dowhaniuk has moments, for sure. He'll complete an in-stride breakout pass or diffuse a multi-threat attack around

his net. He's limited his lack of puck skills and confidence. Throws pucks away without pressure. Attempts passes beyond his skill level with it. Every time he gets the puck, he enters a glide before making the next move. There's limited deception to his game, and he only looks straight up the ice for options. Hands and feet are locked in an extreme rhythm, preventing him from managing the puck in the WHL. I don't see an NHL draft pick.

**Daniel Gee:** November 12th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Frustrating game in totality. Dowhaniuk played a monstrous amount of minutes, manned roles on both special teams, played hard matchups, did some good things, but in general wasted a bunch of offensive puck-touches and was far too passive defensively.

Dowhaniuk's transition game was just fine. Clean two-line passes in-motion, layering cross-ice, some carryouts when he had space to do so -- he doesn't really possess high-end carry habits that top defenders in the WHL usually are able to flex. The highlight of his activations was a shift in the third where he recovered a rebound in chaos, passed the puck off and drove the slot to magnetize some Kelowna defenders. In sustained pressure, the lack of manipulation and activation habits turn the potential of his puck-touches to limited value. Rarely does Dowhaniuk ever move off the left-point after receiving a pass, he sent numerous knee-level directly into traffic, rarely getting them through on net, or tipped by teammates. Top-arm is locked to his hip, limiting down-force potential. His worst sequence was on a power play where he actually executed some movement. Rotating with his partner to occupy the right-point, Dowhaniuk loaded up a one-timer that he flubbed badly, hitting the high defender. This part of his game is not translatable.

Defensively, Dowhaniuk was generally inconsistent. In transitional plays, he is fairly proficient, as long as puck carriers execute perimeter rush-patterns. Super physical in these sequences, integrating hip-checks, and physical resistance to prevent downlow battles. On the flip side, this overreliance and patterned hitting makes him very predictable -- he was almost exploited on one misjudged hit in the second. In open ice, Dowhaniuk is a bit of a mess. I'm not convinced he can judge changes in speed, and in this game, struggled with judging manipulation plays. On a one-on-one while gapped up, he was turned far too easily when his opponent slightly upped their pace, allowing the attacker to crash into Gauthier. Later in the second, he fumbled a puck on the OZ blueline, letting Kelowna attackers activate around him, leading to a breakaway and a teammate penalty. In

sustained defensive pressure, Dowhaniuk continued to push physicality down-low, defaulting to it at any chance. I struggle with his defensive zone scanning as I believe he identifies threats in and around the net, but in this viewing, he was frustratingly passive taking away sticks, executing box outs, and clearing his crease. He is often pushed out of scrums to the outside. If you just watched this game, he looked like a defensive defender who has some hockey-sense issues.

**Cam Robinson:** October 30th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

A less than stellar showing in this game. Dowhaniuk made several soft plays in clearing the puck -one directly leading to a goal against in the first frame. His inability to prescan on retrievals cost him and was a common theme throughout. On thePK he was decisive and physical - attacking weaknesses as they popped up. He used a good stick to disrupt lanes and set up his physical play.

Guarding the defensive blueline was poor in this one. Too much gap and allowing possession to come in unopposed.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

I don't see an NHL prospect in Dowhaniuk. He's a supposed defensive defender who isn't that good defensively. Neat. He concedes the zone too easily, and when he's closed space, he often uses overly committing footwork with these weak, hopping crossovers. Skilled WHLers will easily punish him for that. He blows people up along the boards, but rarely takes away space on the cycle -- he's always chasing. Started the game with a pair of turnovers off the retrieval (doesn't scan, limited handling skills) and then forgoed making puck decisions for the rest of the night. He's just a shooter from the point with inconsistent touch habits. Sometimes he moves on the pass reception or fakes, but not consistently, for example.

**Daniel Gee:** October 27th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

One of the better viewings of Dowhaniuk I have had this season. Controlled defensively, Dowhaniuk commanded the middle lane, pushed outlet passes in motion, leveraged physicality throughout, and well he was basic offensively, he undoubtedly created in this game against Victoria.

There was no overextending seen in past viewings as Dowhaniuk maintained transitional gap control, got his stick in shot releases, mirrored attacking footwork in open space, and kept his body facing towards attackers, leveraging c-cuts and crossovers. While the physical element was more tame

in transition, scanning habits on his retrievals, along with puck protection body pivoting created a rather tidy effort against Victoria's diminished lineup. He completely nullified a Schuurman shot attempt off the right-wing in the second, Dowhaniuk knocking the puck away cleanly. In sustained pressure, Dowhaniuk was equally as proficient. In the first he had a wonderful stick-lift, and physically roughed up a perimeter activation preventing a goal line ring. Late, in the second, on the penalty kill, he proactively read a shot on the left-hand circle, blocking the shot wide. On the same shift he executed another lane clog, and blocked a Victoria shot. He absolutely destroyed Shipley in the second. Loved his habits frankly -- rebound identification into clears, tie ups of secondary threats, and a heroic third period 5-on-3 PK block attempts to keep Brennan's shutout.

Dowhaniuk was way more interesting in transition in this game. One-touch passes with his head up scanning, while in motion. Two-line carry attempts, two-line board banks onto tape while under pressure -- great sequences in general. He joined the rush in the second, calling for a pass on the right-hand circle, firing a low shot with the goalie completely blinded with traffic -- should have leveraged a better shot. Not a massive fan of his sustained offense. He is so simplistic, integrating almost no manipulation or 5-on-5 activations from the point. If the puck arrives on his stick, he's either making a d-to-d or shooting a rushed upper-body oriented wrister on net hoping for rebound activity. He recorded his first point of the season on one of those D-to-d passes. On the powerplay, the Cougars system requires some downhill movement, but even then, his shot is such a non-factor and predictable that he was hardly a threat. I'm guessing he's a later pick for us based on the defending but it's concerning how little offense he generates, even at this level.

**Cam Robinson:** October 22nd, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

This is a defensive defenseman if I've ever seen one. He provides very limited looks offensively, failing to move at the line with sustained possession or work an angle to get a shot off. He didn't activate down the wall much at all in this one except to lower the boom on an unsuspecting winger. That boom though, is prevalent. He's a highly physical player but in a composed and intelligent way. Doesn't retaliate in the moment but gets his kick back later and cleanly. Really strong in-zone defensive reads and habits. Defends the rush well. Just basically a non-asset at the other end of the rink. He has good feet in the defensive end and can pivot away from trouble and keep his positioning against shifty opposition.

Usually I like my defensive defensemen to have some chops in Junior but his outlets aren't awful so maybe he can just lean on that and his D at the next level

**Mitchell Brown:** October 8th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs. Vancouver Giants - WHL

Dowhaniuk should probably be a lot better than he is. There's a lot to like here. He completes the odd pass in motion, sometimes uses the middle (even passes through pressure), scans for threats defensively, angles out attackers, and plays quite physically. But he doesn't really do any of it consistently. It's likely he's just going through the scripts until there's an unfamiliar situation. Then, it's a dump out or a no-chance point shot. Sometimes, he doesn't check at all before punting, even if he has multiple open, easy-to-hit options. Tight NZ gap, didn't concede single a controlled entry, although he was beaten deeper in the DZ a couple of times. When things get complex, he overextends instead of keeping his backwards momentum or closing space. Pre-scans on retrievals, but only once, and fails to gauge pressure. The stride mechanics aren't awful: he pushes his knees a bit past his toes, gets some hip engagement, and mostly has a quiet stride. But he's not fast, and quite slow edge-to-edge. Crossovers are a bit clunky too, although he moves better laterally. Didn't really look like a pick in this game.

**Cam Robinson:** October 2nd, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs Kamloops Blazers - WHL

I'm still trying to get a real gauge on Dowhaniuk's upside. He's a stifling defender of the line - using a smart gap and stick to break up opportunities before the play can materialize. However, once in-zone, he can get confused and reach instead of staying upright and attacking at opportune moments. In transition, he leaves a ton to be desired. It's as if he's afraid to make a patient pass, instead choosing the up and out option far too often.

Super vanilla puck skills and vision. He moved around alright in the offensive zone, but is far from quick. His stride looks fine but doesn't generate much power - a likely response to his underdeveloped bottom half. There looks like more tools should be hidden under there, but I've yet to see them materialize.

**Daniel Gee:** October 2nd, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Dowhaniuk played top pairing minutes with Ethan Samson, and pushed over 25 minutes against the Blazers -- played on all special teams and had over 4 minutes of penalty kill time.

A defining play of the Dowhaniuk's transitional defensive



efforts came part-way through the first. While maintaining great gap control on a Blazer strong-side entry, he completed a great angle off, obliterating his man in the far corner of his zone. Mirrored foot-work allowed manipulation attempts to become null and void, and in general Dowhaniuk was much more aggressive defending on-puck attackers than I saw last season. He survived a nasty inside cut rush pattern by mirroring some pretty technical footwork on one rush in the third. He also missed a big side-board hit on Stankoven on a rushed entry on a subsequent shift. A level of passiveness still enters his game if he is caught too deep in his own zone. In the first, he layed out to block a cross-crease pass much too early, ending up flailing on his stomach. He has a level of measurement with the use of his aggressiveness and physicality -- I think at this level he could opt to be more of a play stopper due to his mobility - he is so much more physical than I remember.

I am still trying to get a good read on Dowhaniuk's sustained defending. In this game, while even-strength, he was locked to the net front, struggling but succeeding in his box out plays and secondary threat mitigation crease side. I feel at times Dowhaniuk struggles to an extent when plays transitions low-to-high -- he has a bad habit of becoming static, making himself small as he expects a shot (while occupying a shooting lane). He can succumb to the pressure of cycle. This play really improved as the game progressed, however. His penalty killing was excellent; active head-checks, establishing constant body positioning to box out attackers and win retrievals, and some great play stopping patterns. His mobility allows for some nice escapability out of his retrievals but I again question if there is much deception incorporated in his game.

Dowhaniuk's transition game was weak. He constantly tired layered breakouts, head up, feet static in his attempts. He had numerous breakouts intercepted or deflected away due to the predictability he establishes with his body. There are some positives though; when he hits one of these long-bomb passes, it results in efforts like he had in the second -- he sauced a layered pass cross-ice through traffic over three lines. Sustained offense was honestly a rare occurrence. He's overly safe at the point -- in the first, with multiple passing options, he opted to ring the puck deep to start a battle -- why? I'm not sure. He tended to take pucks from the middle to the boards -- on one shift, it resulted in a rough shot block within feet of his release. He seems more like a later pick in this draft. He ate a tonne of minutes -- he's a hard read honestly -- probably projects up as a one dimensional rush stopper.

**Daniel Gee:** May 5th, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Dowhaniuk had an inconsistent and perplexing game while playing against the highest quality of competition that the Giants could muster.

Catastrophic mistakes, born ultimately from poor decision making, plagued his game throughout the first two periods. While Gauthier bailed him out on three separate occasions, Dowhaniuk struggled to process developing plays in this game. For instance, on one shift in the second, he failed to recognize a probable turnover on the far boards and was caught with his feet static as two Giants broke free. Unable to move his legs, he tried to plant his stick flat, but essentially was walked, allowing a dangerous two-on-one. On another shift, he floated into the offensive zone to intercept a high flip-out, missing the puck completely, and causing another two-on-one. These are routine reads that should be easy, even for a newly-turned 17-year-old.

In general his play while the Giants forced sustained pressure was inconsistent. He was very passive at times, puck-focused and behind the developing play. On other sequences, he read passes quite well, the best example was on a penalty kill in the second; Dowhaniuk shifted early to the left-hand circle to come up with a block, saving a sure one-time goal by Sourdif. There were shifts where he locked down the stick and body of attackers at the net front and others where he was dominated physically and didn't engage-- habits and lack of strength are apparent. While defending the Giants transitional attacks, other than the mistakes mentioned, Dowhaniuk kept a consistent gap, probing with his stick constantly -- he was able to guide a couple of attacks to the side boards and force some Giants forwards to jettison the puck due to pressure. There were a couple of nice containment shifts to be honest but he was generally passive. On one transitional attack in the second, a stop-up play paralyzed him and allowed for a cross-ice pass and it checked him out of the play -- absolutely transfixed on the puck carrier -- awareness?

Offensively there wasn't much here that screamed translatable to higher levels. He didn't attempt a real shot and deferred heavily to his defensive partner. His best shift in the offensive zone was on a powerplay where he swapped with his d-partner on the fly, sending a nice pass into the top of the left-hand circle for a one-timed shot. His exits in this game were fine; he loves to facilitate off the backhand and had a wonderful saucer pass outlet off the back of his stick. Added strength over this next offseason should be a huge benefit -- he was bouncing off more mature players. Looking for more offensive activation, better decision mak-

ing, and more commanding play to match his draft status. There wasn't much deception on his retrievals -- worrying.

**Daniel Gee:** May 2nd, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs Prince George Cougars -WHL

Dowhaniuk once again was matched up against Sourdif/Nielson throughout this game vs the Giants. While there were some hiccups, Dowhaniuk made less mistakes than the game that proceeded on May 5th, and in general, processed the game at a much higher level.

Elements of Dowhaniuk's defensive game, on surface level, appear to be quite polished given his age and minutes that he puts forth. He faces pressure on retrievals head on, making calculated D-to-D passes to exploit the Giants' aggressive forechecking. He implements bank passes, reverse pivoted rings along the end boards, all with attackers within feet away, posturing his body to protect the area of ice in front of him. While he did not show really any ability to shake off a forechekers (integration of edges and handling), he's extremely safe in these scenarios, and facilitates fast outs through simple outlets and one-touch plays (always with his head up surveying). In transition, Dowhaniuk is frustratingly passive, passing up opportunities to impediment physicality on the side boards to lock down attacking lanes to his net. On a faster transitional attack against in the first, he was deked to the outside, and struggled to match a change in speed with his pivot, but his stable feet allowed him to protect against the drive -- he was ultimately unable to stop a pass across but he didn't let crossover momentum exploitation to occur. On the rare occasion that Dowhaniuk stepped up on his blueline, he was quite successful -- he broke up an attack on a powerplay with a pokecheck to interrupt an

entry on the far boards. His roughest play, similar to some of the mistakes made in his May 5th game, came in the neutral zone. He was slow to process a turnover, reaching out with his feet static, creating an easy 2-on-1.

Dowhaniuk's sustained defense was effective in this game. He showed active processing of the Giants' cycle plays, but collapsed heavily in an attempt to block passing lanes. He is often swimming or on one knee to prevent cross-crease passes -- not entirely translatable, but it works at the WHL level. His best sequence in this game was on a penalty kill where Dowhaniuk was able to tip a pass from the right hand circle to the right of his net, clear a rebound to the corner after a point shot, and finally tip another slot pass away -- he even buried a player on a retrieval -- this shift gave me hope.. Currently he defaults to blocking postures too early, and needs to attack puck carriers to force mistakes (find a balance overall). In terms of tools, his mobility, while nothing special, is functional enough to win races and maneuver in tight spaces to some extent.

Offensively this was a very quiet game. One-touch deferrals to his d-partner and non-existant activation were the hallmarks of this game. He has some positive habits; one one shift in the third, he dragged a puck from the near boards, into the dotted line to let go a poorly weight-transferred wrist shot into traffic. He also had a couple of cycle saving pinches. In the second on a powerplay, he flexed some solid one-time mechanics -- arms unlocked, great contract point in the middle of his stance (timing), and full rotation and weight transfer on one knee. Very limited offensively as a whole however. He doesn't even really attempt any passes longer than one line -- plays too safe. Wonder what we will see in 21-22.

•P

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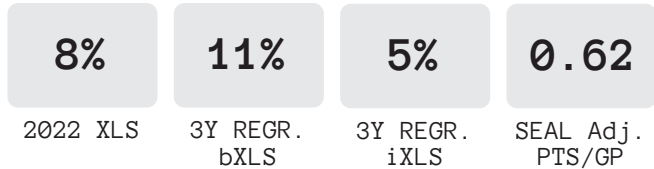
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# AIDEN DUBINSKY

D | TRI-CITY STORM

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. APR. 28, 2004  
 WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	59	3	12	15

> Committed to Univ. of Minnesota-Duluth

## Scouting Report

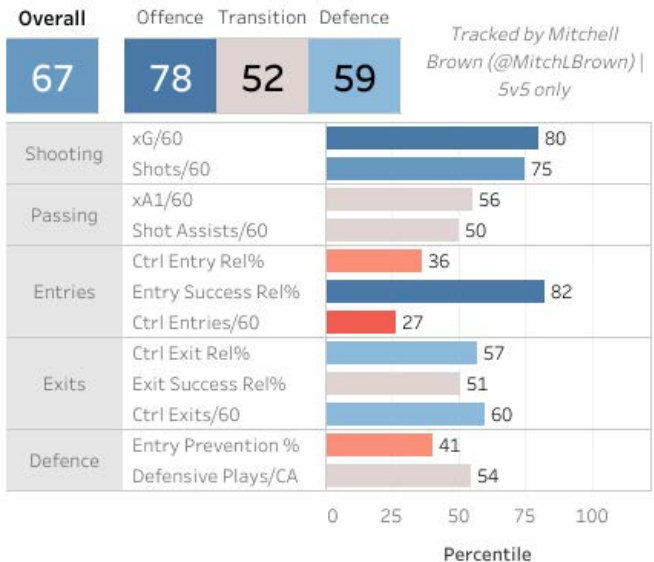
A standout as a draft-minus-one player, Aiden Dubinsky entered this season with momentum on his side. While his progression wasn't quite as sharp as one would've liked, he's still worthy of a selection at the 2022 NHL Entry Draft.

Rush defence is the most exciting element of Dubinsky's game, owing to play-killing instincts and projectable details. Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown explains in a late-season game report: "[He uses] risk-mitigating footwork, angling, and well-timed pokechecks." Quicker attackers put Dubinsky on his heels, and he's liable to getting beat wide, but he improved substantially throughout the season.

With the puck, Dubinsky's projection becomes trickier. He does all the right things on retrievals - establish positioning, deceive, and make a quick escape - but he's prone to throwing away possession immediately. But there are flashes. Sometimes, he makes a high-skill play to the inside through a forechecker or connects with a cross-ice pass through defenders.

Activation drives much of Dubinsky's offensive value. He jumps down the weak side to become a passing option and uses space before shooting. However, the play stops when it

Games Tracked: 12 | Minutes Tracked: 157.5



arrives on his stick, because he doesn't move through pass receptions and shoots without considering other opportunities.

Currently, Dubinsky might be too limited as a skater and puckhandler to lock him into an NHL role. But he's a solid defender with interesting ideas with the puck. He could prove to be a solid mid-round find for a skill development-focused team.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: April 9th, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

A solid game from Dubinsky. Not sure if the activation

is structural or instinctual; I lean structural because he opportunities to join the rush and tends to make his best plays in more repeatable situations. Still, he shows a bit of

playmaking, deception, and timing when he's in the play. Generally uses space before shooting, although he's not manipulating defenders or deking around them to get better positioning. Simple on breakouts and misses opportunities to create advantages up the ice. The core of his projection remains rush defence: risk-mitigating footwork, angling, and well-timed pokechecks. Not enough upside to justify inclusion on our board, but I suspect he's a mid-to-late rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Omaha Lancers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Impressive outing from Dubinsky. He kills plays in the neutral zone as usual, but then activated up the ice. Used the inside on a couple of breakouts, showing patience to outwait pressure. From the point, he looked for simple plays and weak side activation. The latter proved beneficial, as he received two chances from it. None of the tools are notable. I don't see a draft pick, but he's improving.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 11th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Dubinsky doesn't build the play. Really, he doesn't even give his teammates a chance. He's a shooter. He blasts away without any thought. Even simply shooting for deflections or using a shot-pass would benefit his game. He needs to start passing in offensive zone play, if it's just a simple D-to-D pass, to create better opportunities later in the sequence. The breakouts are still bad. He puts himself in the right positions but then throws the puck away. Doesn't delay or manipulate. The rush defence looks projectable enough. He pinches at the right moments, mostly to shoot immediately. He's a play-killer on both sides of the puck. Not a pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

Dubinsky's play belows his skill level at times. He blasts shots from the outside, missing relatively easy-to-hit teammates in far better positioning. He has skill, visible on the retrievals and in open-ice, but he defaults to the simple play. When he activates, he shows more awareness and confidence. But he doesn't give himself many opportunities to do it because he stops pucks dead. The rush defence is certainly a plus, but I didn't see anything to change the projection from the last viewing.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 26th, 2021

Tri-City Storm vs. Fargo Force - USHL

On a team where everyone works plays to the middle,

makes passes in motion, and activates, Dubinsky stands out because he doesn't do those things. Mechanical limitations persisted in this viewing. He's a capable rush defender who doesn't over-commit and timed his step-ups with the pass. Otherwise, he manages distance while angling the play to the perimeter. Don't see an NHL player; not enough outside the rush defence.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

About as quiet of a performance as I've seen. Dubinsky didn't do much offensively, defensively, or in transition. From the point, he's flatfooted and reactionary, limiting his touches and time and space when he gets the puck. Sometimes slick on retrievals with body positioning and a bit of deception, but he rushes the next play. Too simple. Give him a bit of space in neutral zone, and he'll hit a cross-ice pass. Didn't see anything to suggest a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Dubinsky has some awful sequences defensively and with the puck: getting beat wide, unaware of pressure, deferring when he has the space. But there were some draft-worthy moments. In one sequence, he cut inside and turned that into a cross-lane breakout pass under pressure. Another, he looks outside and then went cross-ice. Limited mechanically at times, his hands and feet are locked in rhythm and he keeps that top hand in the same position at all times. It does not just limit the effectiveness of his moves, but he requires a certain set of conditions (forechecker's feet already turned in the wrong direction) to feel confident in them. Scored with a crafty activation sequence: activating for the shot, recovering his rebound behind the net, then working back across the ice to an open pocket for a one-timer. An impressive sequence of foresight and reading the play. Looked like a fringe draft pick in this game.

**J.D. Burke:** September 24th, 2021

Tri-City Storm vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

He barely saw the ice in these two contests at the Fall Classic, and frankly, it was easy enough to understand the coach's hesitance to play him given what happened during his scant few shifts. Poorly defended a 2-on-1 in this game in such a way as it might as well have been a 2-on-0. Always makes the safe play, the rim or the glass-and-out zone exit, if the first read is taken away. Didn't show much pop as a skater. Bleh.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# ARTYOM DUDA

D | KRASNAYA ARMIYA MOSKVA

HEIGHT 6'1"

D.O.B. APR. 8, 2004

WEIGHT 181

SHOOTS LEFT

54%

2022 XLS

32%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

0%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.65

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
VHL	4	0	0	0
MHL	52	14	27	41

## Scouting Report

Artjom Duda looked the part of a hyper-active offensive defenceman as the season started. Someone who jumped into the play at every opportunity, wanted the puck at all times, and tried to find the surest, quickest route to a scoring chance, even at the detriment of his team's defensive health.

As the year advanced, however, the offence took a bit of a step back in favour of a more sound defensive game, especially positionally. While he didn't exactly shadow his check and move proactively to cut passing lanes in the defensive zone, you could find him in the right areas more often in

that later half of the season.

His enthusiasm on the offensive side of the game never left him, but his play selection improved. He started making more plays to teammates in open space, instead of taking on the opposition head-on. His deceptive act on the powerplay also consistently helped teammates find open shooting lanes.

While the progression in Duda's game is interesting, his average tools don't give him a high chance at an NHL role. His game will have to become a lot more efficient if he is to establish himself at that level.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 20th, 2022

SKA-1946 vs. Krasnaya Armiya Moskva - MHL

Duda's performances in the last half of the season are much calmer. He's still activating when given a chance, but there is a higher sense of control and poise in his game. He looks for good plays instead of throwing pucks or himself to scoring areas. He spots teammates behind him, creates space for them, drops the puck...A few standout, smart plays from him offensively in this one. The defence is a bit loose, but he holds his positioning better. The tools continue to look average. He's not a great NHL candidate due to the vanilla skills, but he is probably a pick on day 2, maybe a late one.

**David St-Louis:** February 18th, 2022

Krasnaya Armiya M. vs. MHC Dynamo St. Petersburg - MHL

Duda didn't really pop. I think he was reasonably effective in his plays, good positioning defensively, and quick pass-and-reposition style on breakouts. Offensively, he's used at the top, but he's not really generating much, besides the usual puck distribution with some deception that every defencemen do. There was one activation followed by a manipulation to hit a teammate in the slot. Nice sequence. At his size, he could be more physical, establishing body positioning on retrievals, boxing out...The tools look average, in terms of projection. Maybe a late-round addition? This game was a bit of a contrast with what I saw from him previously.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 2nd, 2021

Loko Yaroslavl vs. Krasnaya Armiya Moskva - MHL

Not much to talk about here. Weak game, again, only showing up when he has the puck. Overaggressive activations, every time he has the puck at the blueline, just know he is going to do something crazy and uncontrolled. Tries to take on everyone in his path to make as many dekes and fancy moves as possible, and boy it does not work out for him. Inability to adapt to pressure and problem-solve mixed with his aggressiveness of the blueline, not good.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 16th, 2021

Krasnaya Armiya Moskva vs. SKA-1946 - MHL

Duda is a player who disappears when he isn't on the puck. Defensive game is limited by his poor rush defense, weak stick, and lack of physicality. He basically allowed plays to form directly in front of him and didn't put any effort into stopping it. Wide stance, not a very quick skater, but good mechanics overall. On the puck is where he shines. Controlled the blue line with smart activations. Good deception to create

space for himself. Release on his shot is good, just needs to add more adaptability under pressure. His stickhandling was what impressed most this game, with an ability to draw players towards him and then make a move to the outside lane and set up.

**J.D. Burke:** August 2nd, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Finland U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Pretty forgettable performance overall from Duda. I like the natural aggression that's baked into his game. The activation off of the offensive blue line, the rush activation to join the second wave, the physicality in the defensive zone. He's just such a blunt instrument as currently constructed. There's no planning. There's no problem-solving ability. Duda charges into the breach, only to find himself outnumbered, without an escape plan, and either defaulting to an uncontrolled play or a lost possession. It seemed like he activated off of the offensive blue line once a shift, and basically nothing ever came of it.



**"While the progression in Duda's game is interesting, his average tools don't give him a high chance at an NHL role. His game will have to become a lot more efficient if he is to establish himself at that level."**

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Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

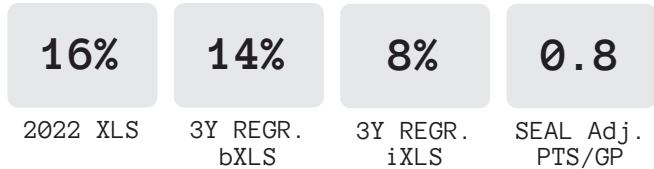


Physical

# TYLER DUKE

D | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 5'9" D.O.B. JUL. 19, 2004  
WEIGHT 179 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	54	3	15	18
USHL	24	2	9	11
WJC-18	6	0	2	2

## Scouting Report

We expected great things out of Tyler Duke coming into this season after a standout year with the USNTDP Under-17 team.

“Some of the most impressive controlled exits were off his stick, going cross-ice for passes or deceiving pressure,” Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown wrote last year on April 17th, 2021. “Consistently tried to bring the puck to the inside in the offensive zone. Several strong down-low sequences to strip the puck carrier. Definitely a player to watch.”

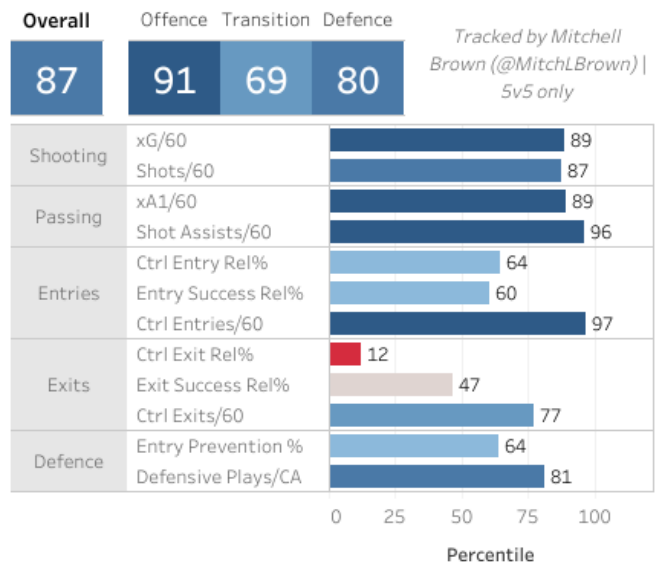
If skating was measured in strides per shift, Duke would grade very high on our scale. The defenceman plays close to a rover style. His constant activations, on breakouts with his forward and off the blue line in the opposing zone, helped open up the offensive game of the USNTDP. They also helped him shut down plays at the defensive blue line.

Duke was a focal point of attention every time he stepped on the ice for the team this season. He could start breakouts, link transition plays, and even finish scoring chances at the other end with catch-and-release shots.

Unfortunately, the defenceman didn't take the steps forward we expected out of him in his draft year. We had our doubts about his ability to translate his game to the higher levels because of his constant hasty decisions, over-aggression, and mechanically flawed skating.

The defenceman gives the impression of speed due to his

Games Tracked: 12 | Minutes Tracked: 156.3



stride rate, short stature, and constantly moving feet, but the actual mechanics of his stride will need work for him to play his style of game at the next level. His wide and uncontrolled recovery, lack of ankle dorsiflexion, and short extensions limit his total output.

Many of the plays he pulled off by the skin of his teeth in the USHL will become turnovers in college and in the professional game. To make the NHL, Duke will have to add poise to his game. He will have to learn to pick his spot and focus on killing as many plays as he can as early as possible off the rush to avoid drawn-out defensive zone battles.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Nothing unusual in this Duke performance. The skating is a weakness and the way he defends won't translate. He plays fast, but he's always a second away from throwing away possession or losing the puck. There's a lot to like about how he plays, but little of it suggests that it'll work in the NHL. It's not as simple as improving his mechanics – he has alter the way he plays. Ease off the defensive aggression and focus on timing, more focus on building the play instead of making one play and moving on, and consistent use of deception and other skills to become an efficient puck-mover. He's not a draft pick this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Duke never has all cylinders firing. If one element of his game is working, others aren't. In this game, his activation and shooting were notable. He joined the play, became an option, and fired off several quality looks. One was a goal, a drag wrister high and far side as he stepped inside, taking advantage of a wide and low goalie. He tried several complex breakouts, stepping inside or going cross-lane. He also failed several. He throws the puck away with little pressure. Doesn't manipulate side pressure, just tries to outrace it. And with incoming forecheckers, he rushes the next play. He's a physical defender, but defends by out-powering instead of out-leveraging and out-smarting. His short strides create the illusion of speed, but he's usually losing ground on players. Not a pick, unfortunately.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

The Duke of last year resurfaced in this outing. He used the middle, deceived defenders, killed plays, and joined the rush. Fired off a bunch of shots, including a step-in wrister that took a wild hop for a goal. Preceding his goal was an entry followed by a delay to hit a teammate on the other side of a defender. Unfortunately, Duke is still limited by his skating and handling. His base is extremely wide with the puck. His feet land outside his shoulders in these half-step strides, while he struggles to get one foot over the other for crossovers. Cutbacks are infrequent and don't benefit his game when used (he prefer one-foot stops). When he's just taking strides without the puck, he almost achieves a 90-degree bend. But that's so infrequent. Pucks roll off his stick, and he struggles to move puck across his body when moving. He's not a pick this year, but I remain excited to see what happens next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Duke's activation was really strong in this game. It impacted all areas of his game. Offensively, he had a few scoring chances. He shot off the pass, got open on the weak side or as the trailer, and stepped into space before firing. The handling skill and skating still get him into trouble – he understands the speed of incoming pressure and overestimates his abilities, leading to turnovers or hastened decisions. But the activation also keeps his gap tighter if there's a turnover. He grabbed a number of stops by taking away the puck carrier's space immediately. Threw a couple of hits. His defence is all power without timing, but game's where the gap's tighter help improve his case. With Duke, there just might not be enough to work with, especially given his drop off in transition effectiveness. I'm still interested in his game, but he's unlikely to make our board this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Duke played with Casey in this game, to which Draft Twitter rejoices. They weren't any good. Duke's style is admirable, but there's not much more going on here. I like how he closes out defensively in the zone, but he's far too passive in the NZ. He doesn't even take the middle away sometimes, just letting defenders use the middle to get him to turn his feet. Solid reactionary defender, so there will be some improvement with time. Feet more like crazy, but poorly. Heels kick, blade strikes the ice inconsistently, lacks ankle flexion and hip engagement, out-toes, struggles to crossover, and relies on his inside edges to do everything. He fakes players out with his head but isn't able to do anything with the puck after that. The hands consistently fail him on pass receptions and I don't see the problem-solving skill or vision to offset it. If he were 6'0", he'd be getting about as much hype as Charlie Leddy.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Sadly, Duke doesn't resemble the player he was last year. The breakout planning, manipulation, and deception aren't there anymore. Randomly delays and then gets stripped. Throws pucks straight up the boards to teammates more covered than himself. The offence isn't any prettier. Doesn't use space or create anything meaningful, and he lacks the handling skill to alter his puck positioning before passing. Just makes the simple, easy play and gets ready to go back on defence. Defensively, he's solid but not translatable. His game's solely about pressure. He doesn't time his engagements at the point of least resistance, which means that he lets attackers slip



past him or run through him. The work rate is always high. The skating fails him. Short strides, leans back on his heels inside crossovers, out-toes. He looks fast because of the high stride frequency, but then you realize he's getting dusted by Cameron Lund. Unfortunately, I doubt he's a pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Duke lost his mind late in this game, crosschecking a player in the face after Madison scored. That's an easy suspension. Otherwise, this was more of the same from Duke. He's physical and wins battles at this level, mostly through using his feet. Passive NZ gap, but shows play-killing ability deeper in the zone. He's somewhat deceptive, but lacks the patience to make full use of it. Turnover-prone on breakouts. The skating's not close to NHL-calibre, and the offence is lagging because of the skating limitations, inconsistent deception, and infrequent activation. I don't see Duke as a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Duke tries a lot of plays, often without success. He takes

passes in motion, activates down the boards, and then chucks the puck into the slot. I like the ideas underpinning these decisions, but he's not manipulating the defender in the lane to create the opening. He tries to get involved in the rush, but his feet often fail him. The defence isn't an issue right now: he kills plays early, gets stops deeper in the zone, and doesn't fall for simple deception. Understands how to leverage to win battles, but he's too dependent on contact alone to win possession. The skating and lack of upside are major issues. He lacks ankle flexion, so much so that he struggles to crossover (leans back and flings his head upwards, too). Wide stride recoveries with occasional significant out-toeing. He's not scoring either. Doubt he gets drafted.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Duke does everything fast and sometimes with a bit of flair on the breakout. Some of his passes are awful, there's no disputing that. He throws the puck away without hesitation, gives up on ideas instead of problem-solving new ones, and lacks the skating to separate consistently. Given him a bit of space, and he'll manipulate a player with his eyes and



body before passing straight up the middle. He's a physical defender with some legitimate play-killing instincts (see: the timed engagements). His skating's a problem, especially defensively -- he struggles to accelerate out of his pivots, build speed, and manage distance. I definitely see an argument for a draft pick. He's NHL smart, but the tools are very limiting.

**David St-Louis:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - NCAA

I like Duke. He tries hard. He wants to be involved in every plays on the ice, but he is already playing at the edge of his skills in the USHL, meaning that the plays he does make, he seems to pull off by the skin of his teeth. He is on the small side and lacks noteworthy abilities. Not a good combo in an NHL projection, although his hockey sense might rank above-average for us at the end of the season. He understands how to create and wants to create offensive advantages. You have to appreciate his constant participation in transition plays, his attempts to beat defenders, activates, and distribute in the offensive zone. He can somewhat evade the forecheck, too. He is pure energy and a good engager at this level (he rammed a couple of opponents in this game). Those elements will keep me watching.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Tyler Duke is a very good USHL player, but what he currently does won't work in the NCAA, let alone the NHL. The skating's probably the biggest limiter. It's very wide with out-toeing, short extensions, and a wildly uncontrolled recovery. Very few power skating details (doesn't drive his recovering leg forward, push off his inside leg on crossovers, or load his stride with his upper body). His pivots look painful, and his defensive skating is just a series of crossovers until he runs his shoulder into the guy -- way too committing. He's too upright and struggles to get knee-over-knee in his crossovers.

He looks like he's jumping when skating. With the puck, he's a bit more projectable: use the inside, deceive forechecking pressure, look for cross-lane options. Decision-making and timing aren't strengths, which also appear in his offensive game, but again, he has details. He looks for cross-ice options, takes when it's given to him, and his shooting mechanics are much better (both hands in front, narrower stance, elbow elevated). He's probably a fringe draft pick unless there's a ton of skating improvement or the offence skyrocketed off.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 17th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Duke has a ton of work to do skating and shooting, but he's clearly an intelligent player who plans plays. Some of the most impressive controlled exits were off his stick, going cross-ice for passes or deceiving pressure. Consistently tried to bring the puck to the inside in the offensive zone. While conceding the zone too easily sometimes, he stays on the puck carrier to angle them out before timing a stick check to dislodge possession. Several strong down-low sequences to strip the puck carrier. Definitely a player to watch.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 30th, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

Impressive performance from Duke. His rush defence was his standout skill in this game. Sometimes too passive through the NZ, but always closed space around the blue-line without committing his feet. Times his checks effectively, both in open ice and along the boards. A strong instinctual defensive player who consistently looks inside or cross-ice on the breakout. Decision-making with the puck is a bit slow, leading to missed opportunities or turnovers, but the base is solid. Tries to be active from the point, but rarely separates. When he did, he created a high-danger chance that eventually led to a goal. Looks like a pick for next year, but is likely dependent on the growth of tools.



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Rank



Grade



Skating



Transitions



Hands



Tracking



Post



Depth

# REID DYCK

G | SWIFT CURRENT BRONCOS

HEIGHT 6'4" D.O.B. JAN. 20, 2004  
WEIGHT 194 CATCHES LEFT

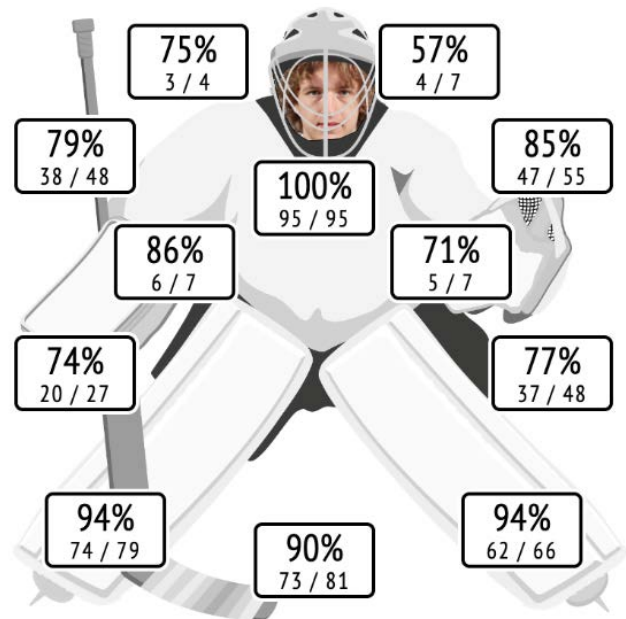
LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
WHL	23	4.26	.884	0
WJC-18	3	6.58	.855	-

## Scouting Report

Few players saw their draft stock boosted in a single game quite like Reid Dyck with his performance at the CHL/NHL Top Prospects game, where he put up a flawless performance statistically that helped ease the sting of his numbers for Swift Current this past season.

He didn't quite go from undraftable to a must-draft, but he did enough to warrant a second look - and the way he kept his composure behind some truly sloppy defence at the U18 World Hockey Championships for Team Canada earned him enough extra brownie points to make him a fun flier to consider.

Fast and effective with his hands, Dyck handles flukey bounces well and thrives among his draft contemporaries when it comes to snagging high shots sent his way when he's out of position. He doesn't have the same control and finesse that fellow WHL powerhouse Tyler Brennan displayed behind a shaky roster this past year, but Dyck did offer up plenty of that highly-coveted creativity that helped him keep his team motivated even when he faced a flurry of shots.



His biggest question mark, at this point, seems to be that it's tough to tell just what about his game is the byproduct of bad habits developed over a season of playing behind a leaky defense.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# LUCAS EDMONDS

RW/LW | KINGSTON FRONTENACS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JAN. 27, 2001  
WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS LEFT

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	34	79	113

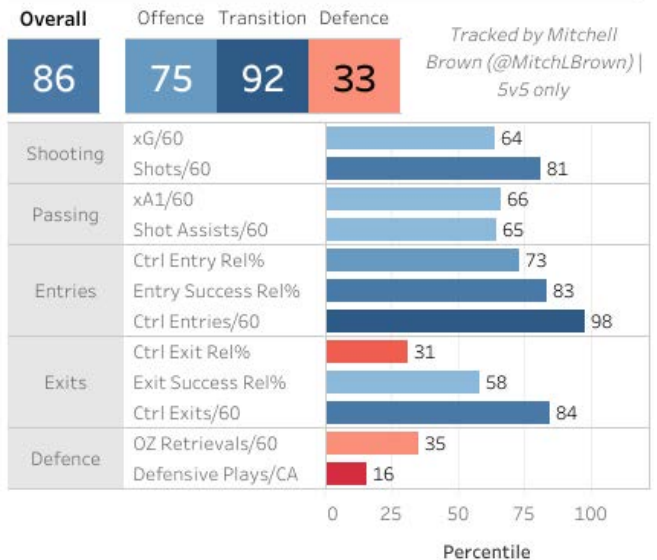
## Scouting Report

Two years ago, Lucas Edmonds claimed the third-to-last spot in the inaugural Elite Prospects draft guide as a draft-plus-one posting gaudy numbers in Sweden's junior circuit. He went undrafted. But after a 113-point season in the OHL, he'll likely hear his name called this time around.

The core of Edmonds' game according to Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown is that "he delays, beats a player, spins back, tries again, and again, and again, and then maybe one more time." While he's a low-pace creator, he operates with a projectable base: slow, then fast. He manipulates defenders by "combining edge-to-edge quickness with deception to make defenders move out of his desired lane."

Superior patience, physicality, and puck skills allowed Edmonds to find a ton of success in the OHL, but there are a number of projection concerns. First, Edmonds is too reliant on his hands. Trying to deke through everyone inside a glide won't work in the AHL, let alone the NHL. Second, he's not an advanced playmaker, lacking the precision and timing to complete passes through the high-value lanes he tries. Third, he's not much of an off-puck player, whether

Games Tracked: 13 | Minutes Tracked: 205.5



that's considering defence, supporting reads, or getting open.

Already 21-years-old, Edmonds should have more refined off-puck play and on-puck decision-making by now. He's neither a shooter nor a playmaker. But his handling skill and advanced understanding of how to create opportunities could be morphed into an NHL game by the right development staff.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

The best game I've seen from Edmonds projection-wise. Still low pace, but he's better at altering pace - slow,

then fast. Draws pressure. Relies too much on his hands but he combines edge-to-edge quickness with deception to make defenders move out of his desired lane. Inconsistent playmaking, but the basis of his fast (delay, then speed up; lots

of attacks that change lanes) should help him improve that going forward. On the other hand, he's already a 2001. He's probably not a pick this year, but I'm becoming increasingly optimistic about his odds of becoming a useful AHLer.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Edmonds is scoring a lot, but finding a path to the NHL isn't easy. His game runs through hands – beating players in 1-on-1s, opening passing lanes, and making low-percentage plays. He's more poised and patient than most OHLers, so it works. And he's not afraid to make turnovers and then try the same play again. But he's not adaptable. Lacks the timing and precision on his passes that he needs as an overager. I don't see anything that suggest an NHL player.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 28th, 2022 -

shaw General's vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Edmonds shoots a lot, throws pucks into the slot blindly, and defaults to the outside lane in transition. His combination of pace, handling skill, and creativity rack up the entries regardless, but it's tough to envision his game translating to the next level if he's not consistently manipulative. That side of his game his wasn't visible in this outing. Grabbed three scoring chances off the pass, showing some awareness of how to get open, but not in projectable ways. A reasonably interested defender, but he lacks instincts and play-killing ability. Probably just an AHLer.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 2nd, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

Lucas Edmonds is all hands. He delays, beats a player, spins back, tries again, and again, and again, and then maybe one more time. His patience is a massive strength in the OHL, but he lacks the extra gear to make it work at the next level. Still, he clearly reads the hands and feet of incoming defenders, and uses his eyes, puck positioning, and body to manipulate them. Upping the pace in those sequences will allow him to do against AHL competition, anyway. The rest of his game's similarly complex. He's not exactly an involved defensive player unless the puck's basically touching him. Mechanically sound shooter off the pass, he knows which spaces to occupy – he just takes too long to get there. Relatively selective playmaker, instead preferring to beat players with his hands first. Even then, the patience doesn't translate to playmaking, he doesn't see high-value targets through defenders, and he doesn't manipulate defenders with the intention of creating a passing window. I didn't see a draft pick.

**EP Rinkside Staff:** February 21st, 2020

Växjö Lakers HC J20 @ Djurgårdens IF J20 – J20 SuperElit

Edmonds played right wing on Växjö's second line against Djurgården, he was his team's most notable player and scored both their goals. Edmonds first goal was scored when he received the puck on top of the left faceoff-circle and moved towards center ice and beat the goaltender with a swift, low wrist shot that found its way between the legs of the goalkeeper. His second goal was scored after Edmonds had worked intensely in front of the net, he backed off a bit and made himself available for a pass and got rewarded with a pass through the slot and could tap the puck into the net.

Much of Edmonds' play revolved around what happened in the offensive zone and he was heavily involved in much of what Växjö managed to create in this game. He showed off a high work-rate and did what he could when he was off the puck to give his teammates a chance to set him up with a scoring chance. He found open ice around the opposing net several times, but rarely got any passes to take advantage of his positioning. He was alert and quick to take advantage of positional mistakes by defenders and looked to be smart in the way he positioned himself. He handled physical play well and could outwork defenders to win the puck or to gain the best position in front of the net.

With the puck, Edmonds have developed well since last year. He can hold on to the puck for longer and let passing lanes open up before making plays. He wasn't usually the player to carry the puck on his line, but he did it better than both his linemates when he got the chance. One thing that he must improve is to learn when he can try to stickhandle, his decision making is not always on point in that area as he could try to deke his way past three or four opponents on the offensive blue line.

Edmonds skating did not look bad, but it is not a strength either. His agility is decent, his balance is very good, and his acceleration and top speed is good enough at this level. He does, however, lack that extra gear with the puck that is needed to have speed as an offensive tool to create scoring chances.

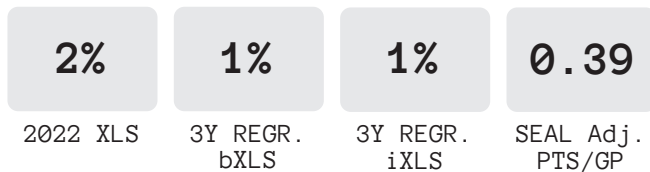
Off the puck, he can reach slightly higher speed and he utilized that well today on the forecheck. He combined his ability to read the game with his speed to put heavy pressure towards the puck, if the defender made a mistake or if Edmonds could win the puck he was quick to try to head towards the net and attempt to take advantage of the situation. He worked well with his stick, not only on the forecheck but in the neutral and defensive zone as well, to win pucks or to slow down his opponents.



# JACKSON EDWARD

D | LONDON KNIGHTS

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. FEB. 27, 2004  
 WEIGHT 194 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	54	0	6	6

## Scouting Report

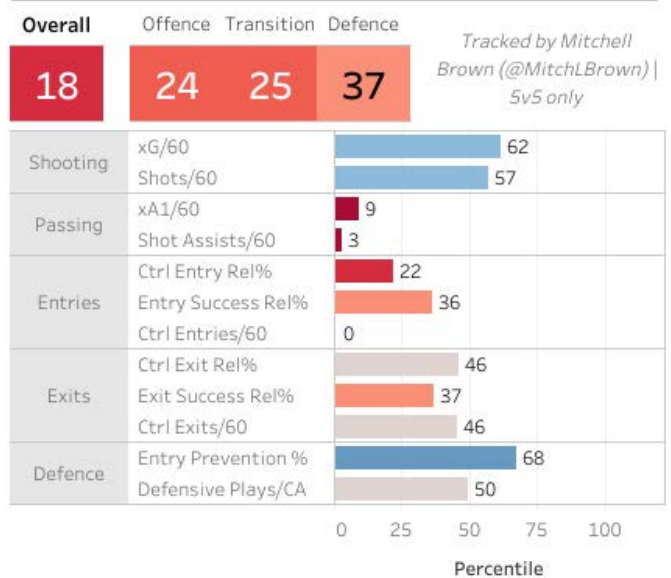
Nothing about six points in 54 games screams NHL draft pick, much less NHL upside, but Jackson Edward could be the exception to the rule.

The physical style of Edward's game leaps out immediately. He's violent, and he uses that violence to emphatically kill plays at the blue line and end the cycle. He does get overzealous, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown explains, "[he throws] needless crosschecks, over-extends to make contact, and hits when he should just angle the puck carrier."

If given space while receiving the puck, Edward often makes a positive play. He'll even draw in forechecking pressure by skating towards it or cutting back, then hitting the gas pedal before starting the breakout. Without the benefit of space upon reception, he rims the puck up the boards or flings it into the neutral zone.

Late in the season, Edward started showing offensive skill and awareness far beyond what his point totals suggest. He made passes to the inside, joined the rush, sprinted ahead of his forwards, and used space before shooting. Where he usually threw the puck away, he started cutting back and letting forechecks fly by.

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 121.7



Not only must Edward build upon these late-season flashes to make the NHL, he must improve his mechanical foundation. "His hands are rigid with a small range of motion and inability to handle with his feet moving," Brown wrote in a mid-April game report. "The skating has a wide recovery and he's mostly locked on his inside edges." If he can improve those, he could become a valuable bottom-pairing defender.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 10th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

The most active puck performance I've seen from Edward. Messy, sure. But it was still good to see him activate, sprint ahead of the play before his forwards, jump in from the point for chances, and try to beat defenders with his hands. This level of confidence suggests there's an opportunity to develop more offensive upside. He followed up plays of his teammates, combining his gap control with activation to advance the puck up the ice. Didn't throw away the puck on breakouts, instead preferring to scan first and then attack space. Nothing advanced in terms of decisions, but a positive step forward. The hands are rigid with a small range of motion and inability to handle with his feet moving. The skating has a wide recovery and he's mostly locked on his inside edges. Lots of work to be done, but when the rush defence and physical game are added into the fold, drafting him seems like an easy decision. Late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2022

London Knights vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Edward has the same issues that all Knights' defenders do - he reverses the puck to no one and throws away possession off retrievals. But there are moments are more. He'll cutback or simply outwait forecheckers, then step into space and make a cross-ice pass. Seems to plan these plays in advance. That's a positive sign. In the offensive end, he sometimes steps into space before shooting. Mostly, he makes simple passes or flings the puck off the end boards. No creativity, and he's certainly not building the offence. Because of the simplicity of these plays, he's often killing the offence by creating another battle. Edward has some NHL qualities defensively. He's often reactive in-zone, but he's physical, scans regularly, and has some play-killing ability at the blue-line. Tightening the gap and building more pro-level defensive skating habits could make him a depth player.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

Edward stands out for his physicality and gap. He's inconsistent, but when engaged, he's a play-killer who minimizes time spent in the defensive zone. Some difficulties identifying his check, along with his overzealousness, likely drive his inconsistent defensive impact. On breakouts, he doesn't mess around anymore. The flashes of a delay game and puck skills haven't been visible in my recent viewings. Some off-puck activation, but I don't see the upside here. Tools are average, play creation is non-existent.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 16th, 2022

London Knight vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Edward has his moments. He'll delay to outwait forecheckers or use a heel-to-heel to turn his back to the forechecker and slip away. Went for a skate to gain the offensive zone. His stance is too upright while his mechanics lack refinement. Lacks quickness and weight shift ability. But Edward getting into the play is only a positive thing. When he activates and tries to make skilled breakouts, his NHL odds improve. Sure, his projection is a physical, bottom-pairing defender - but that requires skill. Consistent skill. He's not doing that yet, but it looks like his game is trending in the right direction. Using the middle (even if it's just to escape pressure) and scanning before taking the point shot are two small details that will likely improve his puck game significantly.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

Edward used space off-puck to grab a scoring chance. That was his only notable play of the game, despite significant usage. He doesn't scan on retrievals (a stark contrast from George), and then throws the puck away. That lack of awareness of his options is a constant theme. The tight neutral zone gap and physicality weren't consistent themes of this viewing. He mirrors footwork along the boards while slowly taking away space. I didn't see anything that suggests a draft pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 11th, 2022

London Knights vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

Edward will probably want a do-over of this game. He started off well, laying an open-ice hit in the DZ to separate a puck carrier from the puck, but it just went downhill from there. On the first goal against, he couldn't close the gap quickly enough and was beat cleanly because he'd stopped skating and then tried to haul the goal scorer down and still couldn't prevent the shot from being taken. He waited way too long to decide whether to take the shooter or take away the passing lane on the second goal against, and when he finally slid down to block the pass it was mistimed and the pass made it across for the goal. He also took a really unnecessary roughing penalty, delivering a shove to the head when the puck was nowhere near either of them. I didn't see many redeeming qualities in this one.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 9th, 2022

London Knights vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Edward is violent. He ran over a couple of Spirit players, getting himself a penalty in the process. He lacks some discipline with his engagements: needless crosschecks, over-extending

to make contact, and throwing hits when he should just angle the puck carrier. He's mistake-prone with and without the puck. The defence isn't much beyond the odd risk-mitigating defensive skating sequence or slick retrieval. Don't see any offence or transition skill beyond flashes that didn't appear in this game. Not a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2021

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

Not much from Edward in this game. Mostly inconsistent defensive and breakout impacts. Guided attacks to the perimeter, but his best defensive skill is engaging at the right times. Turned bad gaps into breakups because he catches players as their lift their stick above the puck. Physical, too. Straight-ahead with the puck, but has moments where he waits an extra second before passing to make sure his teammate's free from pressure. Limited activation or offensive skill. Didn't look like a draft pick in this game, although he didn't play much.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 3rd, 2021


Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

Edward's defensive skating was the best part of his performance. He keeps his knees bent, weight shifted forward,

head up, and uses smaller motions to build momentum. Times his engagements at the point of least resistance, he looks to follow the stick with his shoulder when necessary. Several atrocious breakout decisions, not even trying to look for options for ridding himself of the puck. One activation sequence became a hook pass into the slot, and he set-up a chance later in the game. Interesting player who clearly has the potential to become a lot more effective with the puck, but seems to play below his skill level.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 16th, 2021

London Knights vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Edward is actually a fairly mobile skater for a player his height, but his lack of explosiveness and acceleration is a flaw and prevents him from defending the rush effectively. He showed good puck control and a solid passing ability, but it can seem a bit panicky under pressure. Edward had a couple of good puck rushes up the ice, but there wasn't much dynamic or deception to his carrying ability. He also played a very physical game, knocking players off pucks and pinning them against the boards. He's relied on heavily by the Knights, but I don't think he projects as more than a depth defenseman at future levels. 

**"The physical style of Edward's game leaps out immediately. He's violent, and he uses that violence to emphatically kill plays at the blue line and end the cycle."**

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Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# ADAM ENGSTRÖM

D | DJURGÅRDENS IF J20

HEIGHT 6'2"

D.O.B. NOV. 17, 2003

WEIGHT 185

SHOOTS LEFT

2%

2022 XLS

2%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

1%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	45	8	20	28

## Scouting Report

Adam Engström has a nasty tendency of fading into the background of hockey games. At his most effective, you'll notice him in transition as he carries the puck up-ice, speeding past the forecheck with his long strides. There are better movers than Engström in this draft, but his combination of skating and reach along with the occasional flash of playmaking skill retained the attention of our Swedish regional scout, Jimmy Hamrin.

Though he kept our attention, Engström ultimately didn't make enough noise to feature on our board this season. His inability to make advanced defensive reads – like proactive switches in coverage – and his lack of physical play made

an NHL projection seem out of reach. Further complicating matters was the lack of creativity that we commonly associate with offensive defencemen.

The pathway to the NHL for Engström starts with finding an identity for himself. He'll need to leverage his range to become a better engager along the walls, a real shutdown defender. Alternatively, improving his technical ability to become more effective in transition could make him a puck-mover in the big leagues.

"I think he is a draftable player," Hamrin wrote in an April 10th game report. "The skating, reach and good hands are good foundational pieces to have."

## Game Reports

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 10th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs Linköpings HC U20 - J20 Final four

I like Engström easy going skating. He has a long effective stride and helps him to be sharp in speedy situations. He also took action in the game, wanting to join the attack and had some nice offensive plays in the rush. The best sequence was an assist where he drove up with the puck and made a nice fake just inside the blueline and passed to a teammate who came in with speed and buried it.

Defensively he is too soft. The team lacked good structure in their own end but Engström lacked the ability to cover up. He had some bad gap moments and also played soft

not helping his goalie on rebounds. Still, I think he is a draftable player. The skating, reach and good hands are good foundational pieces to have.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** March 23rd, 2022

Timrå U20 vs Djurgårdens U20 - J20 Nationell Playoffs

Adam plays a big role for his team and is active in the game. He has good reach with good skating. He likes to join the attack and moves the puck well. He plays on the point on the power play where he moves well sideways and can fake and deke to open for a pass.

Adam skates with long strides but in an upright position


which limits his lower body balance. His pace is good and can travel well with the puck and join the attack as well he plays a strong rush defence. Adam has a good passing game and scans the ice to find open passes. He pushes the play ahead and does not need to go for his first instinct and can have multiple solutions with the puck. His offensive puck handling is good but nothing spectacular. He scored a goal where he found an open space in the slot from behind and delivered a nice shot. He also had a sequence where he deked his way through from the blue line to an open scoring chance in front of the goal.

There is a lot to like about Adam's game and I like it more than I did earlier in the season. He is a good two-way defenseman and I can see a good SHL defenseman in the future. For the NHL draft I am still not sure which role to slot him in an NHL role. He is still kind of soft defensively and lacks big offensive upside. He is a player to look for late in the draft though. The skating, poise, reach and puck-moving are interesting assets to work with.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 22nd - 23rd, 2021

Timrå U20 vs Djurgårdens U20 - J20 Nationell

I saw him play two games in two days but he did not stand out in any way. His skating is good and mobile in all directions. I would rank it as slightly above average. He has good reach and plays a decent defensive game. He does not compete hard or is not physical in his way of playing. He is lanky and plays more to the puck. Offensively he has good control but plays a simple game. He does not show much on the creative side.

All in all, I would say that he is solid enough with smarts, reach and mobility to be considered as a bottom pair defenseman but without the physical touch to his game it will be hard for him to reach that level. The same goes for his offence that is not skilled enough for a top 4 role. I see him as a no-draft for now. 





Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# GEORGE FEGARAS

D | NORTH YORK RANGERS

HEIGHT 6'2"

D.O.B. APR. 26, 2004

WEIGHT 194

SHOOTS RIGHT

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OJHL	52	13	35	48

> Committed to Cornell Univ.

## Scouting Report

George Fegaras was the offensive motor of the North York Rangers in the OJHL this season, finishing just one point short of the team lead.

He found outlets on breakouts, carried pucks through the neutral zone, skated around the offensive end to open passing lanes to teammates, attracted high defenders to shoot around them, and attacked down to improve the location of his shot. All highly projectable qualities in a mobile, contemporary defenceman.

His playmaking talent at the OJHL level was never in doubt this season, but of course, there is quite a gap in competition

between Junior A hockey and the OHL, and then an even bigger one with the NCAA. Much of what Fegaras accomplished with North York won't be within his

The Rangers blueliner lacks the finer technical ability that makes great college power play quarterbacks - the edgework and the feinting ability. Fegaras will have to improve his tools and playmaking even more, especially its timing and deception, if he wants to retain his identity as an offensive defenceman and earn a role on Cornell's top power play, much less a regular role at the NHL level somewhere down the road.

## Game Reports

David St-Louis: March 27th, 2022

North York vs Lindsay - OJHL

Fegaras looks like a talented offensive defenceman at this level. He opens up lanes, holds on to pucks to let plays develop, runs around the periphery of the zone, going down as low as the offensive goal-line, finds plays inside, gets shots through...He generates speed, but the mechanics needs

refinement. The stride is mostly high-stance and there is a lack of fluidity in his faking game; he doesn't complete his moves, but just goes through scripts of half-fakes, only turning his stick or his head, moves that won't be able to influence the defence at higher levels. I didn't see anything high-end in his game. He could be a pick, but maybe in the latter part of the draft.





Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

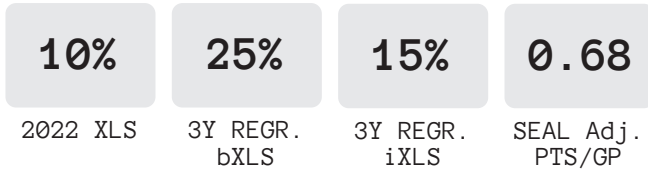


Physical

# LAYTON FEIST

D | REGINA PATS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JAN. 26, 2004  
WEIGHT 168 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	64	6	22	28

## Scouting Report

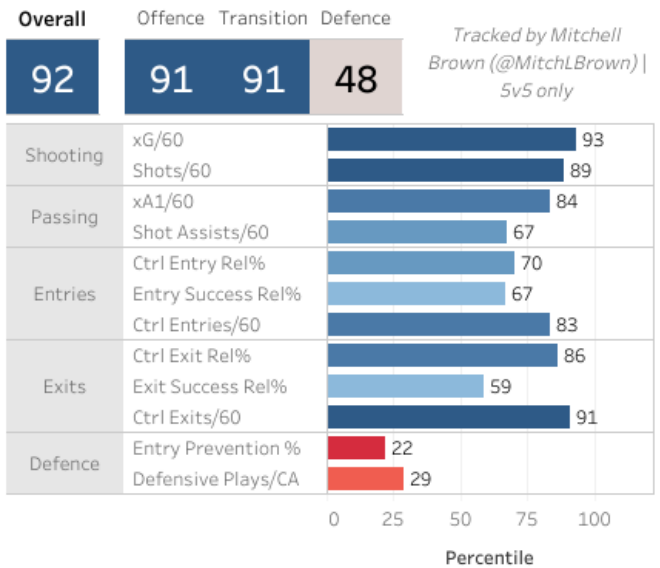
It's not easy to stand out when playing bottom-pairing minutes, but Layton Feist found a way.

A smooth operator, Feist's best when leading the breakout and then joining the rush. In moments, he's a projectable breakout artist, beating the first forechecker, deceiving the next layer, and then passing without breaking stride. Much of the time, he plays a simple, short-range breakout game, but that's understandable for a limited-minutes player.

Feist has projectable details from the point, too. He takes most passes inside crossovers, allowing him to beat defenders into space. Uses space before shooting, flashes a shot-pass to hit teammates around the net, and looks to build the offence when activating rather than forcing plays. Too many point shots at times, but he clearly has offensive potential.

Defensively, Feist is beatable but a hard-worker. He eliminates off-puck threats, traps the puck carrier along the boards, and occasionally gains leverage on bigger attackers to win the battle. A passive neutral zone gap limits allows attackers free entry into the zone, and he attempts to recover by over-extending. Overall, Feist's intelligence stands out in

Games Tracked: 10 | Minutes Tracked: 119.1



this WHL class; however, his skating and handling often fail him. Pressure often deters from him making a positive play, and intriguing moments of NHL ability feature too inconsistently to bet a high pick on him. Still, there's some upside here. With time, he could become an interesting depth piece.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** February 26th, 2022  
Regina Pats vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

As an activator with a bit of transition skill, Feist's solid. He anticipates space without overskating the passing lane. Pinches at the right moments without introducing much risk.

His plays with the puck aren't noteworthy when activated. From the point, he takes point shots and tries to build some offence with shot-passes and tippable pucks. In transition, he didn't show much. Failed a cutback for a turnover. Made a couple of short-range plays but always up the boards. He's



fluid and intelligent, but I don't see many NHL outcomes for him.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 6th, 2022

Regina Pats vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

A slick off the boards was the highlight of this performance. Feist's a fluid player overall, but not an explosive one. Pinches at the right times. Activation rarely results in much. Over-reliant on point shots and misses opportunities to build the play. Very simple player on breakouts, missing inside and cross-lane options. Shows a bit more vision in the neutral zone, but I don't see the upside anymore.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Another quiet game from Feist, although I doubt he cracked 10 minutes. I like the transition ideas: step inside first, look for options on the weakside, and sprint out of his passes to join the play. He tries to activate, but never ended up in a good enough position to get the puck. Didn't look like a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

Regina Pats vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Feist's grown a ton in confidence throughout this season. This was the best viewing yet. He consistently used the inside in transition, looked for the cross-ice feed, and activated at the right times. He's regularly putting himself in the middle of the action with the puck. There are turnovers – look off passes

that, well, required a look, passes that are too optimistic, and passes that don't really seem to serve a purpose. His activation led to a cross-crease slip pass for a scoring chance – deceptive set up, too. The strengths of his game are movement, passing, and activation. If the skill comes along, he's definitely a draft pick. Loose neutral zone gap but closed space quickly, picking up a couple of stops along the way.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 15th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Feist's a pretty simple player skill-wise, showing little in the way of handling, shooting, or passing skills beyond the essentials. But his brain's a step above. He sees targets on the ice other side of pressure, consistently uses the middle before making decisions, and times his activation well. He's always involved in the play through rush and point activation. He has some issues managing pressure down low, but he's worth keeping an eye on.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 6th, 2021

Regina Pats vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Perhaps too simple to become an NHLer at this stage, or maybe it's a confidence thing. Feist sees some options, especially in the NZ. He passes to the inside after drawing a bit of attention to himself. He's sneaky physical down-low and gets the odd break up. Lacks pressure management with the puck. Zero offensive game, but spent most of the game in his own zone for no fault of his own. Need a closer look.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# NIKS FENENKO

D | BAIE-COMEAU DRAKKAR

HEIGHT 6'1"

D.O.B. AUG. 18, 2004

WEIGHT 176

SHOOTS LEFT

22%	14%	0%	0.67
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	62	6	34	40

## Scouting Report

Niks Fenenko scored 40 points this season. This is an impressive production for a rookie QMJHL defenceman in a weaker offensive formation, especially as he's an import player who played much lower competition before this year.

The production, unfortunately, doesn't accurately reflect Fenenko's offensive talents or his comfort with the puck.

Rarely have we seen such a large gap between a player's off-puck and on-puck abilities as was present in his tape last season. The Baie-Comeau Drakkar defenceman defers to others in most situations, preferring to offload the puck as quickly as possible; it's a fine play in the offensive zone – a puck shot on net is always a scoring chance to one degree or another – but not as a viable choice on breakouts.

Fenenko continuously misses teammates and the opportunity to set up plays in transition. The precision and timing of his plays improved over the course of the season, but not to the degree necessary to make that part of his game a strength.

If there's one component of Fenenko's game that does rate well enough to perhaps make him a legitimate NHL prospect, it's his defensive makeup.

"He pinches at the right times, pressures at the right times, and makes it very hard for the opposition to generate offence," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in a May 1st game report. "He's proactive defensively, on top of his check, taking the stick away...A ton of great shutdown elements, that coupled with his mobility and great posture and relative range still make him an interesting prospect."

Fenenko's mobility along with his motor and willingness to engage opponents to remove them from the play could make him a quietly effective NHL defenceman. You know the type. The blueliner who you never notice but nonetheless provides net positive value from the third pair.

For Fenenko to get there, however, the puck skills will have to improve, as the league puts more and more emphasis on controlled breakouts.

## Game Reports

David St-Louis: May 1st, 2022

Chicoutimi Saguenéens vs. Baie-Comeau Drakkar - QMJHL

Fenenko still hasn't developed offensive skills. He's not comfortable with the puck on his stick and looks to offload it as quickly as possible, but, he's making an offensive impact with his skating and pressure anyway. He pinches at the

right times, pressures at the right times, and makes it very hard for the opposition to generate offence. He's proactive defensively, on top of his check, taking stick away...A ton of great shutdown element, that coupled with his mobility and great posture and relative range, still makes him an interesting prospect.

**David St-Louis:** April 27th, 2022

Baie-Comeau Drakkar vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Fenenko really fades in the background if you don't look for him -- the mark of defensive defenceman, but also of prospects who don't bring as much value to the game. He can distribute the puck, pin, shadow, and pokecheck attackers, and he's decently pro-active in his zone. The skating is above-average...Are these skills enough for a draft pick? The comparison with Isiah George is interesting here. They both have defensive potential, but George is showing way more in terms of puck skills at times, and his tools are even greater.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Baie-Comeau Drakkar vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Fenenko had one of the best plays of the game, a give-and-go for a goal after working laterally across the neutral zone. He had many ugly plays, too. He was beaten late in the game by crossing over the outside too early, allowing a breakaway. While he made a couple of crafty plays off the boards on retrievals, he mostly just passed pucks to teammates more covered than himself. Apart from the one gaffe, he was mostly solid on the defensive end. He's not suffocating, but he switches and stays engaged off-puck. Eliminates threats. Angles the cycle up and away. Might be an interesting mid-to-late rounder.

**David St-Louis:** April 21th, 2022

Cape Breton Eagles vs. Baie-Comeau Drakkar - QMJHL

Fenenko wasn't as on-point defensively in this game, but the errors were mostly caused by his partner. He's a weird offensive player. Clearly doesn't have comfort with the puck. Clearly doesn't see plays develop. Clearly is afraid to try them, too. But he also activates really low in the zone away from the puck; he attacks the slot to support plays and fire shots on net, and his low activations also helps him be in good positions to kill rushes and pinch. He mostly flipped pucks out of the zone on breakouts.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Drummondville V. vs. Baie-Comeau Drakkar - QMJHL

Not a lick of puck skill shown in this game, gave for one

handling sequence that ultimately failed. But Fenenko's already quite the defender. He gaps up early, angles, and kills plays of switches. Gets stops inside the puck carrier's puck-handling and times his stick checks well. Proactive off-puck. Pinches at the right moments and uses that to establish his gap on the backpedal. Didn't see anything else. Throws away pucks when faced with pressure head-on.

**David St-Louis:** February 11th, 2022

Baie-Comeau Drakkar vs. Drummondville V. - QMJHL

There are a lot of improvements in Fenenko's game. He's much more confident. He closes out harder, takes advantage of mistakes, skates up ice with the puck, looks to pass it up ice, too, not just to his partner, and he passes with deception too. The handling grip is a bit unusual, super-high, and it limits his precision and affects his mechanics. He's a bit chaotic still, but Baie-Comeau doesn't offer a lot of offensive support. He's a player to keep an eye on.

**David St-Louis:** December 16th, 2021

Latvia U20 vs Hungary U20 - WC-20 Div 1

Fenenko has the skill to make plays, but he doesn't. He panics under pressure and flips the puck out and when he does risk moving around an opponent or moving to find a passing lane, the precision and timing of the play is often off. It's like he never developed that facet of his game.

**David St-Louis:** November 5th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Baie-Comeau Drakkar - QMJHL

Fenenko has interesting tools. His skating could reach NHL average and he's a decent handler, but he plays too safe to really evaluate the extent of his skill. He is afraid to make plays. He defers to teammates in puck-moving situations. He did pick up 3 assists this game, but they were all simple breakout passes that fortunately turned into assists for him. He didn't do anything special to create an advantage for his team. I don't think he can do it at this level, let alone the next.





Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

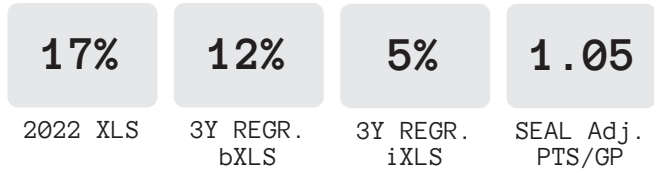


Physical

# JOSH FILMON

RW | SWIFT CURRENT BRONCOS

HEIGHT 6' 2" D.O.B. MAR. 18, 2004  
WEIGHT 159 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	67	23	22	45
WJC-18	3	0	1	1

## Scouting Report

Josh Filmon followed up a nondescript rookie season in the WHL by stealing a spot inside the Swift Current Broncos top-six and never looked back. By season's end, he'd amassed a respectable 45 points, good for third on a low-scoring Broncos side.

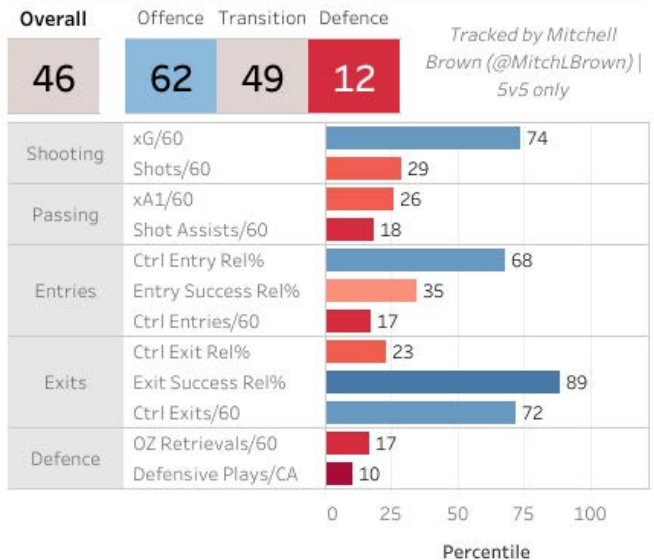
Filmon's best work comes away from the puck. Unlike most CHL players, his supporting movements are projectable and often creative. He'll sprint into a lane, draw a defender, then hit the brakes, creating a passing lane for his teammate and space for his shot. Where most players plant themselves in front of the net, he sneaks away from defenders to the far post.

Those off-puck instincts complement a projectable NHL shot, especially off the pass. Filmon doesn't dust off the puck, using the momentum of the pass to transfer his weight for the shot.

Despite the odd flashy play, Filmon tends to slip into the background. Some of that's the consequence of being a largely a support-focused, off-puck attacker on a low-scoring team that primarily creates off the rush. Still, he's rarely looking to be the play-driver, despite flashes that he could be. While he's rarely throwing away possession, he's not creating the best play either. His playmaking comes and goes, and his inconsistent transition passing directly prevents him from playing a give-and-go game - something that would allow him to use his off-puck instincts more often.

Standing at 6-foot-2 but weighing just 160 pounds, Filmon's

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 122.8



skating will likely improve more than the average prospect. Right now, "a lack of ankle flexion and flailing feet inhibit every aspect of his game, from handling to maximizing his off-puck instincts," according to Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown. Additional strength will help him maintain the deeper stance that he flashes, and it will kick his physical game up a notch.

If Filmon makes the NHL, he will likely be a fourth-liner, but there's a lot of work ahead. That's why he didn't quite make the cut for the ranking, but he could provide value for a team that's willing to invest the draft capital and development resources.



**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

As quiet of a performance I've seen from a draft-eligible player this season. Zero defensive or offensive impact. A couple of smart, but easy-to-spot passes in transition that used the middle. Too often, he misses opportunities to make plays with the puck on his stick. Game seems passive at the best of times. A lack of ankle flexion and flailing feet inhibit every aspect of his game, from handling to maximizing his off-puck instincts. Still not sure what to think.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 11th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

A solid game from Filmon. He whiffed on his best chance of the night, but set up the overtime winner with a functional, but awkward spin around a defender. More changes of direction than normal in transition, although his still failed most of his entries. His best work still comes off-puck. In the offensive end, he finds space, often in clever ways like getting behind defenders and making timed movements off the boards. In the defensive end, he supports well, and in

this game, was rewarded with a couple of steals. Tries to hit and lean on defenders but lacks the strength and skating to work through contact. It could become a strength as he adds he gets stronger. Much of his skating limitations seem to be more from an inability to maintain depth rather than poor mechanics. Might be an interesting project here.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

Still unsure of Filmon. Too often, he plays a simplistic style that actively inhibits his chances of creating offence. That was true for much of this game. Sometimes, he just needs to cut inside and try to create something. Instead, he skates straight down the boards until he runs out of space or throws the puck away. But when he tries to create, everything flows through his hands and it fails. There's a happy medium here: a give-and-go that uses Filmon's off-puck movement and shooting to offset his handling limitations while allowing him to create more dangerous offence. Even in that case, I'm not sure his game has enough elsewhere to make the NHL. I don't see a draft pick right now, but he could get there.

Photo Credit: Ed Fonger - Swift Current Broncos





**Mitchell Brown:** January 28th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

One chance for Filmon in this game, beating a defender as he fell before getting off a chance. Otherwise, an unmemorable performance. He's too simple with the puck for lengthy stretches. He doesn't throw away possession, but doesn't seek to better the outcome of his possession. Limited off-puck offence in this game beyond skating to the net in straight lines. Consistent on the forecheck and backcheck, bringing a bit of physicality and anticipation, but it likely won't be enough. I didn't see a draft pick in this viewing.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Filmon's a tricky projection. He plays a very safe, simple game for stretches before (seemingly at random) becoming more of a play-driver. He had the best off-puck sequence of the game: fading wide, drawing the defender with him to create space up the middle for his teammate, and then cutting back to the inside, slowing down, and depositing the pass. One of the better examples of linking together off-puck skating/routes and off-puck scoring movement to create space for a teammate and then get open. Cut inside, shot under a defender's stick, but he lacks the lower body engagement to get power from a compromised position like that. Clearly wants to play a physical game but he lacks the strength. Looked like a draft pick in this game, albeit late.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Filmon had a breakaway look then he jammed into the side of the net. The off-puck skating before that was crafty, skating wide before launching himself into the middle just as the pass came. Really, that's pretty much what he does right now: find space off-puck, but lacks some timing and individual skill. I didn't see anything else in this game: very

passive in transition, in the defensive end, and create any offence beyond that chance. Doubt he's an NHL prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Prince Albert Raiders vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

Filmon has some flashes. He's very physical, looking to make contact whenever possible. Shows some vision on the breakout (looking for inside lane options). He'll delay or beat pressure with a weight shift. He's somewhat crafty as a handler, but lacks pace. Shows better vision, pace, and awareness with the extra space on the PP. Some off-puck movement, not so much timing. His stride still lacks depth. Not a draft pick right now, but with continued growth this season, he could get there.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Another solid performance from Filmon, and he showed a bit of NHL skill in this one. He fired off a couple on partial/nearly in-stride shots, but his lack of ankle flexion and lower body engagement in his stride hinders his ability to generate downforce as a shooter. Identifies the odd scoring chance opportunity and connects with a pass, and he has some off-puck scoring game. Apart from the odd hit or battle win, he's pretty bland everywhere else. I don't think he's an NHL prospect, but I'm curious to see how he looks like a few months.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 16th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Filmon had a solid game but didn't show any NHL qualities. A couple of slick passes in transition through pressure, physical and active on the forecheck, and some off-puck ability to get the puck in scoring position. Mostly the tertiary player on his line, lacking individual skill, skating, and decision-making.



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# QUINN FINLEY

F | MADISON CAPITOLS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. AUG. 8, 2004  
WEIGHT 170 SHOOTS LEFT

22%

2022 XLS

17%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

3%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

1.1

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	39	12	17	29

> Committed to Univ. of Wisconsin

## Scouting Report

Omitting Quinn Finley from the 2022 Elite Prospects Draft Board could look awful in just a couple of years. After all, he's one of the most talented players in the USHL, even in the point totals don't reflect it.

First-and-foremost, Finley's a shooter. An NHL-calibre one, at that, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown explains: "[He uses] one-timers, two-touch wristers, and clean catch-and-release [shots]. Takes the puck across his body, chooses to handle only if necessary, elevates his top arm elbow, and drives through his shot. That base gives him plenty of ability to add new shooting skills. He's a rebound-generating machine."

Finley's off-puck game is largely built for a sniper: he gets open just out the slot, often between defenders, primed for a quick shot. However, to turn his shooting prowess into goals, he must start finding space inside the hash marks with timed movements.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 30th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Finley's game continues to become more nuanced. While he still used those straight-line, single-speed rushes a bit too much, he showed more advanced rush patterns. In one sequence, he pressured the middle, waited for the defender's crossover, then attacked the outside. Instead of forcing a

Similarly, Finley's largely an ineffective playmaker who gets locked along the perimeter with the puck. The give-and-go, a key skill for NHL shooters, doesn't feature regularly in his game, and he's rarely looking to set teammates up. Additionally, an upright skating stance with a dropped chest limits his speed, agility, and balance through contact.

Late in the season, Finley showed better NHL habits: he attacked the middle early, cutback instead of forcing a shot, started using the threat of his shot to set-up teammates, and even managed to offset some of his strength limitations with body positioning.

If Finley builds upon his late-season flashes, he could become a third-line shooter. It'll require lots of time and development, including the standard skating, strength, and speed trio while also developing a more nuanced approach to his shooting game.

shot, he cutback and passed for a scoring chance. It's that type of growth that Finley needed to work into top-three discussions. He's done it. Much better body positioning, too. He know gets low, drives into defenders with his hips, and spins away as they lean on him. The shot's still the driving force in his projection, but these details could should earn him a spot on our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

A different game from Finley. The shot still stands out, but he was looking to pass in this one. Most failed. But he had good ideas. He waited for the defender to pivot along the boards before passing to the trailer. He used crossovers to draw defenders to the outside, too. Timing on his passes is a bit off, and he doesn't scan before pulling the trigger, but he has some passing skill and diverse rush patterns. Still, he's mostly an outside lane player. Won battles by winning the race and making the next play quickly, but he struggles to absorb contact. The shot alone is worth a late-rounder, but the playmaking and retrieval flashes have me wondering if he could make our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Finley had a bunch of nearly identical chances: get lost in transition and arrive late for a pass. Showed a one-timer, two-touch wrister, and a clean catch-and-release. Takes the puck across his body, chooses to handle only if necessary, elevates his top arm elbow, and drives through his shot. It's projectable to at least a 6-grade shot, and that base gives him plenty of ability to add new shooting skills. He's a rebound-generating machine. Off-puck movement is built for a sniper: getting open just outside the slot and between checks, but he'll need to learn how to find space on the inside of the hash marks to keep scoring. Not a playmaker despite flashes. He's the designated shooter and he scans, so I wonder if his lack of notable passes are the result of structure. He's a straight-line attacker who gets pushed to the perimeter and overwhelmed. But his energy on the forecheck is notable, and he gets the jump on passing lanes. Lots of physical development required, but he could be something in the later rounds.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 5th, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Finley's a shooter. There are moments where his shot looks like a projectable NHL skill. Actually using his shot might prove tricky. First, his skating suffers from a lack of ankle dorsiflexion, wide recoveries, and collapsed torso. Not only does he lack quickness, he lacks stability. He can't power through checks or manage contact. He also prevents him from shifting weight, both for loading his shot laterally and for deception purposes. His off-puck movement isn't anything special, mostly weak side reads. More between the checks reads on the inside will get him more dangerous looks. One give-and-go sequence. Perhaps his shot is enough reason to draft him, but I doubt he makes our board.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** November 13th, 2021

Madison Capitols vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Pretty average performance from Finley. He's incredibly determined to get to the inside off the rush which isn't a bad habit for a player with such a strong shot. His shooting is a big plus in his game; he's always looking to get pucks on net and has a quick curl and release wrister that caught the Youngstown goalie off-guard a couple of times. His skating isn't great, he moves well enough but his feet are wide, inhibiting full extension, and he doesn't get a lot of knee bend in his glide, making him easy to knock around in corners and in battles. Defensively, he's about average, he's good enough positionally but doesn't have the highest work ethic. Someone to keep an eye on but probably more of a mid-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 8th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Finley had some moments of shooting and passing skill. Projectable shot already – drops weight over his stick quickly, narrow stance, chest up through the shot. Some curl-and-drag ability in there. Shooting will improve as his skating posture deepens. Some solid passing ideas, but struggled to connect. Mostly a straight-line, single-speed attacker in transition without a ton of variety of creativity to his game. Didn't look like a pick, but the shot seemed interesting enough.

**J.D. Burke:** September 24th, 2021

Madison Capitols vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Not an especially inspired performance from Finley, but I liked the thought process on a lot of what he was trying to pull off. He's not an especially skilled passer, but he wants to move the puck with pace. On one play, he turned an offensive zone retrieval into a spinning pass low-to-high to set up a chance, and that sort of processing power interests me. He's really trying to work those one and two-touch passes. Not a great handler. Flubbed a breakaway pass. He's a decently fast skater, but recovers wide and doesn't have much for a separating gear.

**J.D. Burke:** August 2nd, 2021

USA U18 vs. Slovakia U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

In a surprise twist, Finley was probably the American's best skater in this contest in spite of his relatively limited role as the fourth-line left-winger – not so sure about that player evaluation on the coach's part, but it is what it is, I guess. He needs to work out the hope plays. You know, the blind passes into the slot, the passes into space with the hope that a teammate might be there rather than the assurance. But there was some execution in this game to go along with the attempts. Made a great pass between bodies to set up a potential partial breakaway. Back tracked well and consistently applied himself in the defensive zone. Worked hard on the forecheck, was physical. Showed some real competitiveness in a game that would've been easy to check out on.



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# JAMES FISHER

C | BELMONT HILL SCHOOL

HEIGHT 6'2"

D.O.B. APR. 28, 2004

WEIGHT 194

SHOOTS RIGHT

N/A

2022 XLS

N/A

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

N/A

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
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USHS-Prep	27	17	11	28
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> Committed to Northeastern Univ.

## Scouting Report

James Fisher first caught the eyes of our scouting staff for his physical gifts – strength, shooting, and handling skill. In the Massachusetts Prep circuit, he overwhelms players, even if the stat-line doesn't jump out.

Rushing the puck is Fisher's game. With a series of driving crossovers and fast hands, he challenges defenders to race down the boards, colliding head on if necessary. If he gets the jump, he gets low and skates through the defender's stick on his way to the net. In open ice, he presses the inside, then tries to break through the entire team himself.

Too often, those are the only two plays Fisher tries. Not even elite skaters rely on speed alone in the NHL. And Fisher's far from an elite skater, as Elite Prospects crossover

scout Daniel Gee explains, "clumsy feet, a tendency to tilt backwards in his crossovers, and significant stride-to-stride variance in depth and form makes it nearly impossible for him to complete the outside drives he relies on."

While untranslatable plays plague Fisher's current game, that doesn't have to be the case going forward. Gee noted Fisher's improving cutback and delay game. He also shows passing ability down-low and along the boards, hidden behind infrequent scanning. And his shot's an NHL projection, thanks to sound form and crafty off-the-pass shooting. For Fisher, achieving the NHL won't just require technical improvement; it requires a stylistic change. But his tools are interesting enough to make a worthwhile investment for an NHL team.

## Game Reports

**Daniel Gee:** February 17th, 2022

Belmont Hill vs Noble and Greenough - USHS- Prep

Not very impressed with this performance; Fisher failed to flash enough in this viewing. It was essentially a nothing effort in high school terms, devoid of the typical chance generation and volume of puck touches you usually see from a USHS prospect.

Transitionally, Fisher struggled again-and-again to beat defenders wide and head on. First issue is his stride; clumsy feet, falls backwards in the crossover (walks on stairs), mechanically inconsistent. Made it near impossible for him to turn defenders, drop his shoulder, and crash as he intended

(has to almost always settle for a cutback). He failed to protect the puck on many sequences -- bad habit of holding the puck in front of his body. On one sequence in the third, Fisher took a pass in-stride, popped the puck into his hip-pocket, cut from the slot to the far boards, dropped his shoulder on a hard cut-back and started a sustained pressure play. Questionable decision to move the puck out of a dangerous area. Found Fisher to be a non-factor off-puck on a couple of sequences -- he could have clearly upped his pace to add himself as an option. His handling still seems like a clear plus tool. On a first period powerplay, Fisher executed a perfect weight shift into an inside-outside handle that led to a tripping call. He

was also pretty strong on a 4-on-4 sequence where he cut in behind a defender, popped into a wide base and missed the open net on a backhand deke.

He had very limited sustained pressure 5-on-5, most of his work on the powerplay. He sets up for one-times and occasionally works downhill. Shooting form is solid -- unlocked arms, shifts to get the puck in the middle of his stance. Whiffed on a couple of chances due to poor timing. Fisher had an interesting fake-shot manipulation that he used to work low, but other than that there wasn't a tonne here.

Not sure he is a pick at this point. Going back to high school next season and seems like a late bloomer -- may require a check-in next season. Not enough translatable habits and tools as it stands. I question his sense and skating ability.

**J.D. Burke:** February 9th, 2022

St. Sebastian's vs. Belmont Hill - USHS-Prep

Fisher was the best player on the ice every time he took the ice. It was just that simple. It was the sort of dominance one wants to see from a potential draft pick in this setting. Fisher's game is all about unrelenting pace, constantly pressing his advantage. He doesn't force plays, but even the slightest opening and he's sprinting through it like the Kool-Aid man through a brick wall. Stacks the advantages with plus-level skating habits, moving through pass receptions and shots. His skating looks well above average. Threw some massive hits in this one. Above-average skill as a handler. Looked like the sort of player who could fit into the middle of our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 17th, 2022

Belmont Hill vs. Milton Academy - USHS-Prep

Fisher didn't accomplish or even try much in this game. He grabbed a couple of scoring chances -- one off a catch-and-release wrister and the other off a one-timer. There were net-drives by trying to outrace defenders to the inside. One crazy pass where he overpowered a defender, delayed, anticipated an activating defender, then skated up the boards for a cross-slot pass on the backhand. But that's not much for a notable prospect playing at this level. He forces plays that weren't there, overskated pucks, missed opportunities to support the play, took looping routes instead of stopping. Probably could've grabbed a couple of chances if he just skated his routes. Skating didn't really pop. Crossover integration and balanced, but he didn't seem quick for this level. Lacked depth from a hip of ankle flexion and not engaging his hips. Doesn't fall into his crossovers. Didn't see anything too interesting in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Belmont Hill vs. Northfield Mount Hermon - USHS-Prep

At this level, half of what makes a prospect interesting is volume of stuff created. Fisher didn't create much. He had


a couple of intriguing shots: a well-planned curl-and-drag wrister and a two-touch shot for a goal. But his game is the same patterns over and over. He gets the puck, pushes it wide laterally and catches it on the backhand. Then, he races to the net. Sometimes, he drives other to get inside. Other times, he attacks the middle. His crossover-heavy rushes pop at this level, but he rarely emerges on the other side of defenders with the puck. No delay game or adaptability. Tries to take on the entire team himself. Hands in rhythm with his feet. Stride lacks polish and explosiveness. His upper-body follows his lower-body through cutbacks and crossovers. Actually shows some vision and playmaking down-low. Don't see a pick here.

**Daniel Gee:** December 17th, 2021

Belmont Hill vs St. Andrews College - USHS-Prep

Fisher had a monster game, but the quality of competition, apparent habits, and a lot of different elements of hockey sense makes me question his potential translatability.

He takes passes extremely well (one in particular was way behind him; was able to coral it in-stride). He's a constant off-puck scanner, which helps him get to dangerous areas and support his puck carrying teammates. Fisher also showed some ability to blend handling and explosiveness in this viewing. He scored a second period goal off a right-wing drive, born out of a hope-pass and a net crash rebound chance. Later in the third Fisher carried the puck in on a far board entry, popped the puck around a defender, and had a dangerous backhand shot saved. In the same period he accelerated through one-on-one, outwaited the defender and goaltender and scored an easy goal off the individual effort. His shot has a tonne of weight-transfer; it helped him late in the third to score his hattrick goal. He won a retrieval on the far-boards, wrapped the puck around, beat a defender with an inside-outside move and rifled a low shot off the left-hand circle.

He's less effective in sustained pressure where he throws an inordinate amount of bad passes, devoid of pre-scanning. This hurts his ability to string plays together. For instance, he will beat a defender one-on-one on the perimeter and then just throw the puck into the crease. On a first period shift he took a pass, spinning and one-touching it to no one in the slot. Part of this is teammates not being in dangerous spots, but Fisher needs to play off of those deficiencies better. He uses the mohawk well, often to move laterally out of pressure while on-puck. He appears to have independent control of his upper and lower-body while handling the puck, and while his skating was impactful at this level, he is super raw in terms of forward stride mechanics -- ankle flex being an issue. By virtue of this he defaults into the crossover. Seems like a player with solid tools but limited sense. Maybe a late pick, but going back to high school next season may hurt that. 



# NOLAN FLAMAND

F | KELOWNA ROCKETTS

HEIGHT 5'9" D.O.B. JAN. 12, 2004  
WEIGHT 159 SHOOTS LEFT

7%	11%	7%	1.03
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	60	10	30	40

## Scouting Report

While the points came inconsistently for Nolan Flamand, his details-focused game ensured his impact remained constant.

There's no doubting Flamand's motor. He's invested in every second of every shift, demonstrated by his proactive positioning away from the puck and overwhelming pressure in pursuit.

The combination of intelligence and motor drives much of Flamand's offence value: he's a retrieval creator. Always scanning to map out the ice, the second he forces the turnover, he already knows the next play to further the offence.

In open-ice, Flamand plays a pro-style give-and-go game that emphasizes short touches and off-puck intelligence. He makes quick-possession plays - one- and two-touch passes - to overcome handling and skating limitations.

The details that define Flamand's game could make him an effective professional player, but to reach the NHL, he must develop an extra layer of skill while refining his tools.

## Game Reports

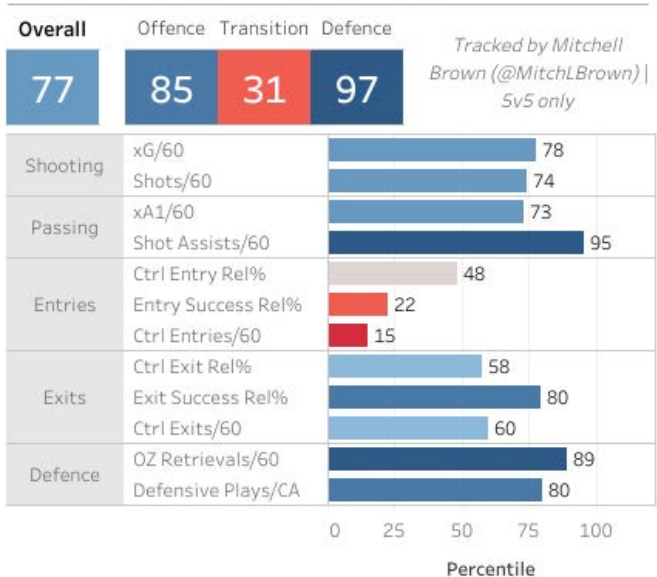
**Daniel Gee:** April 6th, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Flamand is more interesting than I thought -- especially after these mid-week games. While the Cougars failed to match up, Flamand's play was a major reason for it.

His defensive accume continued to be rather eye-opening. Great harassment play on the penalty kill, pre-scan recoveries off of fast passing plays, and incredible backchecking

Games Tracked: 6 | Minutes Tracked: 68.7



efforts highlighted this viewing. He created scramble passes, occupied lanes, and was generally annoying. On one shift he angled off a puck carrier in the neutral zone, creating a turnover and counter attack. Later he established body positioning at his net, corralled a rebound and safely exited the puck. Matched against Heidt and Ziemmer the whole game. Motor was immense, even with forward-stride mechanical issues.

Flamand pushed more offence than previous viewings.

He was working as a one-time threat in sustained pressure -- showed more power than I thought he possessed; he really gets his whole body through his rotation but lacks precision and proper placement through his attempts. He managed to hit a post in the third on one sequence. Flamand even pushed some solid transitional habits in this game. In the first he jumped on a loose neutral zone puck, entered off the left-wing and pulled off a quick cross-ice pass to Novak for an easy goal. He doesn't really change the angles of his attacks, mainly straight-line actions. A play in the third characterised his game; 2-on-2 rush, Flamand drove to the net dragging the defenders deeper. On the same shift he stripped the puck off a slow moving defender in the slot, but was unable to string another play off the change in possession. Very intense in these sequences. Not sure if much of this is translatable but in my opinion he has shown some serious growth. He might be hyper-specialised defensively, but he occupies that role on Kelowna well. Honestly wouldn't be surprised if he was selected or passed over. Depends on if teams hedge his seasonal growth.

**Daniel Gee:** April 5th, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

By far, the strongest game I have seen Flamand play. He has mechanical limitations between his stride and shot but he's maximising what he can do out there.

Have to start off with his defensive game -- such an impressive effort, to the point where I had to change the hockey sense grade I put on him earlier. Habits wise he's an intense pressure pusher, who constantly pre-scans the play, and activates to swarm vulnerable puck carriers. Flamand had some wild backchecking shifts in this viewing -- one leading to a hard hit and a turnover creation. Later in the second on the penalty kill, he stripped Heidt of a puck on the left-point, shooting off a breakaway, beaming Young's shoulder. He's such an annoying forechecker, one who launches up and into defenders. Just constant harassment.

Transitionally Flamand showed more than I've seen in the past. Multiple middle lane neutral zone to offensive zone carries, knifing through pressure. He absolutely destroyed a defender with an inside-outside body manipulation handle on another exit (triangle exploitation). Even made a sharp slot-cut off another carry and was tripped as he tried to break One touches, saucer passes off the backhand, he was fun. Stride does limit what he can accomplish (so much of his opportunity comes off of changes of possession). Hips are locked, lacks depth, wide recovers, lots of mechanical inefficiencies. Doesn't travel at all off of push offs.

Patterns into really awkward puck touches in sustained

pressure -- puck can be grenade-like on his receptions. Regardless he created a lot in the Cougars' zone. On one shift, off an amazing forechecking play, Flamand created a turnover in the far-corner and slipped the puck into the slot to create a high-danger chance. Ater in the period he made a recovery in the near-corner and popped a puck into the slot for another chance. On the powerplay he worked off the right-hand circle -- really struggled to create; his no-look attempts to the bumper were predictable and his shot attempts were all blocked.

May be too limited to make it, but his defensive game is super polished. Huge part of Kelowna's success -- could be a D-prospect on our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Didn't see any notable ability from Flamand in this game beyond the motor. His effort didn't even result in much impact -- he chased the play and overextended. Found a bit of space in the offensive end to shoot off the pass. Lacks the individual skill to create better opportunities for himself. Defers in transition. When he can't, he offloads the puck. Didn't see NHL upside.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 22nd, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

Didn't see anything from Flamand in this game. He didn't make bad plays, but he barely got the puck. He's not a play creator. Got stuck to the outside in transition. Didn't see any individual skill or passing. Some defence through his motor on the backcheck. Didn't look like a pick in this game.

**Daniel Gee:** February 18th, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

I don't think there is much here offensively, but Flamand's defensive impact was strong once again against PG. A constant supporter and battler below the goal line, Flamand snapped to secondary threats under sustained pressure, supported breakouts, and made stops all game. His best sequences were on the PK. On one kill. He scanned and proactively got into a shooting lane with a sliding block. On another he broke a puck out of his own zone, handed it into the boards in the Cougars' zone, and then passed it back to his defenders to kill a good 40 seconds off the clock. Made one gaff that resulted in a goal; Flamand let Heidt escape off the near boards into the slot with no coverage leading to a goal against.

Still concerned about his shot and lack of finishing. While he is a great support player in the offensive zone, facilitating cycle and pressure, he just straight up botches chances. On





a 4-on-4, he activated into the slot, took a perfect pass and let go a very weak shot that was pushed aside. On-puck he is much too safe -- only works the puck north-to-south (or low-to-high). His Stride is a big issue -- knee bend comes and goes, upper body is wild, he barely extends his legs, and his recoveries are wide -- looks like he is skating in quicksand. Not sure there is enough here to be an NHLer. At most he projects as a defensive specialist, but the skating will hurt that at higher levels.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 16th, 2022

Prince George Cougars vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Flamand was the best player in this messy game. His presence on the forecheck and backcheck was significant. Tons of pressure, but never mindless. He scans, anticipates, and angles plays to the perimeter. Always gives himself a chance on plays. The skating lacks refinement, but he has some tricks in open-ice and along the boards to escape. Delayed for the trailer in one sequence, cut inside for a chance in a similar situation later in the game. Quick release from his hand positioning, but tends to shoot from compromised positions (and doesn't get much on many of these shots). Some scoring instincts, but mostly standard off-puck skating and far-post positioning stuff. Could be a late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 5th, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Flamand was the most effective of the draft-eligible talent in this game. He mostly makes simple, but effective reads. He applies pressure, and contests pucks at the right moments. He doesn't chase or overreach. His effort led to a scoring chance back the other way. With the puck, he uses give-and-gos and waits the extra second to find a passing option instead of forcing a shot. Didn't see any separating ability or the extra layer of skill needed to play this game at the next level, but he's skilled enough to keep watching.

**Daniel Gee:** November 13th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

One of Kelowna's best players by a large measure. Flamand put together an epic defensive performance while generating multiple high-danger chances in the Cougars' end.

Flamand's high motor, penchant to push pressure, proactiveness in lanes, and great stick create a really annoying penalty killer. Lets walk through his best two-way plays in this game. In the first Flamand was able to strip a puck on the far boards, starting a penalty kill counter-attack, driving wide, and drawing an equalizing penalty as he entered in on the offensive zone. Later Flamand pushed a tonne of high

pressure on the left-point in a Cougars sustained sequence, causing yet another turnover; Flamand drove up the right-wing and a low placed pass as he crashed on net for a high-danger chance. He showed some small-area escapability while defending a Cougars breakout, intercepting and stripping a puck carrier, handling out of pressure and clearing to kill 20 more seconds on another kill. His habits are pretty immense -- gets his stick in releases , high battle level on the boards. While a lot of transitional attacking plays came off of counter attacks, he has layering ability -- one one shift he executed a cross-ice pass on the far boards to send a man in on the near boards. Flamand's off-puck work was pretty impressive; he took a slip pass in the third, handled through static defenders, and fired a puck in the crease.

Flamand showed some legit offensive zone habits in this viewing as well. He's a one-touch facilitator who can work give-and-go attacks, with inside focused habits. He is particularly dangerous on the power play. In the first he executed some body manipulations on the far boards, scanned and identified an open lane in the slot, worked into the empty space and fired a low shot in traffic - meant to create a rebound. Flamand regularly gets in on retrievals first, executing escapes into low-to-high passing plays. In the second he dragged a puck out of a pile on the near boards, found a teammate in the slot and hit him with a pass for a high danger chance. Off-puck positioning is a strength too; planted in the slot in weak coverage and released a two-touch shot that hit Brennan in the crest.

Looked like a C-grade or better prospect in this game. Projectability wise, there are some concerns about his tools. He lacks a two-step separation gear and the shot won't do much against goaltenders at any level. Sense is pretty high though. I think he's a pick based on the two-way play alone.

**Daniel Gee:** November 12th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

I came away interested more than anything after seeing Flamand live for the first time. For starters, he looks rail thin. This permeates throughout his shifts, hindering but not deterring a rather contact heavy play style. In sustained

offensive zone sequences, it's kind of shocking how involved Flamand is on the perimeter, at least attempting to facilitate cycle plays. He was absolutely rocked a few times, and is fairly easy to staple along the boards, but his high pace allowed for some breathing room as he attacked aggressively on the forecheck and other retrieval plays. In the first, he supported a teammate and took a pass on the right-hand circle. From there, Flamand executed a wonderful deke to the inside, cut around the Cougars net, and sent a hook pass against the grain back into the slot. It was a nice individual skill play and exploitation of some passive defending. As expected, with space on powerplay sequences, he can execute more of his skill set. In the first, he did a solid job protecting the puck by pivoting his body between a defender and his stick (to the best of his ability), eventually one touching a pass into the high slot, leading to a Tyson Feist goal. There wasn't much transitional value shown in this game -- part of this is due to some glaring deficiencies in his forward stride; wide recoveries, limited extensions, short stride length, and a lack of strength on his side-to-side push offs create some issues in straight-line attacks. Motor, edge-work, and ability to explode out of stopped positions is all there, however. He has some nice scanning habits and executed a drop off pass on an entry, but I need to see more.

Flamand's two-way element is probably the most favourable part of his game. He centred one of Kelowna's units and he was pretty impactful in his minutes. Despite his size, he constantly was below his goal line, initiated and involved helping his defenders win pucks back out of the Cougars heavy forecheck. Flamand had a highlight reel block in the second after he swung hard into a shooting lane on the right-hand circle, following that up with a dash up to the point to pressure the shooter. Even better, in the third, Flamand was able to get his stick in the release of a high-slot shot, chasing and pressuring with a tonne of speed -- he legitimately was forcing the Cougars into rushed plays. Two-way habits are honestly very impressive. Flamand is kind of a hard projection -- he's a pick (a late one) if you believe there will be some further physical development.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

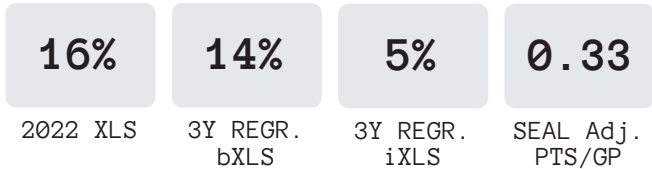


Physical

# MADDOX FLEMING

RW | SIOUX FALLS STAMPEDE

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. FEB. 13, 2004  
WEIGHT 179 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	18	1	4	5
USHL	52	11	25	36

> Committed to Univ. of Notre Dame

## Scouting Report

A couple of years ago, Maddox Fleming was among the 2022 NHL Draft's most promising prospects. He was a scorer with Shattuck St. Mary's 18U team at just 15-years-old, while likely first-rounder Isaac Howard played on the 16U team in the same program. But as often happens, this ahead-of-the-curve prospect soon fell behind it.

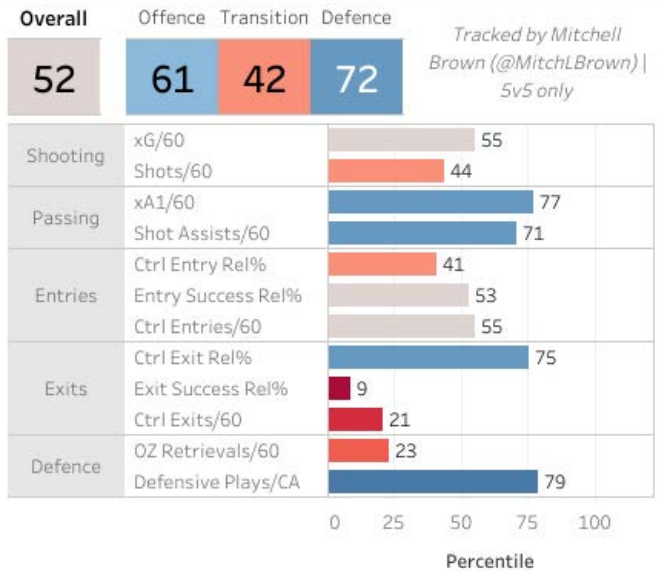
Still, Fleming brings an intriguing package of tools and puck skills that make him a worthy project pick. The best of the lot is his puckhandling, characterized by a top hand that floats across his body to maximize his reach, a quiet out-the-back technique, and adaptability. His favourite move is projectable – bait the defender to pivot, then attack the inside.

Along the boards, Fleming combines the handling skill with perfectly timed cutbacks, body positioning, and the desire to get inside immediately. Sometimes, he drags the defender to the middle with him. Others, he makes a quick pass to end the cycle and set up a chance.

While Fleming's defensive zone coverage remains a work-in-progress, he's a disruptive backchecker who works to get ahead of the play if he's not in direct pursuit.

The limitations in Fleming's game appear in the spaces between deking, board play, and backchecking. Cutbacks aside, his skating stands out for its upright posture and strong reliance on the inside edges. When he's looking to beat defenders, he does so in a low-speed glide. When he's defending, his legs are straight, limiting his reaction time. Stationary off-puck positioning and a lack of supporting reads limit both the quality and quantity of his puck touches across the ice. Fleming leans playmaking over shooting, but

Games Tracked: 11 | Minutes Tracked: 109.1



his shot requires refinement to remain a threat at the next level. But to make the NHL, his playmaking must improve.

"He's late to read passing lanes (even with the puck), and he tends to pass to where his teammates are, not to where they're going," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in one of his game reports. "There are moments of advanced playmaking ideas, but he stares a hole through his target before passing – too obvious."

There are flashes of legitimate deception from Fleming, including cross-slot passes with a fake shot set up. While mechanical refinement is important, to make the NHL, Fleming will have to build upon those flashes. At this stage, Fleming has some middle-six-forward-quality skills but lacks the links between them to make the NHL.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** April 16th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

A multi-point night for Fleming including a couple of tallies, one of which just deflected in off of him. He's got a high motor, active on the forecheck, finishing his hits. He also showed some nice d-zone play, tracking nicely and supporting his defensemen down low in battles. Outside of this, there wasn't a whole lot from Fleming. There's not much creativity off the rush, a little bit of delay game but his passes were usually off the mark. When the Stampede were set up in the o-zone, Fleming wasn't especially effective, firing off a couple bad angle shots, not doing much to get inside. His second goal was nice, showing some puck protection before firing an off-foot shot. The skating is probably a little below average, there's a sharp hinge at the hips and a bit of heel kicking. Not really sure what to make of him.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Two goals for Fleming, an assist, and a phantom assist. The only interesting play was a wrister after cutting across the slot in 4-on-4. Shot isn't noteworthy, nor is his ability to get

open and use it. He had points, but I didn't notice him much more. Very simple with the puck and no notable skills or tools.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Fleming's skills stood out in this game. He times his cuts back perfectly. He beats defenders with hands, but rather through the triangle, preferring to use a hesitation to bait the defender's stick. He scans for options on the inside. He changes lanes with crossovers. He's not scoring, and he's creating a notable amount of offence. Perhaps some of that is usage and situation. But he's also inconsistent off-puck. Sometimes, he's moving and finding space. Other times, his feet are planted. He's late to read passing lanes (even with the puck), and he tends to pass to where his teammates are, not to where they're going. Many of his passes are too slow. The execution's bad, and I don't know if there's enough motor to offset it.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Directly involved in two goals in this game, mostly by



making plays off the boards to the inside. Puckhandling remains his best skill, but the skating will prevent his skating from having the same effect in open-ice. However, along the boards, he should find success. Establishes body positioning, then cuts inside while looking for the pass. Sometimes, he pulls the puck through or around a defender inside that slot cut. Those his best sequences. Involved on the backcheck, getting above the play then forcing dump ins around the blue line. Little off-puck offence shown; he plants his feet and waits. Looked like a late-rounder, maybe.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Des Moines Buccaneers vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Nothing from Fleming in this game, relegated to fourth-line duty after the first period. He backchecks, I guess. But his defensive zone coverage is lacking. Doesn't scan, doesn't engage. Didn't create any offence. Didn't look like a pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Sioux Falls Stampede vs. Lincoln Stars - USHL

The usual from Fleming. His hand speed and creativity looks like potential NHL abilities, but his skating, inconsistent deception, and poor play selection will keep him from making it. There are moments where shows more skating skill, like a cut to the inside or a cutback, but needs a slow-speed glide to make his best happen. Turnover-prone on breakouts, but he brings some energy on the backcheck. Doesn't translate to the offensive end. There are moments of advanced playmaking ideas, but he stares a hole through his target before passing - too obvious. Better timing on his passes will help, too. Not manipulative, although he flashes the potential to become one. I don't see a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 23rd, 2022

Fargo Force vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Alright, Fleming does have some deception. He grabbed a pair of assists with similar plays: spot the teammate at the net, fake the shot, turn the shot into a pass for a tap-in. Neither were on 5-on-5, but it's clear that Fleming has ability. The rest of his game didn't look like much. He's late defensively and in support. Touches are limited as a result. Tricky player to get a read on.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 20th, 2022

Fargo Force vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

A quiet game from Fleming. Connected with a couple of cross-ice passes where most push the puck up the boards. That was it. He's clearly talented, but he lacks the layers to make the most of his hand speed and coordination. Doesn't use deception in any form, whether that's with his eyes, puck positioning, or movement. That prevents him from manipulating opponents.

Very limited off-puck skills; he's either stretching the ice or chasing the play. He's never shrinking distance, building speed under the puck, etc. I don't think he'll make our board, but I could see an argument for it.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022


Lincoln Stars vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

I searched long and hard for Fleming in this game, rewatching his shifts after watching the full game. I have nothing of interest to say. He has some interesting moments when handling the puck, but never in-motion. No ideas. Only set up one shot. Limited puck touches because he's never positioned to get it back. Constantly behind the play offensively. To his credit, he's a dedicated backcheck, although not necessarily a disciplined one. Don't see a pick here.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Fleming was one of the best players in this game. His handling really stood out. Top hand free, quiet handling motion, and some real adaptability. He beat defenders by planning and problem-solving. In one sequence, he drove wide, brought the defender with him, then deked through him and gained the inside -- little risk because he already beat the feet.

In another, he toe-dragged on the reception, then froze the next defender with a quick handle before setting up a teammate lurking on the other side of the slot. He tried to take pucks from the outside to the middle with his handling skill, too. Found space off-puck to fire off a couple of transition chances, but nothing about his shot was particularly interesting. A bit inside edge depending on the handling, but the creativity's there. Looked like a draft pick in this game, if not for anything other than hands and passing skill. 



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# JAKE FURLONG

D | HALIFAX MOOSEHEADS

HEIGHT 6'1"

D.O.B. MAR 4, 2004

WEIGHT 190

SHOOTS LEFT

19%

2022 XLS

15%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

2%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.67

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	67	4	38	42

## Scouting Report

All of the basic components that an NHL team looks for in a defenceman are there with Jake Furlong. The mobility and handling skills to break out pucks, and the physical ability to play as an effective defender at the next level. He's active, willing to join plays, and empties the tank on most shifts.

The defenceman has a relatively solid foundation of technical ability and habits that should lead, in time, to a professional role on a blue line.

"Furlong might be a pick," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in a February 15th game report. "He should receive a lot of 5 grades on our board, but those good enough abilities combined with his poise, defensive

engagement, and his willingness to try plays on breakouts is probably enough to land him somewhere in the latter part of our board."

The issue with Furlong's game is one of upside. While he's an all-around effective defensive and offensive player, there is a lack of creativity and anticipation in his game. He's a read-and-react player who often limits himself to making the simpler play in most sequences. He lacks a special quality that would make him stand out in comparison to other defensive prospects in an NHL system.

Because of this, it's harder to see what he could leverage to beat the competition and earn a role on an NHL roster.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Baie-Comeau Drakkar vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Furlong's mostly reacting to the game. Even with the puck, he takes the first option. It's problematic on retrievals where he doesn't scan until after touching the puck, then reversing play or throws the puck away. His turnovers could be halved just by better habits on retrievals. When he's given a bit of space, he makes short-range plays then joins the rush. Sometimes, he throws pucks to teammates with more pressure than himself. From the point, he occasionally shows some creativity in reactionary situations. But he's not creating better opportunities for himself or teammates. Defence looks like a potential strength because of the tools, but his

reactionary and late for the most part. Gets the odd stop in the neutral zone, but any sort of speed causes him to back up and concede the zone. He's getting pick, but I don't see him as a candidate for our board.

**David St-Louis:** March 18th, 2022

Blainville Armada vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Furlong is a little bland of a player. You can pick him and bet on the average tools, but I doubt he ever becomes an impactful NHLer. I would try to mould other defencemen in the draft before I would select him. He's a bit clunky and while he participates in the play, the processing doesn't grade all that high.

**David St-Louis:** February 15th, 2022

Moncton Wildcats vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Furlong might be a pick. He should receive a lot of 5 grades on our board, but those good enough abilities combined with his poise, defensive engagement, and his willingness to try plays on breakouts is probably enough to land him somewhere in the latter part of our board. His skating would improve if he lowered his stance a little bit and his offensive game would improve if he was less focused on shooting. Maybe it's a coaching thing. He can be physical and has the size to pin attackers to the board. He's relatively agile.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2021

Moncton Wildcats vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Furlong is not that all exciting. His game already feels capped at this level. He tries and he has some skill (below-average to average), but there is nothing creative or that effective about him, besides his engagement and effort level. He misses the best play, is too focused on shooting, rarely if ever beats the forecheck. Hockey sense seems fairly limited and the skill doesn't make up for it.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 9th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Furlong had a couple of moments, faking shots before passing and killing rushes in single-variable situations. Introduce more complexity to the read, and Furlong's game falls apart. He misses options, concedes ground too easily, and gets pressure into poor decisions with the puck. Physical, and when he has space, he uses the middle and tries

to create an opportunity up the ice. Didn't see anything to suggest a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 21st, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Furlong looks like a projectable shooter, handler, and skater. He mostly used those skills to activate. Best read was joining the rush, slowing down to become the trailer, then changing his route twice to maximize his odds of getting a pass. Shot immediately for a chance. Scored by activating from the strong-side boards to the far post, an interesting route. Nearly created a chance with a look off pass into the slot. Strong night defending the rush, too. Established his gap early, angled, and forced dump-ins. Ended up chasing and reacting late in defensive zone coverage. Breakouts were mostly poor decisions or failed plays. Enough here to keep watching.

**David St-Louis:** March 14th, 2021

Halifax Mooseheads vs. Charlottetown Islanders - QMJHL

A lot to work on for Furlong. Lack of scanning hurt him all game. He was absorbed by the puck, watching it for long seconds, which didn't allow him to find outlets fast enough after getting the puck or to register pressure. He has some creativity to move the puck around closed lanes, but less awareness, so he can only do that when his options are in front of him. And his decision-making or play selection was mostly suboptimal. Lack of weight on a few of his passes, too. Reactive defensively, misses assignments or a step late to cut lanes and ineffective to box out threats around the net.



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Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# MARC-ANDRÉ GAUDET

D | ACADIE-BATHURST TITAN

HEIGHT 6'3"

D.O.B. OCT. 24, 2003

WEIGHT 181

SHOOTS LEFT

8%	6%	3%	0.57
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	68	13	25	38

## Scouting Report

There's a definite case to be made for Marc-André Gaudet as a late-round pick, even if we couldn't find a spot for the Acadie-Bathurst Titan defenceman on our board.

There's no glaring holes or a fatal flaw in his game standing between him and a professional career somewhere in the hockey world, and his all-around offensive and defensive ability give him some NHL potential. Maybe that skills profile could even allow him to build his game slowly each year until he develops into a bottom-pairing defenceman at the NHL level.

When we make our draft board, though, we look for something special in a player that makes them stand out from the

pack. Gaudet's game doesn't really bring any such element to the table. There isn't a clear separating skill around which he can build an NHL career. Not that we could find, anyway.

The one element of Gaudet's game that earned an above-average mark was his shot. Specifically, his ability to activate down from the blue line, take a pass in a stick-side weight shift and spring it on net directly on the reception.

There's always going to be a market for a 6-foot-3 defenceman with a decent shot. Perhaps there's an NHL team out there up to the task of building a professional game with what Woodworth brings to the table.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

Sherbrooke Pheonix vs Acadie-Bathurst Titan - QMJHL

Gaudet has some interesting elements in his game, but he's a bit too vanilla to be on our board, meaning that he's average at a bunch of things: rush defence, breakout passing, o-zone quarterbacking. I like his shot; he can get it off the pass quite easily and powerfully. The skating seems a bit limiting overall.

**David St-Louis:** February 13th, 2022

Acadie Bathurst Titans vs Charlottetown Islanders - QMJHL

Gaudet's skating is limiting his game. His stance is high.

He can't shift his weight to either leg or flex in an explosive position; he moves in one block. He has above-average range (6'3") but that range doesn't serve him as he has no four-way mobility; he can't explode laterally. If he extends his stick, he loses balance sometimes. He cares about defence and his rush defence was decent in his game despite the mobility issue, but I don't see an NHLer here. His hockey sense or handling skills are not good enough to make up for the mobility.

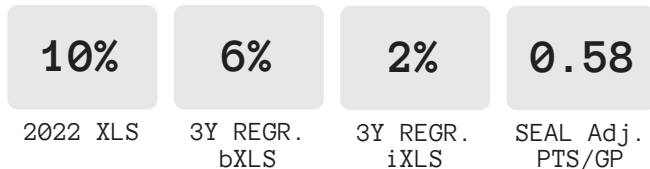




# RUSLAN GAZIZOV

F | LONDON KNIGHTS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JAN. 21, 2004  
WEIGHT 187 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	54	10	18	28

## Scouting Report

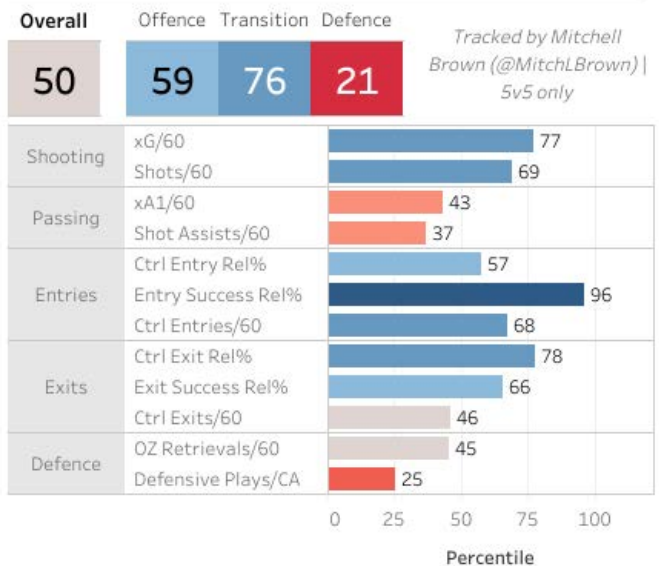
As a top CHL import pick to the London Knights, Ruslan Gazizov entered the season with an understandably large amount of hype. Early on, he proved that was warranted. But after 13 points in his first 12 OHL games, he scored just 16 over the remaining 44, seeing his minutes wane in the process.

Gazizov has a number of intriguing qualities from an NHL perspective. Where most players sprint, he delays or cuts inside to create a better look. Where they deke, he uses a give-and-go. He turns tricky pass receptions into shots without much issue. And there are moments where he deceives the defender between him and the intended target of his pass to open the lane.

Skating presents Gazizov's biggest limitation, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown details: "Gazizov's skating is wildly inconsistent: feet flying, depth changing between strides, and a consistent lack of balance as he leans too far forward. Keeps both hands on his stick while striding off-puck." As he gets stronger, his skating will improve. But to make the NHL, he must stop entering a glide every time he handles the puck and develop his outside edges.

Other concerns include infrequent scanning and poor off-puck movement that combine to limit Gazizov's touches

Games Tracked: 10 | Minutes Tracked: 115.8



and waste the few that he gets. Gazizov's skilled enough to overcome this inefficient game in the OHL, but few players pull that off in the NHL, especially if they don't have a standout off-puck game.

It'll require a lot of work, but Gazizov has enough intriguing qualities from his delay game and flashes of handling skill to justify a mid-to-late round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 10th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

Gazizov had some fun moments, whether that was spinning away from a defender to the inside or delaying to find the activating defenceman. He's mostly a secondary player on whichever line he plays. He lets his teammates dig out the puck and find him. Reactionary off-puck movement limits his touches. Given his mechanical limitations, he needs to add deception, off-puck movement and timing, and a puck protection game. Right now, I don't see any of those things. Perhaps he gets there. But I haven't seen enough that suggests a draft pick beyond the delay game.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2022

London Knights vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

The patience returned. Gazizov hit a couple of passes after delaying inside the blue line. Scored with a wrister. Sure, he overhandled the puck, but he brought the puck into his shooting pocket and beat the goaltender cleanly. The skating's wild – feet flying everywhere, limited control on his outside edges, wide recoveries. He's limited mechanically overall, but the skating is linked to his handling form. More consistent depth will tighten his handle, as will more focus on freeing his top hand when handling. I don't see enough to justify a pick, but London Knight + flashes of skill usually results in a pick. He'll score next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

Not much from Gazizov in this game. He lacked the puck patience that made him interesting in previous viewings. Just

a sloppy skater without any notable offensive tools. He doesn't scan enough; he misses plays and throws away possession as a result. Determined without the puck, but lacks details. He overskates space, overshoots his check, and fails to eliminate threats. I didn't see anything that suggests a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

If the skating was a bit better, Gazizov might be worth a late-rounder pick. Or, at the very least, he scanned regularly. Right now, he's an inconsistent skater who has some difficulties using his outside edges with a knack for throwing possession away on simple plays. Some of his ideas are projectable: give-and-gos, delays to wait for options, and slowing down off-puck to become a trailing option. He hit a post doing the latter. But the tools might be too limited to justify a pick right now.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 11th, 2022

London Knights vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

Saw some craftiness and deception out of Gazizov in this one, but the plays were pretty few and far between. He had good awareness of where his teammates were on the ice, and liked to deke to create space for himself. Good deception on the Knights' first goal with a backhand pass. I just didn't think he got the puck nearly enough in this game, and when he didn't have the puck, he wasn't all that effective or even noticeable. His off-puck offence needs work. There are hints of what he could potentially become, but there's not enough consistency yet.

**"It'll require a lot of work, but Gazizov has enough intriguing qualities from his delay game and flashes of handling skill to justify a mid-to-late round pick."**

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

Gazizov's skating is wildly inconsistent: feet flying, depth changing between strides, and a consistent lack of balance as he leans too far forward. Keeps both hands on his stick while striding off-puck. Tighten up the skating, and I think his game probably looks a lot better. He's very inefficient, as he moves the puck too early when passing, possibly as a response to his skating inconsistencies. Appreciate the give-and-gos and passing in transition, but sometimes he just needs to take control. When he's looking to carry, he enters a wide glide and tries to beat everyone without moving his feet. It doesn't work here and it won't work at the next level. Some off-puck ability by getting open in the right areas, but he tends to default to the net front too early. Has some NHL ability, but I need to see more.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

Gazizov has some good ideas: cutting inside and passing against the grain, delaying and looking for the trailer, and some deceptiveness. But his skating's wildly inconsistent. The skating skills that he has erased by his inability to handle the puck while moving his feet. While he plans out plays, the tools prevent him from executing. He skates into pressure without the tools to problem-solve. Set up a goal with a pass

to the inside after angling to the boards to become short support ahead of the play, but that was about it. Not a draft pick based on this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 3rd, 2021

Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

Scored twice in this game, but neither were particularly interesting. First, a very early-stage curl-and-drag wrister, generating the power by flipping his hips instead of distance between his feet and hand positioning. That hand is usually locked to side at all times, which limits his shot and will limit the handling at the next level. Finds space off-puck, both inside and outside the slot. Picks the right space at the right time. With the puck, he's more a reactionary player who lacks the tools execute. Not a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

It's still early in Gazizov's OHL career, so it's not too concerning that he didn't do much in this game. He also didn't play that much. There were definitely some moments of NHL skill, particularly in transition. He combined a jab with a pass to the inside for a clean entry. He set-up a scoring chance by slowing down, although most players would make that read. Flashed some individual skill on occasion, and didn't force many plays. Let's see what happens in the second-half.

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Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

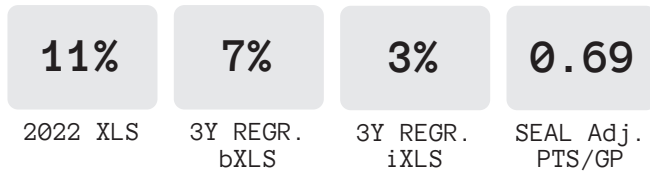


Physical

# PATRICK GEARY

D | WATERLOO BLACK HAWKS

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. FEB. 18, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	55	4	13	17

## Scouting Report

At the start of the season, Patrick Geary played a depth role for Waterloo. By the end, he was playing top-pairing minutes while being arguably his team's most effective defender.

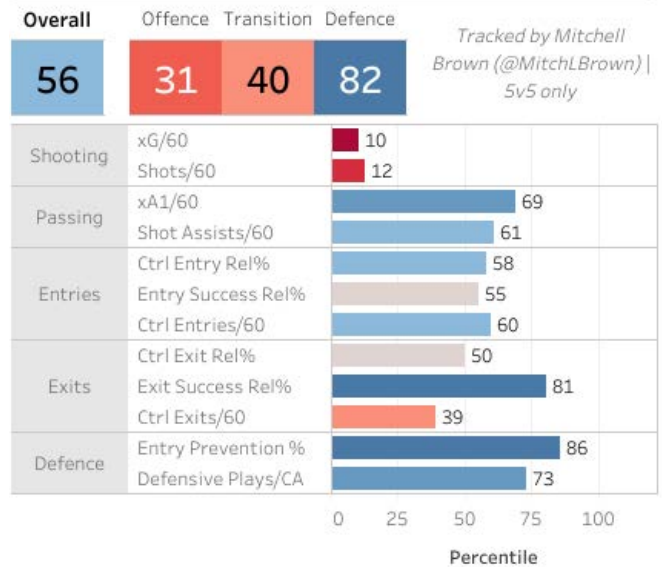
The core of Geary's projection is defence. All season, he demonstrated instincts. He'd kill plays at the perfect moments, identify switches of coverage in advance, and proactively eliminate off-puck threats. But he wasn't content. Instead, he significantly improved his defensive skating.

As Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown details, "Before, he'd plant his feet and wait for attackers to come to him. Now, he's mirroring footwork, angling, and gets stops on the pivot. C-cuts lack power, but he generates enough momentum to believe he'll have success against pros."

With the puck, Geary's game improved, too. It's most visible in the offensive end, where he takes passes in motion to beat defenders into space, then activates. For the most part, that activation serves to simply extend the cycle. But there are flashes, as Brown wrote in an April game report: "[He] connected with a look-off pass into the upper slot. Later that same shift, he activated, cut back, felt the defender on his shoulder, then cut back the other way. Instead of wrapping the puck around, he skated into a passing lane to pass on the heels of a defender for a point-blank chance."

Those skills don't consistently appear in Geary's breakouts. He opts for just as many dump-outs as passes, even going off-the-glass with accessible teammates. A common theme

Games Tracked: 10 | Minutes Tracked: 130.8



is missing inside-lane passing options and opportunities to cut back and reset. His rigid handling style, with the puck in front of his body as he keeps his weight centred, doesn't help him evade defenders, nor does his inconsistent lower-body depth.

In its current state, Geary's game might be a touch too bland to make the NHL. But given his substantial improvement this season, don't expect his game to stagnate. The contrast between his game at the start and end of the season is stark. If he stays on this path, he could become a defence-first depth piece.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Omaha Lancers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

If Geary's puck skills were a half-grade better, he could make our board. He's a projectable rush defender who brings proactive in-zone coverage and play-killing on the cycle. Still some work to do on the skating and neutral zone gap control. Offensive development has been sharp. Now, he activates, demonstrates advanced passing ideas, deceives, and pinches to extend offensive zone time. The hands are rigid, handling the puck with his weight centred and in sync with his stride. I can see a late-round argument.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Geary's been outplaying Rinzel lately. And this time, it wasn't because Rinzel was doing too little. Geary activated off the blue line, slipped away from forecheckers on retrievals, and joined the rush. Connected with a look-off pass into the upper slot, finally using his in-motion pass receptions to great effect. Later that same shift, he activated, cutback, felt the defender on his shoulder, then cutback the other way. Instead of wrapping the puck around, he skated into a passing lane to pass on the heels of a defender for a point-blank chance. Applying this skills and ideas to transition will be key for Geary's development. But he's looking more and more like a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Geary has a couple of standout defensive plays per game. He mirrors footwork, angles attacks, and kills them along the boards. Closes space on the cycle fast, but never seems to over-commit. Off-puck, he scans frequently with his knees bent, ready to dash in any direction to pressure the puck. The puck skills project as below-average. The ideas probably around average. He looks inside – sometimes. He identifies teammates on the weak side – sometimes. But he's not manipulating or creating advantages. Geary clearly has pro-level attributes. To make the NHL, he needs further skating, shooting, handling, and decision-making growth (beyond the standard growth). It's a lot. He's worth a late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Another game where Geary was Waterloo's best draft-eligible defenceman. Joined the rush a bunch, creating two scoring chances. Doesn't make the best play, but he makes a positive one and uses his teammates. Pinched at the right moments to extend offensive zone time. Eliminated off-puck

threats. Killed plays with well-timed checks in the neutral zone. Angled an attack to the outside to get a stop. Breakouts are too simple, for the most part. With more focus on delays and short-range passing, he'd increase his controlled exit percentage while getting more opportunities to join the play. He might be worthy of a late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

Geary continues to impress as the season winds down. He's a rush-stopper with increasingly projectable technique. He takes the middle early, forcing the attacker to the outside. Prefers face-to-face, but keeps the crossovers to a minimum and finishes plays off along the boards. Timed engagements in the NZ, too. Breakouts are often simple passes up the boards. Offence is simple plays, other than one rush activation sequence followed by a pass to the inside. It'd be nice to see him look to create more, as he has some details (eye deception and moves through pass receptions). Might be an interesting late-rounder, although the skill's too variable between shifts at this stage.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 28th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Geary's defensive skating continues to improve. Before, he'd plant his feet and wait for attackers to come to him. Now, he's mirroring footwork, angling, and gets stops on the pivot. C-cuts lack power but he generates enough momentum to believe he'll have success against pros. Overall, he's a reasonably projectable defender now. Breaks up play at the right times, tight off-puck gap, communicates, and scans. He has some interesting transition ideas, like stepping inside before passing, but his execution wanes. Moves on pass receptions but does nothing with it. Lacks shooting skill and basic playmaking. He's a confusing player, seemingly limited by both his tools and inconsistent role. Could be an interesting late-rounder, but I doubt he makes our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 16th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Geary's a black hole offensively, but he doesn't have to be. He moves through pass receptions, generally showing an awareness of which space he's trying to beat defenders into. Then, he takes a low-percentage shot. Finding a way to integrate the transition skill into the OZ will be key. He makes passes in motion, cutbacks from pressure at the right times, and occasionally uses the middle. Then, he activates. Defensively, he's confident but lacking details. He just plants his feet and waits for the attack to come to him. One sequence

where he killed two plays in quick succession, starting with a well-timed stick check on the recovery followed by a series of crossovers to the next threat. He'll get beat doing the latter more often than not. But he has defensive instincts and awareness. Geary looks like an interesting project for NHL teams, although there might not be enough offence to justify it at this stage.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

Des Moines Buccaneers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Geary got his rush stops, as normal. He's flatfooted and doesn't generate much backwards momentum, but his aggressive positioning causes most USHL attacks to offload possession. Beyond that, he did little. He didn't do any of the interesting transition stuff that I've seen in other reviews. The offence wasn't here at all - no touches, no activation, no creativity. It's tough to imagine an NHL role. He's a rush-stopper now but won't be going forward because of his defensive skating. And he's neither a consistent creator nor facilitator, despite flashes of both. He didn't look like an NHL prospect in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Basic performance. No complex or interesting puck sequences, just straight-ahead passes and point shots. Scored with one, however. Has difficulty managing incoming forechecking pressure; he can't manipulate or deceive. But he's

not afraid to try to deke through them. Maybe that's a sign there's more skill here than I saw in this game. Defensively, he positions himself well, especially off the rush. Forces dump-ins. But he's a stiff backwards skater, failing to generate much momentum. So, he plants his feet in the right spot. That won't work going forward. Didn't see an NHL prospect in this game, but it's my first viewing.


**J.D. Burke:** September 24th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Barely played in this game. Was the extra defenceman. Details are a little bit spotty. Got caught puck-watching a few times, getting fixated on the puck-carrier and losing his man. Took an obstruction penalty in the first. Makes plays with the puck at pace, though, and I think he deserves far more ice-time than the Black Hawks coaching staff are willing to give him at present.

**J.D. Burke:** September 23rd, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Geary played this game with such a commanding affect. He was just in total control whenever he stepped onto the ice. Kept play in front of him. Made proactive reads in both zones. Has a bit of pop as a skater, but he recovers wide, flairs at the knees, etc. He's fine in a straight line, but lacking a bit for fourway mobility. Jumped into the rush a lot in this contest. One awful giveaway in his own zone late, though. 

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**"The core of Geary's projection is defence. All season, he demonstrated instincts. He'd kill plays at the perfect moments, identify switches of coverage in advance, and proactively eliminate off-puck threats."**



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

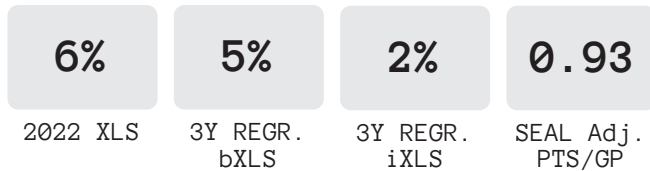


Physical

# ALEXIS GENDRON

C | BLAINVILLE-BOISBRIAND ARMADA

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. DEC. 30, 2003  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	66	30	16	46

## Scouting Report

A quick look at Alexis Gendron's boxcar stats won't exactly get anyone excited about his potential, but some of that is environmental. The Blainville-Boisbriand Armada wasn't an offensive powerhouse this season and Gendron lacked the scoring support that would have allowed him to hit the point-per-game - context matters here.

Still, Gendron was an offensive leader on the ice this season; a dual-threat, quarterback-type forward for the Armada. He created chances for himself by transforming interceptions into breakaways and for others with deceptive passes, on the power play and at 5-on-5. All season long, he flashed an ability to anticipate the rotation of teammates and the puck. He moved with foresight and timing to support those rotations. There was also a grittier side to his game. You could often find him around the net-front areas and on the walls, digging pucks and moving them to teammates inside space.

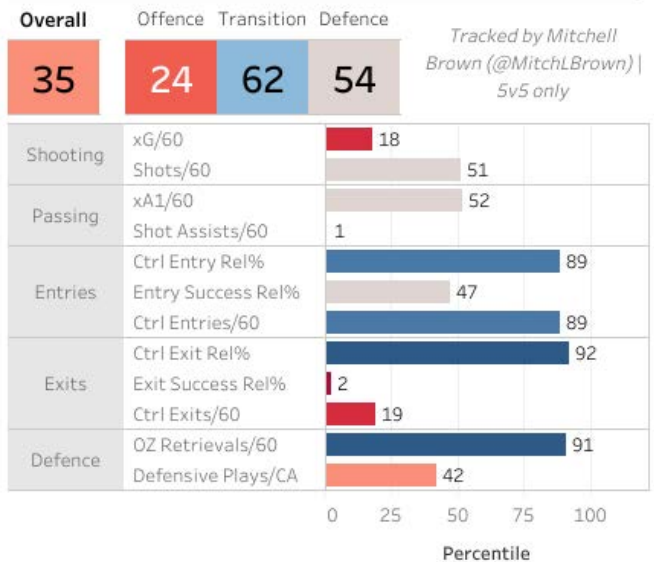
There is a limit to Gendron's technical ability, though. Many quirks in his skating and shooting limit their power and precision. These weaknesses combined with his older birthday and lower scoring kept him lower on our board.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 9th, 2022

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Blainville-B. Armada - QMJHL  
Gendron had one of the better plays of the game, using a well-set-up pull-back into a between-the-legs move to get around the defender. Idea to pass after the move was sound,

Games Tracked: 4 | Minutes Tracked: 52.8



We wouldn't be surprised to see his production explode over the next two seasons, as he gains experience, strength, and as his supporting cast improves. He's a high upside selection in the lower rounds of the draft.

but the execution was off. That was it from him. The biggest issue with his game in his one was the straight-line rushes.

He sprints up the boards to the nearest defender, then tries to deke around them or cut inside. It failed every time but one. He kills so many advantageous situations before

they start. I didn't see a pick in these two playoff viewings. No scoring upside, not much skill. Just some forechecking.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 6th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Gendron didn't accomplish much in this game, besides his slick two-touch wrister on the powerplay after his initial shot was deflected. Looked off his teammate as he worked across the slot before passing – no one expected it. That was it for plays. He forced dekes through defenders without making them move their feet first. In transition, he's mostly just trying outrace defenders without a ton of success. Lacks projectable rush patterns and the problem-solving skill to invent a new play in the moment. Forechecking's a plus. He's first on pucks, establishes positioning, and shows some escapability with a defender on his back. Not sure he's a pick, but I see enough redeeming qualities through the shooting, playmaking flashes, and forechecking to justify it.

**David St-Louis:** April 28th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Rouyn-Noranda Huskies - QMJHL

Not sure why I thought Gendron's tools were his selling points in my last report. I see him as a below-average to average skater now (projection). The high-stance affects everything else: his retrievals, his passing range, his dangling ability...Although, he has some great ideas, the lack of technical ability and the lower scoring don't make strong arguments for a draft pick. He goes to the net, especially the far-post, and that's how he probably scored many of his goals.

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

Blainville B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

A very interesting game from Gendron. He's still mechanically limited, in a sense, the one-block, upper-body and lower-body lock skating, that is somewhat alleviated by stride rhythm in crossovers, but also limits his play-range a bit. He

can pull the puck through opponents, make passes off walls, place the puck inside space for teammates, has decent off-puck instincts -- where to go at what time -- and generally shows anticipation in the game. There is deception, too...A lot of interesting elements that don't appear in high volume, but when the conditions are right, present themselves.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Gendron didn't do much with the puck. He cut across the slot for a chance, but mostly got stuck on the boards. Needlessly cycled and just forced plays up the boards. But he's an intelligent off-puck player. Gets open between defenders, adjusting his positioning constantly to maximize his odds of getting a pass. Uses that off-puck movement to support plays along the boards and down low. Didn't see any playmaking, and he hardly played in this game.

**David St-Louis:** April 14th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Gendron continues to line up interesting performances. There is a variety of facets to his offence: a more gritty style, a playmaking side, and an ability to create chances for himself. He recognizes opportunities, anticipates support, and can even intercept pucks defensively. I doubt the skating really holds up as he transitions in level, but the hockey sense might be an above-average grade and that gives me hope. He's on the smaller side but he can create from the walls through his passing and handling skills; he spots the small holes through and around opponents.

**David St-Louis:** April 10th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Baie-Comeau Drakkar - QMJHL

Gendron is adaptable. He's not forcing many plays, but it's because he's a bit of a creative passer, who finds solution to difficult situations and skill limitations. His shot is poor;





there is no leg involvement, only the upper-body falling to the ice to create leverage on the stick. How did he score 30 goals? Probably from his off-puck timing, as he's pretty good at moving one pass away and anticipating the flow of the play. The skating is a 4.5-5, no ankle flexion. He really needs to learn how to use his outside edges. Right now, if he can't find a play as he attacks in a straight-line, he can't cutback to find another one. He missed occasions to attack inside in this game.

**David St-Louis:** March 18th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Gendron creates a ton of offence from stealing pucks. He got a breakaway early on by speeding up-ice and sticklifting a defenceman as he caught the puck. Breakaway. Goal. His game has a lot of wide drives along the boards, followed by attempts at passing to the middle. Teammates have to be there for him, otherwise, he doesn't have individual solutions to defences. He communicates on the ice, has a bit of defence, and recognizes opportunities offensively, open teammates and lanes...Is it enough to make him a draft pick?


**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Blainville-B. Armada - QMJHL

Gendron's hands were barely functional in this game. As soon as he started moving, he'd hit the puck ahead and eventually lose control. Gets locked into these straight-line rushes with few crossovers. The skating looked much better. Consistently pushed his knees past his toes, engaged his hip, and kept his chest up. Full extensions with a high stride frequency. Loses much of that depth through his crossovers and turns. The energy and anticipation of passes stood out in all three zones. Applies direct, immediate pressure. Didn't look like a pick in this game, although he set up a goal with a pass through a defender.

**David St-Louis:** December 11th, 2021

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

I like Gendron's tools, his skating and handling skills. He's quick and speedy. He can make plays through defenders, beat them wide, and also cut inside on them when he sees a lane. He seems to recognize gaps in coverage at a decent level, but he also moves too fast for his own good at times, too. He attacked wide in the second frame and aimed a shot at the far pad of the goalie to have it rebound in the slot for a teammate. At least, I think the play was intended; the shot placement looked intentional. 

**" Gendron was an offensive leader on the ice this season; a dual-threat, quarterback-type forward for the Armada. He created chances for himself by transforming interceptions into breakaways and for others with deceptive passes, on the power play and at 5-on-5."**



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# DYLLAN GILL

D | ROUYN-NORANDA HUSKIES

HEIGHT 6'2"

D.O.B. JUN. 7, 2004

WEIGHT 181

SHOOTS LEFT

5%

2022 XLS

4%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

3%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.49

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	66	6	15	21

## Scouting Report

Not unlike fellow QMJHL defencemen Angus Booth and Marc-André Gaudet, Rouyn-Noranda Huskies blueliner Dylan Gill would be a fine pick in the later rounds of the draft. He's a player whose all-around game gives him a chance at playing as a replacement level, bottom-pairing defender in the NHL.

Gill can move pucks off the back wall in his zone safely and smartly. He closes on attackers quite rapidly in the defensive zone. He's capable of rotating at the right place, at the right time to manage risk and remove plays from the

opposition, and he participates in the offensive game both as a puck distributor and a blue line shooter.

From what we could glean this season, though, the Huskies defenceman's upside doesn't extend past these duties. He could likely play the same game up a level or two, especially if he improves his skating. His lack of flexion in his stride currently limits the explosiveness of his pivots and his ability to separate from forecheckers to find passing lanes in his zone.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 1st, 2022

Victoriaville Tigers vs Rouyn-Noranda Huskies - QMJHL

Gill, not unlike Roy in this game, is a good Junior defenceman who makes many right plays and identifies his check and passing lanes defensively. The skating projects as below-average. He performs well in the slower-paced QMJHL, but I don't see him increasing his pace enough to play in the NHL. He can't reach some passing lanes already at this level or shake the forecheck. Plays have to be there for him to make.

**David St-Louis:** 27th February, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs Rouyn-Norande Huskies - QMJHL

Gill will probably become very effective in this league

with a bit more time. He's physical, engaged in the game, and limits risk defensively well in general. The skating is a problem and I didn't see anything offensively projectable in this game.

**David St-Louis:** 26th February, 2022

Blainville Boisbriand vs Rouyn-Norande Huskies - QMJHL

Gill is willing to make plays but his skill is limited, which leads to a few turnovers. His skating ranks as below average. His pivots especially can be a struggle. His passing game is decent but he lacks the precise handling to make plays through opponents; he's limited to pushing the puck up to forwards. His defence will probably be the best part of his game in Junior. I doubt he has an NHL future.





Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

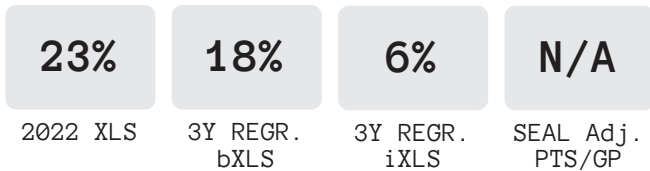


Physical

# DENI GOURE

C | OWEN SOUND ATTACK

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JUL. 15, 2003  
WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	24	39	63

## Scouting Report

Although Deni Goure narrowly missed on the Elite Prospects draft ranking two years in a row, we remain fans of his game.

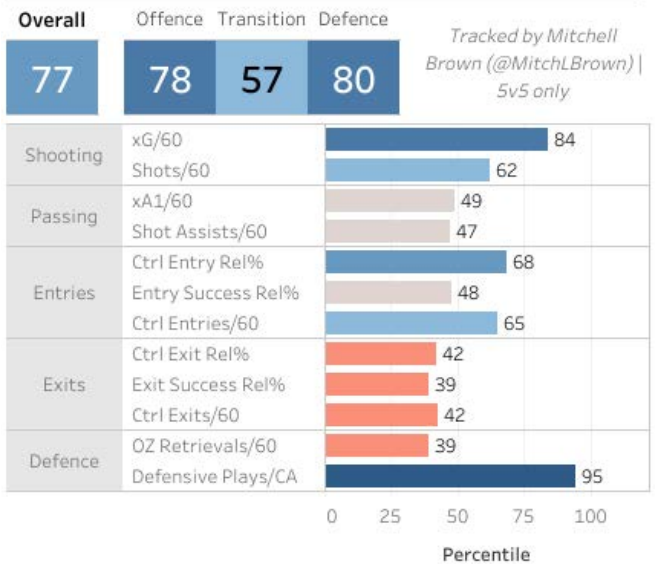
Many prospects make alterations to their style of play to make the NHL. They become increasingly less reliant on individual skill, focusing more on playing within a structure and using their teammates. Deni Goure won't have to go through that transformation – he already plays an NHL style.

Here's what that style looks like, in the words of Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown: "He plays off his teammates well by anticipating pockets of space, arriving into them at the right time, and playing a give-and-go style. He changes his speed to fit the moment and always keeps his stick free from defenders. Where most players deke, he passes to achieve the same result. It perfectly complements his off-puck instincts while minimizing turnovers."

Goure's also an advanced defensive player, combining energy and anticipation. Those same positional reads that make him a scoring threat appear in the defensive end by shrinking his distance to the puck battle and being ready to move upon reception.

Not one to create high-value offence, Goure isn't likely to put gaudy point totals outside the OHL. He prefers to play

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 135.3



the short-range game that builds offensive sequences. He's not deceptive, but he alters the timing of his passes to ensure his pass gets through. While he plays fast, he lacks a true delay game and in-motion skill – either could prevent him from making the NHL.

Like the other Owen Sound prospects, perhaps Goure just isn't quite skilled enough to make the NHL. Still, his nuanced game provides enough reason to believe he could become a fourth-liner with additional refinement.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Goure's working out there. He's always applying pressure on the backcheck and forecheck. Breaks up plays through a combination of energy and proactivity. Defence should be a strength at the next level. With the puck, he plays fast and gears down at the right moments. Uses the change of pace game to beat defenders. Doesn't give away intentions too early. Skilled on the backhand. NHL game likely looks very similar to his current game: pace, give-and-gos, defence. He'll have to keep improving the skating (ankle flexion, stride recoveries, in-motion skills) and puck protection to get there. A late-rounder and perhaps a candidate for the end of our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 2nd, 2022

Kitchener Rangers vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Goure's going to be a great pro. Not sure if he's bound for the NHL, but he could carve out a third or fourth line role if the tools improve. He's a give-and-go player. Does everything at full speed. Makes plays off the boards to the middle regularly. Alters the timing of his passes to maximize his recipient's time with the puck. Non-stop motor on the defensive end. He sprints for every loose puck and eliminates off-puck threats, showing a great balance of energy and anticipation. The offence that he creates is mostly mid-value: short-range passes for medium-danger looks and wristers off the rush from just inside the circle after a give-and-go. He's not manipulating, but he's all-around intelligent and disciplined.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

A quiet performance from Goure. He played fast and got open, but rarely received the puck in favourably position. Mostly took a passive approach with the puck. Defence and retrievals could be strengths at the next level, but I'm unsure about the puck skills. Just not much to go off on this performance.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 10th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Erie Otters - OHL

The usual performance from Goure. He's highly impressive defensively. Works to get above the puck, then angles out attackers and gets the steal. Non-stop pressure to force poor decisions. A bit of a quieter puck carrying game from him, but that only showed his versatility. He plays off his teammates well by anticipating pockets of space, arriving into them at the right time, and playing a give-and-go style.

He changes speed to fit the moment and he always keeps his stick free from defenders. Where most players deke, he passes to achieve the same result. It perfectly complements his off-puck instincts while minimizing turnovers. Earned a number of scoring chances, mostly quick shots off the pass. He looked like a draft pick in this game, probably towards the end of the board.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Little offence from Goure in this game. A bit too individualistic with the puck (which eliminates his primary strengths), but his struggles weren't necessarily his own doing. Still, he gave a solid account of his defensive game. Quintessential tough-to-play-against player, even if he's not throwing bone-crushing hits. Always take the extra stride to establish body positioning, punishes slow-acting puck carriers, and instantly looks for the next player after winning possession. In transition, he looks for the cross-ice pass and then sprints to get open again. He's a draft pick this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 20th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

It's a wonder that Goure doesn't score more. He's a bit inconsistent on his execution of scoring plays (i.e., shooting and passing to teammates for a shot), but he has tons of high-level details and ideas. Small area give-and-go to get a high-danger chance under pressure – most players shoot right away. Turned down-low support into should-be chance by reading the feet of the defender, cutting inside, and passing back through the recovering defender for a clean entry. Then, he slowed down and became short support behind the puck carrier. He consistently attacks the middle, uses overlapping routes, and puts his recipient in a better position – scalable game. He hunches over and elevates his hips when handling the puck, but he has better posture elsewhere. Looks like a pick as a re-entry.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Domination gets thrown around way too much in junior hockey, but this was pretty dang close to it. Goure was just a machine. He took 13 shots at 5-on-5 while creating multiple scoring chances for his teammates. Gobbled up every loose puck imaginable across all three zones. Disposition players on the backcheck with well-timed sprints. Multiple shifts where he created multiple scoring chances in different ways. Give-and-go, pre-scan on retrievals before passing to the inside, off-puck positioning to get open for



passes, cutting to the middle, deking around pressure, and depositing rebounds. Consistently alters pace, often inside single rushes. He'll sprint ahead before slowing down to sell the outside attack, then speed up and do a similar version before delaying and hitting the trailer. Full look-off wrist shot in transition – always appreciate that. His feet kick and his hips tilt forward when striding, but he outraced multiple strong skaters in this game. He's a re-entry, but definitely worth a pick. The three-zone skills and change-of-pace game are NHL attributes.

**David St-Louis:** March 11th, 2020

Flint Firebirds vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Good skating mechanics. Just needs a bit more ankle flexion. It will probably be above NHL average in a few years. Goure is a patient handler. He doesn't take the first option available if he sees something develop and has the space, but waits for the situation of his teammate to improve before feeding him the puck. His off-puck timing, route finding was also pretty advanced for his age; he could have had two prime scoring opportunities if his teammates had his patience.

**David St-Louis:** February 1st, 2020

Owen Sound Attack vs. Windsor Spitfires - OHL

Goure makes more of his plays in a glide, but he can beat defenders in that way at least, seeing holes through them in

which to slip the puck to teammates. He scored this game by stopping at the net off a rush (good habit) and almost scored another one by controlling his skating to take a cross-ice pass that he immediately fired on net. Goalie saved. Goure will likely be a trusted defensive player in his next OHL years.


**David St-Louis:** January 20th, 2020

Owen Sound Attack vs Oshawa Generals - OHL

Goure has a bit of a tendency to stand in traffic, but he can hold his own there and make plays under pressure, quick passes and stickhandles. In transition, he passes early, which alleviates the speed concerns a bit (skating might be average in a few years, but right now it is mechanically flawed). He scored from circling back in the neutral-zone, carrying the puck in, and firing. Nice placement on the shot.

**David St-Louis:** January 4th, 2020

Flint Firebirds vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Good defensive performance from Goure this game. He backtracked hard, showed some physicality, stuck to his check in the defensive zone, played the F1 role smartly and with energy, jumped on opponents when they were vulnerable, creating one turnover that led to a goal. He showed himself to be a patient handler who takes all the space that the opposition gives him. His skating projects as average. 



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

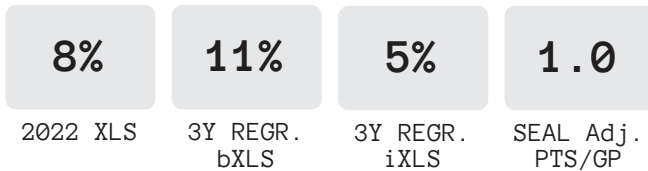


Physical

# MAX GRAHAM

F | KELOWNA ROCKETS

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. MAY 21, 2004  
WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	64	10	23	33

## Scouting Report

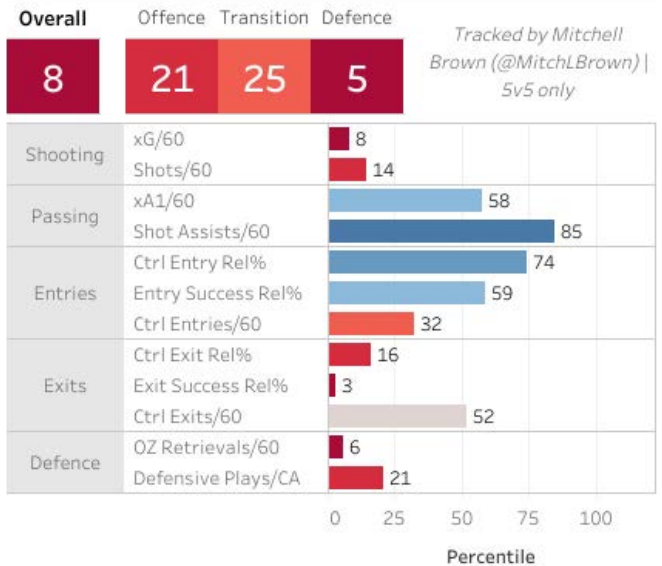
Undrafted into the WHL, Max Graham became an effective 200-foot centre for the Kelowna Rockets in his first full season.

“Proactive off-puck positioning, whether that’s net-front coverage or tracking threats higher in the zone,” Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown wrote. “Works to get inside positioning and overpowers players for the puck.” The physical side of his game also appears along the boards, both by throwing hits and using body positioning to create a bit of separation.

While Graham’s impact is most consistent on the defensive end, there are flashes of NHL-calibre playmaking ability. Behind the net, he checks the slot before reception, then makes perfectly timed passes to the inside. In open ice, he manipulates defenders to open or prolong passing lanes. Some of his best comes after receiving the puck, where he fakes the shot, looks towards the net, and only passes after the defender moves their stick out of his preferred lane.

Graham’s variable offensive impact starts with inconsistent frequency and volume of touches. Some of that’s the fault of his supporting cast, but he also doesn’t consistently position himself in the space best to become a passing option for his teammates. Additionally, he’s limited in transition due to

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 102.0



an over-reliance on a straight-line rushes and the lack of a cutback and delay game that would better make use of his passing skills.

Improved offensive details and awareness will be required for Graham to reach the NHL. Likewise, further emphasis on his physical game could make him an effective fourth-liner.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: March 26th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Graham has puck skill. It’s clear in how he handles the puck

and makes small-area plays. Created a chance by passing to the inside as he was falling backwards. Didn’t show much off-puck instincts of shooting ability. Kept to the outside and

took low-percentage shots instead of delaying or driving. Anticipates passes on the forecheck and supports effectively. Proactive defensive zone coverage and applies pressure at the right moments. Didn't see a draft pick in this game, but he was interesting enough.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 22nd, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

Graham's passing skills appeared in this game. Sprinted his route off-puck to get the puck in the middle, sold the move on the backhand, then passed back through a defender for a scoring chance. Tried to delay and pass inside in transition. Always finishes his off-puck route, then establishes body positioning on the defender. Skating lacks some refinement, but nothing too unordinary (lacks some flexion, extension, and becomes too upright through crossovers). He's not much of a shooter. Lacks the advanced off-puck details to consistently get touches, but his teammates were rarely looking for him. Looked for the big hit all game long, too. Not a dynamic player but there's a bit of upside here through the passing skill. Could have a difficult time using it at the next level.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Graham tried a few skill plays that failed, including a couple of dekes. Not poorly timed, but he didn't deceive enough pre-deke to convince the defender. He also had the best pass of the game, a look-off cross-slot pass to the trailer. As he stepped off the boards he scanned to identify his teammate, then faked the shot as he drew the defender closer and closer, passing at the perfect moment. Not much shooting skill on display, but he consistently got open just outside the slot. Impressive game. I'll need to watch more to get a better read on the mechanics and details of his game.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 16th, 2022

Prince George Cougars vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

A mostly quiet performance from Graham. He made one play to the middle in transition, and set up a couple of point shots. A crafty cross-ice pass in transition was bobbled by his teammate, eliminating the chance. He's a reactive defender who tends to float and disengage. Not deception or particularly creative. Didn't see NHL ability in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 5th, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

A solid defensive game from Graham. Proactive off-puck positioning, whether that's net-front coverage or tracking threats higher in the zone. Works to get inside positioning and overpowers players for the puck. One steal led to a scoring chance. Didn't see the playmaking flashes that I saw previously, but he showed more shooting skill. Went skate-to-stick for a pass reception while pressured, gained the zone, then fired off a textbook outside leg wrister. He's not a dynamic player, but he shows some projectable abilities and the defence could become a strength.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 8th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Graham's an interesting prospect. He has some physical skills: winning battles and keeping his stick free around the slot by establishing body positioning, leaning on players at the right times to prepare cutbacks, and throwing the occasional hit. Tried to play a skilled game, but failed because he bobbled passes, set up his dekes poorly, and took too long to identify the passing lane. Showed some basic playmaking: drop passes and simple plays off the boards. Nothing that suggested a draftable prospect, but there were enough moments to keep me watching.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# LEO GRUBA

D | HILL-MURRAY SCHOOL

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. OCT. 22, 2003  
WEIGHT 205 SHOOTS LEFT

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
UMHSEHL	20	9	17	26
USHS-MN	31	12	21	33
NAHL	10	1	4	5

## Scouting Report

As the competition increased, Leo Gruba played it. He played his best hockey of the season in the NAHL speaks to that.

Gruba's a physical presence, launching him into opponents who venture too close to his side of the rink, whether that's in the neutral zone, at the blue-line, or along the end boards. A tight neutral zone gap funnels attackers to the outside.

In transition, Gruba uses small-area plays through opponents and occasionally manipulates with a quick change of pace to open a passing lane. Later in the season, he started

activating into the play, experimenting from the point, and even flashing playmaking ability under pressure.

To make better use of these abilities, Gruba must improve his mechanics. Pucks roll off his stick without pressure and he's prone to throwing pucks away after successfully escaping battles. Even when he closes space early, attackers beat him to the outside and he lacks the pivots and skating to recover.

Gruba's a long-term projection, but his combination of physical potential and flashes of puck skills could make him an interesting late-rounder.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 21st, 2022

St. Cloud Horsemen vs. Anchorage Wolverines - NAHL

Gruba dangled around a defender from the point, then passed cross-crease for a tap-in. That was one of several activation sequences that showed skill and playmaking. However, he lacks the lower-body flexion to separate with his edges and he's constantly fighting the puck. The puck rolls off his stick regularly. There's clearly potential from his combination of activation, physical play, and increasingly projectable defence. But even in the case of the latter, he's vulnerable to speed. He's worth a late-rounder, but isn't a candidate for our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 29th, 2022

St. Cloud Norsemen vs. Bismarck Bobcats - NAHL

Gruba didn't accomplish much offensively, but showed transition and defensive upside in this game. Throws out some deception retrievals, then looks inside or cross-ice for options. A hesitation move froze a defender, creating a passing lane to the inside - one several impressive small-area passes in this game. He is dump-out prone and missed the best play at times, but there's clearly potential. Some of his turnovers and poor decisions were the result of trying to handle with one hand on his stick for unclear reasons. Defensively, he's always launching himself into people. Killed plays by closing space early and driving the attack wide. Killed a couple of small-area 2-on-1s by forcing the pass and pushing across to interrupt the reception. In open ice, it falls apart. He



hesitated when recovering, conceding the outside lane as a result, and he's beatable along the boards because he closes on straight lines. Looked like a late-rounder in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

North Iowa Bulls vs. St. Cloud Norseman - NAHL

Some moments from Gruba. He hands the puck with one hand on his stick too much, which leads to some issues managing pressure. Sets up retrievals correctively and his punch turn gives him a bit of separation, but his hands fail him – leading to dump outs. Made a couple of slick passes to the inside, however. Joined the rush, then got open in front of the net for a scoring chance. Beat a couple of times along the boards, but made a projectable stop in the neutral zone by building backwards momentum, taking the middle, and interrupting the player's stickhandling for the kill. Not sure about the skill level – skating, shooting, and handling look like below-average grades – but he has some draftable qualities.

**Daniel Gee:** March 12th, 2022

Prior Lake High vs Hill-Murray - USHS-MN

Gruba has his deficiencies, but this game weighed in more positively than my last reports.

Spacing and gap issues continue to plague Gruba's game -- his skating being a hurdle, there were more examples of heel-pushing, allowing him to kill a bunch of transitional attacks with lane occupations and others where he was just too far out of position to dynamically react to route changes. In the first, he failed a heel-push to the inside, having to crosscheck the passing threat. On a subsequent play his spacing was off, limiting the pressure he was able to create in the slot, causing him to dive face-first into a pass lane in desperation. The positives is that Gruba is excellent at guiding using his stick and cleaning up the heel pushes as the game wears on. The troubling thing is that he is often outreached and vulnerable. Gruba actually was pretty proficient at preventing inside lane activations in the later periods. Very physical in his approach, he became very aggressive as well. High DZ activations, even bleeding into NZ stops. More inconsistent than anything. A bit too reactive on odd-man breaks, he takes the idea of preventing the cross-ice pass a bit too haphazardly -- often dropping too early in full body attempts that a simple saucer pass would solve. In sustained pressure Gruba threw some massive hits to kill cycle plays, mainly working the perimeter and endboards. Doesn't scan enough currently though. If anything he's a pressure pusher.

Not much of a transitional game here. Gruba loved the high flip in this viewing -- rough sequences. Has some carry-out ability; one-hand handles past F1's, finds teammates up

the middle of the ice, one-touch plays. He had a wonderful carryout into a 3-on-2; Gruba used a pick to walk into the inside lane, drags and shot stick side. On a subsequent play, he filed in as a backdoor option -- adds legit value jumping into the rush. Has an element of weird decision making; blind reverse passes, spin-o-rama passes out of pre-scanned retrievals.

Often a static right-point operator in sustained sequences. Very minor manipulation attempts -- an area of his game that needs to improve. When he did activate on-puck, he often took pucks out of the middle and towards the boards. Had multiple one-time chances -- still hounding over the puck and is a bit light on his weight-transfers. Couldn't get full rotation as he drove through one knee. Some pinching ability -- in the second he pinched, shot off the far boards and created a high-danger chance off his rebound.

Probably not a pick for our board but if he cleans up his habits and works on his footwork, he could be a depth piece with a physical element.

**Daniel Gee:** December 4th, 2021

Hermantown High vs Hill-Murray - USHS-MN

For all the hype around Gruba, this wasn't the greatest performance from the right-hand defender.

His defensive game, and the habits that form it, are very unrefined and raw. Gruba is a wild-card of passiveness and aggressiveness, lacking proper decision-making throughout his shifts. On one shift, you will find Gruba making an aggressive step-up on the blue-line, missing the chance to create resistance, stumbling on his pivot as opponents maneuver past. On other shifts, he can become static, feet planted on the ice, outreached posture, unwilling to physically commit. Tough game in general for him. Probably the most troubling play occurred in the third; a failed read of the puck-carriers speed led to a missed hit, a late pivot, and a free-lane to the net. I question how much he scans -- he completely misses opponents in his peripherals, and over-commits heavily into full-body sprawling sequences. In sustained defending sequences he lacks intensity, especially on retrievals -- allows opponents to win races. Skating isn't good enough to chase, and when he does, he struggles to mirror footwork. Pace is an issue.

In transition, while on-puck Gruba sends too many pucks down the ice without control -- lobs and chips making up most of his attempts. Debilitated by pressure as well. Some positives when he commits to carrying the puck out. Can execute some pace increases through his crossover use, but he struggled to string actions together. Gruba had one shift where he intercepted a dump in, used the boards to deke an



attacker, and then turned over the puck attempting to slip a pass through a secondary forechecking wave.

There isn't much here offensively. His shooting is below average and mechanics are inconsistent -- when he is at his worst, his top-arm locked to his hip, no leveraging of his lower body. When he is at his best, he gets his top-arm free and leverages more weight-transfer, but lacks accompanying tools like manipulation to open up lanes. His upper-body is compressed when he releases on one-timers. Gruba has some positive activation habits, especially on the weak side, often

adding himself as a cross crease pass option. He struggles with pinching decisions, however. On one shift in the second he pinched into two defenders and essentially allowed a two-on-one the other way. Had a singular positive sequence where he was able to snap a hard shot placed five-hole.

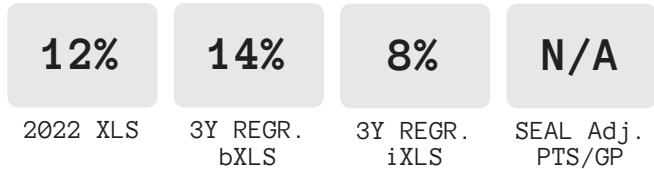
If habits and tools are like this at the USHS level, I doubt much will transfer barring a huge developmental swing. Didn't look like a pick for our board, regardless of his physical profile.



# DAVID GUCCIARDI

D | MICHIGAN STATE UNIV.

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. OCT. 9, 2002  
WEIGHT 194 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
NCAA	36	5	6	11

## Scouting Report

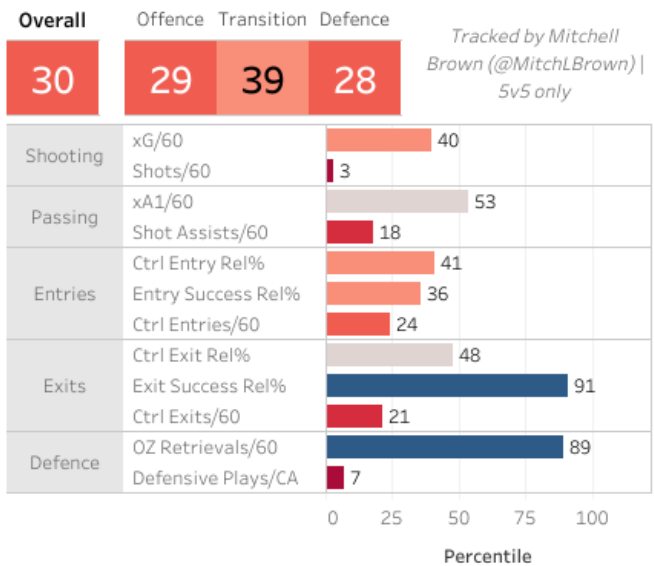
For whatever reason, David Gucciardi just can't seem to get much in the way of playing time. That was the problem during his draft year with the Waterloo Black Hawks in the USHL, and it plagued him again at Michigan State in the NCAA.

Last year, Gucciardi's hyper-active playstyle, aggressiveness as a rush defender, and flashes of playmaking ability left us wondering why he didn't get more ice-time. This year, however, we quickly understood that the defenceman wasn't quite ready for this level of competition, both in terms of technical ability and play-reading ability.

In years three and four of his NCAA career, it's probable that the defenceman will become a very effective defenceman for Michigan State. He will be able to leverage his offensive confidence and ability to join the rush to create offence. His projectable above-average skating ability will also enable him to shutdown the opposition both in the neutral zone and in his zone.

To earn a top college role, Gucciardi will have to refine his breakout passing, both in terms of precision and poise, and learn to pick up his check earlier when defending away from the puck. He will also have to restrain himself from

Games Tracked: 5 | Minutes Tracked: 40.6



shooting most pucks he gets at the point. He has the capacity to walk the blue line and find better plays.

Gucciardi's size, aggressiveness, and mobility give him some NHL potential, but he will require the help of a strong development team.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** February 25th, 2022  
Minnesota Golden Gophers vs. Michigan State - NCAA

Gucciardi can't be a pick for us at this point. The game is too raw in every facet, both in terms of hockey sense and

execution. A defensive zone sequence where he repaired a succession of breakout mistakes with two-handed slashes summed up his problems in this game. The speed of the game is a bit hard to handle for him, which leads to mechanical

errors that compound. Again, the ideas, in general, are pretty good and with some refinement he could become a really effective college defenceman in year 3 and 4.

**David St-Louis:** January 7th, 2022

Minnesota Golden Gophers vs. Michigan State - NCAA

The mechanical ability is not there. It's a bit more worrying considering he's 19-year-old, not 18. The skating is fluid, but hunched over, but the handling and passing precision...They are below average. A lot of rushed plays, pucks sent into closed lanes...And the reads away from the puck defensively were also quite poor for parts of the game. His value is as an on-puck, mostly rush defender at this stage. He has some interesting ideas in transition, like give-and-goes, but again, the execution lags.

**David St-Louis:** December 30th, 2021

Michigan State Spartans vs Michigan Tech Huskies - NCAA

Tools! Except for handling. The puck jumped off Gucciardi's stick quite often in this game, but the puck-moving ideas were good, the stretch passing, the evasion of forecheckers, and the carries. They didn't lead to much but with better timing and a slightly smoother technical ability, they would. And he did score from a between-the-legs shot, so there is handling potential there. The other goal was from a slot activation. He received a pass and two-touched a shot behind the goalie. The skating looks like an above-average grade. He used it to defend the rush well, tight gaps and precise stick work in those situations.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 24th, 2021

Des Moines Buccaneers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

More of the same from Gucciardi: random point shots that somehow generate offence, flashes of playmaking ability that suggest he probably shouldn't be pulling the trigger so much, and very limited usage. Some crafty transition plays, but he needs to runway of space before he can make a positive play. Plenty of rush activation, one sequence directly leading to a goal. Tight NZ gap but he's committing. Zero defensive value at this stage. Skating lacks a ton of refinement, but he makes the odd play in motion, shows legitimate quickness, and he keeps his depth through crossovers. Lacks a bit of hip engagement and he has a pronounced heel kick. Nothing crippling. He has a ton of work to do before earning the trust of a coaching staff at the next level.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 21st, 2021

Omaha Lancers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Gucciardi barely saw the ice until the third period, where

he was out there every shift as Waterloo tried to tie the game. Early on, he was throwing possession without much care. His retrievals and exits aren't strengths, but they could be with improved pressure reading, patience, and pre-scanning habits. Committing rush defence as always but his high pressure style results in quite a few break ups. Pivots looked awful in this game: just falls onto the lead foot instead of pushing off the back foot. He's a bit lost as an off-puck defender and doesn't balance rush activation with defence whatsoever. A quality point activation sequence off-puck, before taking the puck in the hip pocket into a curl-and-drag wrister. Didn't look like a draft pick in this game. Lots of intriguing elements but I don't think he's quite skilled or intelligent enough to make it work at the next level.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 12th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

After barely playing in the first half of the game, Gucciardi barely left the ice in the third period. Some strong transition and offensive sequences: tap-in goal on the PP after activating down the weak side, plenty of rush activation, and an end-to-end look featuring lane deception and a hesitation move. He can't help himself with the no-chance point shots but showed more vision than usual. Plenty of awful sequences, mostly on the defensive end. He was beat with overly committed footwork twice, and didn't bother getting back into the play on one of the sequences. Lots of scanning, but he spends too much time defending nothing. He's always looking for rush activation opportunities at the expense of eliminating threats. Crossover are a strength, but his lack of hip flexion prevents him from separating with punch turns. The occasional solid physical play, creating some distance with a hit then sealing off pressure. Through several pucks away by failure to scan. Nothing that really suggested a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Lots of evidence in this game to suggest Gucciardi is more than just an activator. Pre-scanned on retrievals, deceived with his feet and body positioning, then quickly moved the puck inside or passed to an open teammate. One-touch breakout passes, but inconsistent delay/patience. As usual, tons of activation, often up the weak side or accelerating into space ahead of his forwards. Off the rush, he showed some playmaking ability, including a backhand pass to the middle. In OZP, he's a shooter. Lots of shooting. Tons of bad shots from the point. He activates on occasion, but it's always to shoot -- he missed teammates in better positioning to take a low-percentage shot. A random pinch straight up the middle

without support, and another where he didn't recognize the situation developing -- chance against. His high-pressure defensive game mostly works at this level, but I fear it won't. He has some switchability, moving from one check to the next with a loaded push off out of the mohawk, but sometimes he concedes too much ground. Physical and mirrors footwork, but better attackers will get him chasing by moving the puck inside. Skating's an interesting projection. Depth's a touch inconsistent but he doesn't quite get his hips involved enough at the best of times. Inside edge-dependent in-tight, which limits his separation ability (lots of stops and spins of both inside edges). Projectable skating habits and a non-stop activity level to offset any mechanical issues. Normally it's a 5 under a grading scale but I think he's mechanically sound enough with such advanced habits that 5.5 is an acceptable grade. 50s-and-on prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 19th, 2020

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Gucciardi looked like a draft pick in this game. His aggression defensively stood out immediately. Loaded up pivots to come across and break up chances and kill plays in the NZ, mirroring footwork to drive plays up the boards, and confident close outs to pressure shooters. His aggression could lead to issues against better attackers who don't wilt under pressure. Always moving in the DZ, but doesn't have much awareness of the net-front. Constantly in the rush, leveraging his aggressive defending into opportunities up the ice. Didn't show much individual skill on exits or retrievals: he collects pucks quickly but doesn't scan and panics under pressure. Lacks some details offensively, but it might just be his shoot-only mentality. That's a problem. Lacks some depth through his hips, but he's always in motion and reads plays in advance. Skating requires a closer look, as his posture seemed inconsistent but with sound habits. P





# LUKAS GUSTAFSSON

D | CHICAGO STEEL

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. DEC. 16, 2002  
WEIGHT 190 SHOOTS LEFT

3%	2%	1%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	59	11	27	38

> Committed to Boston College

## Scouting Report

Last season, Lukas Gustafsson was one of the 2021 NHL Draft's greatest mysteries. He appeared in just 16 games for the USHL's Chicago Steel, usually in a limited minutes role. But he made the most of those minutes, and just missed the cut for Elite Prospects' final draft board. A year later, Gustafsson is a full-time USHLer with a highlight reel that rivals most forwards prospects in the draft class.

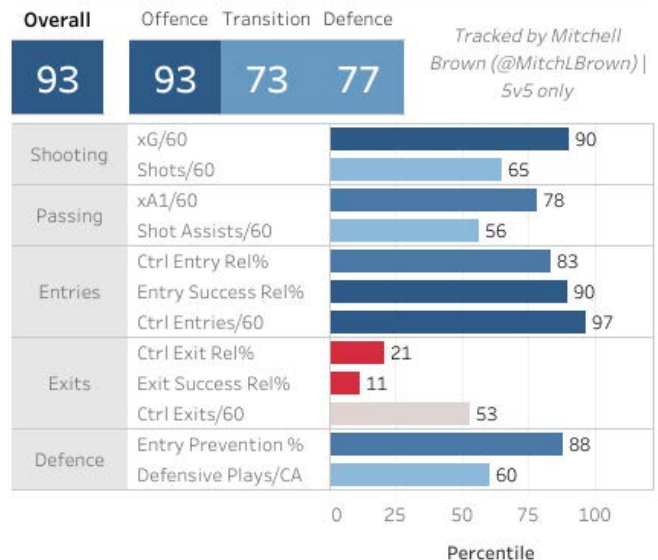
An activator, Gustafsson seeks to improve the quality of every shot, pass, and opportunity by joining the rush and moving off the point. With the puck, he outraces defenders and occasionally fakes an attack in one direction before sprinting in the other. Without it, he jumps into space on the weak side, sneaks to the far post, and becomes the trailer.

In top form, Gustafsson makes high-end reads, showcasing mechanical ability and skill. Those flashes often take the form of tricky retrievals into dekes around incoming forecheckers, before cutting inside for a scoring chance.

While a tendency to commit to the outside lane too early (exposing the middle) remains, Gustafsson keeps his stick on the middle, uses heel pushes to build speed over crossovers, and slowly closes space when defending the rush. Those details kill plays early and put him on the attack sooner.

The most pressing issue in Gustafsson's game are the breakouts under pressure. "Give him a runway of space, and he'll make the odd high-level read," Elite Prospects Dir. of

Games Tracked: 12 | Minutes Tracked: 203.7



North American Scouting Mitch Brown detailed in a game report. "If not, he throws pucks to teammates more pressured than himself, punts too early, and blindly throws pucks away off retrievals."

Sometimes, it seems like Gustafsson's puck-plays lack an end-goal, but that he has the skills and confidence to adapt and experiment is only a plus in our books. He remains a long-term prospect, but it's getting easier to envision him playing a bottom-pairing role in the NHL.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Alright, I actually did have more to say about Gustafsson's game. From the point, many of his plays lack purpose. He twists and turns then throws the puck into traffic. Sometimes, a simple pass with the expectation of getting it back will do the trick. He's a very inefficient player with his touches, whether that's from the point or on breakouts. He reverses pucks to the other team, overhandles, and tries to outrace pressure on speed alone. With that said, he's getting better at trying to create advantages. All the same defensive issues apply. I doubt he's a pick for us this year, but I'd understand why others feel differently.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

There's nothing really more to say on Gustafsson's game. Give him space, he'll create. He's more aggressive on breakouts than earlier, which has led to some turnover issues. But he also outskated the entire opposition team for a point-blank chance. The rush defence has improved this year, but is it a strength? Perhaps, if he stops committing to the outside too early. The activation remains a plus. He's a mid-to-late rounder. Average-ish tools with pressure management issues. I like his game, but it'll come down to development. He's also an '02.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

There aren't too many holes in Gustafsson's game. He's a strong playmaker with some manipulation ability, a much-improved rush defender, and a frequent activator. He'll step to the outside lane early when defending the rush, but he's engaging much better than he was earlier in the year: stick protecting the middle, heel pushes to build backwards speed, and angling out the attack. A well-timed pinch set up a scoring chance, after breaking pressure himself and scoring. Flashy, but a bit lucky as it was a whiffed shot that led to him freezing the goaltender. The biggest issue in Gustafsson's is breakouts. Give him a runway of space, and he'll make the odd high-level read. If not, he throws pucks to teammates more pressured than himself, punts too early, and blindly throws pucks away off retrievals. He's a draft pick this year, but maybe as a mid-round candidate given the average-ish tools and pressure management limitations.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Gustafsson was the best player on the ice in this game. He manipulated defenders with changes of pace, head fakes, and

weight shifts. Fakes and then waits for the reaction before continuing – he's clearly an advanced thinker with the puck. Mechanically-sound handler – top hand out and controlling, moving it to adjust his puck positioning. Well-timed pinches and off-puck activation, coupling his proactive reads with individual skill to create several scoring chances. The number of ways he created screamed NHL upside: off-puck movement into a shot, dangle into a shot, rush activation into a net drive, and more complex off-puck sequences where he linked different ideas together. Shot a ton but tough to complain about any of them. His rush defence continues to improve, and he's actually making plays off the end boards now. Lots of work required in his breakout decisions off retrievals, but he consistent looks inside and for cross-ice options if given a bit of space. Looked like a second or third-rounder in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Gustafsson's really interesting. He activates at the right times, even showing more advanced playmaking ideas like delaying to wait for the trailer, manipulating defenders to open lanes, and using the threat of the shot to pass. Beats defenders with his hands more than his feet, but his passing mindset should scale up well. He has a lot to clean up defensively, but he's tighter and more proactive now. Doesn't get a ton of early stops, but stays engaged and gets them deeper in his zone. Stride lacks complete extensions but he pushes his knees over his toes and engages his hips. Breakouts lack consistently (he panics with back pressure on retrievals), but also steps inside, looks for cross-ice options, and tries more advanced plays. I like he's probably a draft pick as a re-entry.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

It's still early in the season, which makes some of Gustafsson's shortcomings a bit more tolerable. He's mistake-prone in transition, failing to connect or missing options altogether. The gap control still requires tweaking, and he engages too upright. But many of the better offensive sequences belonged to him in this game. In one play, he activated, drove the inside, worked a give-and-go, and then cut inside and set up a cross-slot scoring chance. He's a pretty advanced offensive thinker, and it's clear that he understands the finer points of activation and creation. I'd still pick him.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Gustafsson looks like the same player as last season. That's not a bad thing, necessarily. Given that he's an '02, the defence

and breakout decisions should probably be further along. He throws pucks away on retrievals, misses options entirely in open-ice, and gets fixated on plays directly in front of him. In the OZ, his game changes. He starts manipulating incoming pressure with his hands and feet, baiting the reach before going in the opposite direction. Consistently looks for teammates in the slot, setting up passes with some deception to prolong the lane. He could be a draft pick this time around.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 11th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Finally regular minutes for Gustafsson, but he didn't create a ton. Not as many mistakes as normal, either. All the usual stuff applies to this performance: lots of activation, in-motion passes, ability to get the puck to the inside lane. Activated weakside into the slot for an assist. Crafty shot pass from the point under pressure for a HD look. Some deceptive qualities but it wasn't a consistent facet of his game. Established his gap early and killed plays early. Everywhere he's far weaker. Once he gets the puck, he usually knows the next play and doesn't hesitate to jump into the play. There's so much uncertainty here, but I'd pick him.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

I doubt Gustafsson played much more than five minutes in this game, but I still came away impressed. Beat on the outside lane, but stays engaged in the defensive end. Some difficulty turning his motor into impact. Some of that's from his lack of strength, but it's mostly poor reads. It's fixable. Lots of harder to teach skills on display: the puck position-adjusting breakout passes, passes inside mohawks and crossovers, the seamless rush activation, and ability to pull the puck off the boards and bring it inside. Some off-puck activation in the OZ, too. For me, the concerns are mostly mechanical: lacks flexion, doesn't finish his strides, and keeps his top hand locked to his side while handling. Pushing his hand in front will improve his range of control, allowing him to better use his crafty mind to beat defenders, while limiting his handling turnovers (he tends to lose the puck behind him). He's a pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 16th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Gustafsson hardly played in this game and it was easy to see why: lots of mistakes. Among them: a no-percentage pinch, letting his check slip behind him on several occasions, sloppy, speed-killing pivots, skating directly into pressure without an

escape plan, and randomly throwing away possession. Still, there were flashes of what makes Gustafsson an intriguing prospect. The rush activation and passing inside movement, for one. Gathered the puck on the backhand in motion, accelerated past a defender, then stepped inside and fired for a scoring chance. Establishes his gap early and forces poor decisions. Those are the core of his game: rush defence, activation, and playmaking. Looks like a candidate to explode next season.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 9th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

Gustafsson's a project, but a worthwhile one. He's always involved in the rush, joining the play several times in this game directly leading to an assist and other positive plays. Crafty playmaker who looks inside or cross-slot over taking low percentage shots. Uses the threat of the shot to move defenders before passing. Pre-scans on retrievals, throws out some deception, and identifies the next play quickly, but the precision's a bit off. Defensively, he's rough but his path to improvement's clear. He gets on his check early and kills the odd play through the NZ. Sometimes he's too committing (reaches a lot) and gets beat. Overplays the block instead of challenging the shooter with his stick. Some defensive instincts, but he's a porous off-puck defender who lets his skate around him without much friction. Weak, too -- easily bodied away by defenders. Skating looks roughly average: more skilled than mechanically sound. Looks like an acceptable late-second or third rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 21st, 2020

Chicago Steel vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Lots of mistakes in this game: poorly timed pivots, late to react on retrievals, defending nothing in the DZ, reactionary DZ coverage, low-percentage point shots with his head down and better options available, and several giveaways on the breakout. There's no doubt that the skating needs a ton of work: lacks depth through the hips, doesn't push off on pivots, and very inconsistent posture. But there's a ton of skill. He connected with a perfect point-to-slot pass after stepping to the inside. Consistent pre-scanning on retrievals and usually made the right play. Manipulating forecheckers with eye and body deception and changes of pace. Frequent rush activation, but doesn't take needless risk. Locks his top hand top his hip while handling and shooting, limiting his range of motion and shooting power and control. I'm intrigued.





Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# AARON HAKALA

RW/C | KÄRPÄT U20

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JUL. 11, 2004  
WEIGHT 163 SHOOTS RIGHT

9%

2022 XLS

6%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

4%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s.	37	12	19	31

## Scouting Report

Aaron Hakala's game is incomplete. With the puck, he's a risk-taking, deceptive carrier and passer, who creates a volume of scoring chances. He can beat goalies with his shot on the power play and he's especially effective at creating off the cycle, at getting the puck off the wall with timely passes and handling moves. His feet never stop in the offensive zone. He likes to circle the ice to drag defenders out of position and find seams to the inside.

"Hakala has more offensive skill than many of his draft-eligible peers in the U20 league." Lassi Alanen, Elite Prospects

Dir. of European scouting, wrote in a November report. "He drew multiple penalties and had dangerous sequences with the puck, once cutting inside and deking two players before hitting the post with his eventual shot."

Without the puck, however, he lacks the speed and instincts to proactively support the play, especially in the defensive zone. Hakala's lacklustre shutdown game kept him in the U20 league all season. If he wants to become an NHLer, he will have to work on his rotations and the mechanics of his stride.

## Game Reports

**Lassi Alanen:** March 9th, 2022

Kärpät vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Hakala wasn't as effective in this one, not getting many puck touches in the OZ or in transition while his game definitely lives by that. There's some off-puck instincts on the offensive side, some good movements to get open, but his primary strength is creating with the puck. When you gap him tight, he doesn't have as many tools to solve his way past defender's one-on-one. He's not a defensive stalward either, doesn't scan much and puck-watches a lot. I still like the player, though.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 1st, 2022

Kärpät vs. KalPa - U20 SM-sarja

It's pretty clear that Hakala is the most offensively gifted draft-eligible player in the U20 league after the obvious names

who'll get drafted. He was all over the place in the OZ, especially in the first half of the game, circling the offensive zone and dangling his way to scoring chances with hesitation moves. Had multiple high-danger chances to convert but didn't find the back of the net this time. Still a below-average skating projection, but his crossovers in the OZ were rather effective. Did some work in transition, too, completing all of his exits and entries successfully and having the awareness to return the puck back to his defencemen if the situation called for it.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 25th, 2022

Lukko vs. Kärpät - U20 SM-sarja

A bit more quieter game from Hakala, but he still managed to create some 5-on-5 chances in the OZ. He does struggle in transitions as he's not that fast or strong on his feet. But in the

OZ, he's definitely one of the better draft-eligibles in the league at creating off the cycle. Some crafty passing ideas that didn't quite work out this time. Defensive game was a bit more iffy in this one and he's often not in sync with his linemates on breakouts, trying to sprint up the ice quickly when the others are looking for a delayed breakout.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 19th, 2022

Kärpät vs. JYP - U20 SM-sarja

Hakala was all over JYP in this one, recording three assists in a 5-0 victory. This was one of the better offensive performances I've seen from a draft-eligible forward in the U20 league this season. Hakala was creating a lot off the cycle with his play-making, keeping his feet moving and actively making himself available. It was clear he wanted the puck and it definitely worked in this one. Very slick cross-ice feed on his first assist, taking advantage of his reputation as a shoot-first forward. The skating remains an issue as his upper-body movement is very inefficient and his posture is hunched over. The stride also breaks down more and more as the shifts and game progresses. Still competed moderately hard in this one, showing willingness to play on the defensive side of the puck, too.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 20th, 2021

Kärpät vs. HPK - U20 SM-sarja

Hakala definitely has some quirks in his game. He's not the best in the defensive zone and his skating projects as below NHL-average, lacking ankle flexion, having a hunched over posture and often skating with a pitchfork. There are times where he takes weird off-puck routes in transition, taking the same route with another player and supporting too close. But Hakala also has more offensive skill than many of his draft-eligible peers in the U20 league. He drew multiple penalties and had dangerous sequences with the puck, once cutting inside

and deking two players before hitting the post with his eventual shot. Shooting and hands are both strong suits for Hakala. Dangerous wrist shot from the left flank on PP.


**Lassi Alanen:** November 12th, 2021

U18 Five Nations, Switzerland

Hakala started the tournament in a smaller role, but got noticeably more ice time in the last two games when he was promoted to the second line. I came away pretty intrigued. In the opening game of the tournament, Hakala was the best forward in the bottom-six, being the most dangerous in the offensive zone. He showed good skill level, ability to get open when pressured and he showed good vision with some of his passes. I would characterize Hakala as primarily a shooter, and he's got a good release from mid-distance even if he didn't score any goals here (a couple of times he came pretty close). Hakala's skating is also fine for this level and he plays with rather quick pace. He's certainly someone to keep an eye on.

**Lassi Alanen:** August 13th, 2021

Sport vs. Kärpät - U20 SM-sarja (pre-season)

Hakala scored a hat-trick in Kärpät's 6-2 win over Sport in the opening game of the U20 league pre-season tournament. All of his goals came on the power play where he played on the left half wall as a right-shot forward. Hakala's goals showcased a dangerous release as he was able to pick corners from mid-distance. Hakala was active with the puck, creating zone entries and being able to handle the puck in corners. Sometimes he missed passing options as he was looking for his own solution too much, but it wasn't that big of a problem. His hustle on the forecheck was admirable. Hakala's skating looked fine. He had wide stride recoveries and some other quirks, but the speed was enough for this level of play. I'd assume he's going to play in a rather big role this season. 

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Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# BARRETT HALL

F | MINNESOTA WILDERNESS

HEIGHT 6'0"

D.O.B. DEC. 29, 2003

WEIGHT 170

SHOOTS LEFT

N/A

2022 XLS

N/A

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

N/A

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHS-MN	25	25	30	55
NAHL	19	5	15	20

## Scouting Report

Looking for a sleeper prospect? Look no further than Barrett Hall. He's the definition of a sleeper, so much so that even NHL Central Scouting didn't rank him. He was uncommitted until early-May. Four years of gaudy point totals on the Minnesota High School circuit weren't enough to get him drafted into the USHL until this season, where Green Bay picked him third overall in Phase II.

Puck skills define Hall's game. He's a dexterous handler, moving his top hand across his body while he handles, reaching out to bait the poke check, then quickly retracting the puck to evade. Tricky passes are no issue for him, as he kicks pucks skate-to-stick and deflects them through his legs without entering a glide.

The way Hall uses this handling skill stands out for a High School player. "He's very focused on gaining the inside, cutting across defenders regularly," Elite Prospects crossover scout Daniel Gee explains. "When not an option, he cuts back away from pressure."

The handling skill factors into Hall's shooting and passing.

He masks his release with subtle angle changes, in-stride wristers, and quick stickhandles pre-shot. Backhand, slip, hook, and in-motion passes fill his arsenal, and when given a bit of space, he shows deception and even a delay game to find the trailer.

However, Hall's time in the NAHL also suggested a player with many untranslatable habits. While he brings energy, he's always reacting and reaching. He's constantly moving off-puck, but often overshoots space and floats ahead of the play. "His touches are infrequent as a result, and he's inefficient with the few he gets," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a May game report. "He regularly passes to teammates with more defensive pressure than himself."

Hall's a long-term project, but his skill level suggests a player who should score in the USHL, and eventually the NCAA. Even if he doesn't get picked, he's a player worth keeping tabs on.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 1st, 2022

Fairbanks Ice Dogs vs. Minnesota Wilderness - NAHL

Several awful decisions in this game. The worst: point blank chance that he instead tried a no-chance pass for a teammate with less space. In general, he tends to float ahead of the play and lacks awareness. Touches are infrequent as a result,

and he's inefficient with the few he gets, regularly passing to teammates with more defensive pressure than himself. But the skill level is high. He pulled off several incredible puck-on-a-string moves. He dekes around defenders, cut inside, and tried backhand passes. He showed off-puck instincts, in-motion skill, and creativity. Skating's just pace.

Narrow, upright stance and he has some difficulty accessing his outside edges. Absorbs contact shocking well for a player with his lack of lower-body flexion. Not much to go off, but an interesting performance.

**Daniel Gee:** April 1st, 2022

Minnesota Wilderness vs Springfield Jr. Blues - NAHL

Hall was much less of a force against NAHL competition, but the production is still flowing. Part of the difference is that he was often not the primary puck handler transitionally in this game, pushing him more into an off-puck role. The thing is even on-puck, he was much more inefficient, and more perimeter than my last viewing. Too many turnovers in pressure, unable to cut inward or adjust his pattern against gapped up defenders. Hall still proved to be extremely strong at taking hard pass receptions. On one shift, he took a bad pass on the red line, deking through his legs, and ended up leveling the defender he was trying to beat. On another shift in the third, Hall took a pass in stride, cut into the middle, but cut back on the near boards to wait for teammates to come in as the trailer — this shift was the most reminiscent of the HS viewing.

Hall continued to find soft ice during offensive zone pressure; In the second he shifted and planted on the left-hand-circle, moving into a weak one-timer placed five-hole. Saw more examples of his movement in the OZ. Had a couple of deceptive cut-backs to escape pressure on the end-boards, stringing hope passes out of the escapes. He recorded two powerplay assists in this one but they were more products of set passing plays -- Hall occupied the right-point on his unit. He really only had one notable shot in this game; a downhill outside-leg wrister — still possesses the lean but his arm is unlocked from his body and he transfers completely to one leg. Not as dominant as I expected to be honest, — he wasn't really connecting plays like before. Viewing confuses me more than anything. Need more viewings to solidify a grade.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Janesville Jets vs. Minnesota Wilderness - NAHL

Hall's a standard USHS player but has more notable skills: he takes pucks in motion, shoots under pressure, deceives, and even shows a delay game. But he's so inefficient. He passes to teammates more covered than himself constantly. He's not creating advantages. On the forecheck, he reaches


and reacts – gets beat a lot. Moves a lot off-puck, sometimes in productive ways and other times, he overshoots his space. Concedes ground to defenders instead of spinning away and trying to get inside positioning. Forces passes that aren't there. There's clearly handling, passing, and shooting skill here, and even some details in moments, but he's a long-term prospect.

**Daniel Gee:** February 26th, 2022

Gentry Academy vs Woodbury High - USHS-MN

Hall was flat out dominant against this level of competition, a game in which he practically played every other shift, backing up the minutes with production.

Inside-leg wrist shots out of handles, hard on-puck slot cuts transitionally, combined with a full selection of passes, made Hall dangerous off of practically every touch. In the first he entered the OZ wide, unlocked his arm from his hip, handling the puck into a layered one-time pass that his teammate mishandled -- one of two plays like this. On another sequence he drove wide, along the perimeter of the boards, cutting behind the net and feeding a teammate alone in the crease, looking the pass off the entire way. He's extremely dexterous, taking hard to corral passes skate-to-stick; in the second, he took one of those passes and dragged the puck through his legs to push a gapped defender into a pivot -- high level stuff. On top of all this Hall adjusts his routes to the inside, uses stutter and body manipulations, and hooked passes out of his handles. Finds open teammates constantly through motion.

Hall was a menace in sustained pressure as well. The highlight of his game was in the first. He filed into the slot, took a pass, and transitioned into a quick catch-and-release inside-leg wrister. While he possesses a great lean to the left, the execution was wonderful. On the same shift he brought a puck off the near-wall, handled west-to-east, cut into the hash-marks, and threaded a backhand pass to an open backdoor threat for a goal. Had 10+ shot attempts, too many dangerous plays to talk about. A lot of the inside leg wristers — the lean affects his accuracy, but overall it's a really exciting tool. He always floats high defensively in this one looking for breakaways and odd-man breaks. Looked like a C-grade prospect in terms of skill blending and habits, but the competition didn't feel strong enough for him here. Probably too high of a projection, but this viewing was exciting. 



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

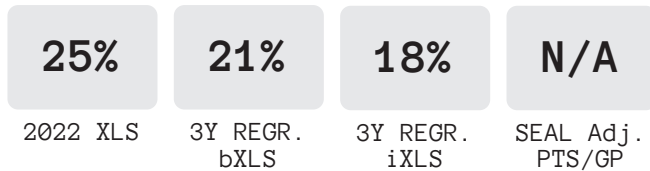


Physical

# STEPHEN HALLIDAY

C | DUBUQUE FIGHTING SAINTS

HEIGHT 6' 4" D.O.B. JUL. 2, 2002  
WEIGHT 209 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	62	35	60	95

> Committed to Ohio State Univ.

## Scouting Report

On the prospect radar for some time now, Stephen Halliday may finally hear his name called in his final year of draft eligibility.

By USHL standards, Halliday's a hockey genius. He's mastered the slow game, cutting back where most sprint and delaying momentarily to draw the extra defender. Combining body positioning and an albatross-like wingspan, he easily shields possession and pokes pucks away from defenders. He's also a master of deception, faking fakes on pass receptions, faking passes, and even faking cutbacks or turns.

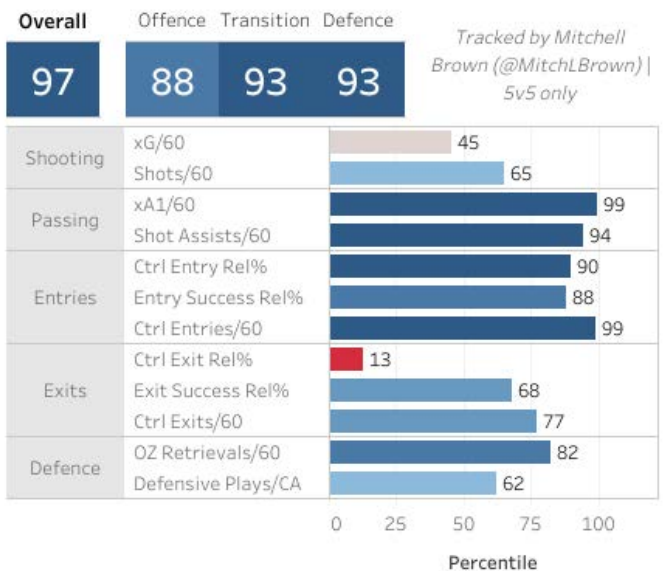
Those skills primarily serve Halliday's playmaking. He slips pucks through defenders, reaches out to pass around them, and saucers pucks over their sticks. The most projectable sequences see him compile three or four touches in quick possession, making a one-touch play to start a give-and-go, then making a quick play back to the inside for a scoring chance.

Halliday's skating, the long-standing limitation in his game, remains an issue. Beyond the absence of any quickness, he creates most of his offence inside a glide after a lengthy possession. "He has the skills to hang onto possession for the perfect play in the USHL, but he won't transfer that style

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2022  
Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL  
Halliday's skating might prove too limiting, not just because

Games Tracked: 5 | Minutes Tracked: 75.5



to the next level," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a March game report.

Leaning heavier on the give-and-go, quick-possession plays will be integral to Halliday's success going forward. His skating might prove too much of a barrier to overcome, but he should become one of the NCAA's most fun players in short order.

of his lack of quickness, but his game is dependent on space at times. When pressured, sometimes he panics and misses options. Other times, he shows more adaptability, but he

still can't complete the play. Lots of creativity in open ice. He dekes, plays keep away, attacks the middle, changes pace, and looks for teammates on the other side of defenders. Overall, he's an inefficient attacker. But he's always involved on the defensive end to get the puck back. Doubt he makes it at this stage, but I'm still a fan.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Halliday is finally putting up notable point totals. He's also gigantic. I'm sure a team will bite. He's a borderline hockey genius at times. With skating as a significant weakness, he deceives, delays, cuts inside and then out, and uses his teammates at the perfect moments.

Where most players shoot, he makes the best pass to a teammate for an even better chance. And he uses reach to play keep away, throwing the puck into space well outside of defenders, waiting for their reaction, and pulling it back inside. Gets and keeps pressure on his back, sometimes by winning the race but often by reading the defender's feet, pinning them along the boards, and escaping with possession. Lots of defensive value, too. I'm not sure how translatable his game is, but he's awesome.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Halliday could very well be a hockey genius, the best plays masked his long-standing limitation: skating. Some of the players he makes are ridiculous: self-passes off the boards before making a one-touch spin around play to the inside on the breakout, hooking pucks around defenders, and making all sorts of deceptive plays. He fakes cutbacks, fakes shots, fakes passes, and understands how to play the slow game. He forces plays, but the biggest issue is how he creates. He has the skills to hang onto possession for the perfect play, but he won't transfer that to the next level. One-touch plays feature, but are rare. What happens when his skating becomes a bigger issue at the next level? Tough to make the NHL, but if he does, he'll be a fun player.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

For the final minute and a bit, Halliday was on fire. He scored two goals in 49 seconds, including the game-tying goal with one second left. For the 59 minutes that preceded it, this was largely an inefficient performance from Halliday. He had one handling sequence where he got off the wall, but for the most part, Youngstown kept him along the boards – mostly because he's just not agile or quick enough to outmanoeuvre their pressure. He tends to settle into a glide when looking to pass, which only exacerbates it. A solution are slip and puck positioning-adjusting set ups to his passes. He doesn't do much of the latter, despite consistently showing hand speed and skill unmatched by most players in this game. He's disruptive defensively and an intelligent support player, but this wasn't a game that suggested an NHL draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 8th, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

At low speeds, Halliday is impressive. He beats defenders on his first touch, knows the next play right after deking through them, and shields the puck with back and free hand. Off-puck, he slips behind defenders, times his movements into space, and gets open on the weak side. Some net-front skills, too. Didn't look like a pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

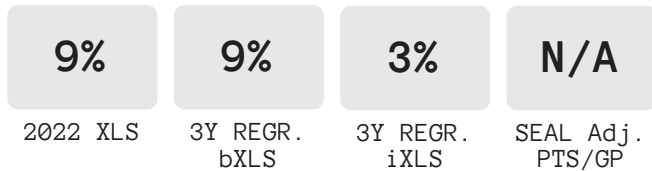
Halliday is one of the funnest players in the USHL. He's creative, skilled, and intelligent. In one sequence, he dangled around a defender, gaining body positioning on the other side, and passed through two defenders to create a scoring chance. Made the net-front player too often, but even inside that role he shows some off-puck instincts. In transition, he's always popping into the right lane, backing off defenders, and stopping in space. The skating's bleak, not so much mechanically anymore as he just lacks speed and quickness. And he's not a strong defensive player. Not a draft pick based on this game, but an interesting player.



# JEREMY HANZEL

D | SEATTLE THUNDERBIRDS

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. MAR. 27, 2003  
WEIGHT 192 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	63	7	26	33

## Scouting Report

Jeremy Hanzel jumped from AAA to the WHL last season, and while he didn't score much, his playmaking earned him the No. 68-rank in the 2021 Elite Prospects Draft Guide.

A year later, Hanzel added weight, improved his stride, and turned in-zone defence from a weakness to a strength at the WHL level.

"He's better at killing plays early, using contact to prevent entries, and disrupting plays down low," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a February game report. "Pivots and skating are still a limiter, but he's closer to finding ways to offset them."

Playmaking and activation remain Hanzel's best qualities. He doesn't just identify the best option; he finds the best way to deliver the pass. Sometimes, that's making a two-touch pass. Other times, that's drawing the extra defender, faking one play, then passing just as the defender exits the lane.

Activation isn't as simple as just joining the play; it's about supporting the puck and becoming a viable passing option while managing risk. Hanzel does the latter - sometimes. Throughout the season, Brown noted that the activation ceased in many games, and his effectiveness went with it.

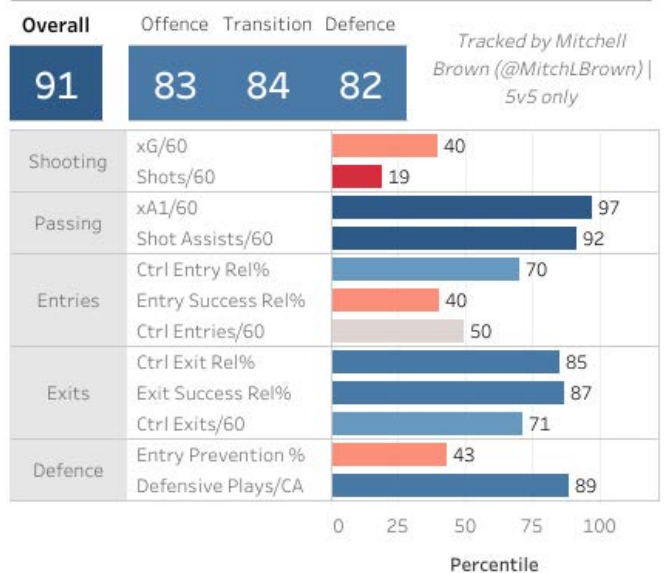
## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Hanzel's is definitely better than last year from a mechanical perspective, but he's far from quick. His pivots are late

Games Tracked: 11 | Minutes Tracked: 173.6



Still, Hanzel's defensive improvement and manipulative playmaking ability arguably earned a spot towards the end of the board. Ultimately, his defensive skating and inconsistent activation introduced too much uncertainty to feel as confident in his NHL upside as we did last year.

and reactionary. But even when he gets the jump, attackers still out-skate him without issue. The core of his projection comes down to playmaking and activation. The activation was back in this game, stepping inside in the offensive zone,

then finding teammates in better positions. He manipulates defenders, then passes into the space he just cleared. Looks for give-and-gos, but none worked out in this game. Probably not a pick this year, but he could still be worth the investment. He's an intelligent player who has taken significant strides defensively.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Spokane Chiefs vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Hanzel's activating less, and his game suffers. Still, there are flashes of the playmaking mind. Consistently moves the puck to teammates with more space than himself. Understands how to create space through delaying and deceiving. Manages space on the PP while keeping the puck moving. The defence is the biggest area of growth. He's better at killing plays early, using contact to prevent entries, and disrupting plays down low. Pivots and skating are still a limiter, but he's closer to finding ways to offset them. Looked like a fringe pick. I still think he's one of the age group's best activators and playmakers, but there's still a ton of work to be done.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

Hardly an inspiring game from Hanzel with the puck. He activated less and tried fewer skilled plays. Still, he looks for options in the middle and cross-ice. The defence requires further work, but he's engaging earlier, more often, and more confidently. Better at following his check and eliminating threats off-puck. Lack of activation rendered him ineffective offensively. Not a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 15th, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Hanzel's best sequences are when he's up the play - he's just activating far less than previous. He had one quality offensive sequence: activate, retrieve, pass into the slot. The way that he combines pace and deception suggests an NHL-calibre playmaker. But if he's not sprinting up the ice, he's not getting those looks in the NHL. His breakout passing is a bit simpler than his OZ passing. Misses inside options and the deception isn't as frequent, but he's still one of the better breakout artists in the league. Skating and defence have both improved. Defence is a strength with potential to become so at the next level, if the skating comes along. End-of-board prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 14th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Hanzel continues to be one of the best low-scoring players I've seen. He activates and pinches at the right times, owns an advanced give-and-go game, and shows NHL-calibre playmaking. In one sequence, he pinched, cut inside, saw an open

teammate, then turned his body, look off his target, and then passed. Highly deceptive; most players can learn something from him. Defensively, he's much better this season. It's not just a tighter gap, but he's looking for opportunities to run into players, he dislodges pucks in battles, and instantly steps to the inside lane. He's a draft pick again.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

I might quit watching hockey if Hanzel isn't drafted. The skating still requires major refinement, but he's taken a step and he looks like an NHL prospect. The gap control's tighter with better-timed checks and awareness. Joins the rush with every opportunity, showing the passing skill, vision, and deception to connect with high-value targets. Manipulates defenders; he understands how to turn their feet towards him and cut around them. Drives the inside regularly, both with cross-lane passes and handling actions. Deceives on retrievals before stepping to the inside. Tons of details with legitimate offensive ability. Long-term project but No. 4 upside.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 8th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Spokane Chiefs - WHL

Returning from injury, Hanzel was Seattle's 6th-most used defencemen in this game. The instincts are still here: The rush activation, the playmaking, the deception. He tries and consistently succeeds in making high-level breakout passes, going cross-ice through layers after stepping inside. His skating's still a problem, lacking depth and outside edge use. Pivots are weak and slow. On check early, killed some plays in the neutral zone. His a long-term projection still looks valuable, but tons of assembly required.

**David St-Louis:** May 7th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Many of Hanzel's issues stem from poor skating form. I can see a 5-grade for that skill as he does achieve more depth when he gets going, but he spends 90% of the game very upright. He can't get any leverage against opponents, is late to recover (no explosiveness), and poor at boxing out. His backward skating is also problematic, short crossunders and attackers easily move around. The transition game is the best part. Most of the first period, he deferred to teammates on retrievals, unwilling to beat F1 himself (not trusting his explosiveness), and some of his plays looked panicky, but then he started making skate fakes and deceptive passes in periods two and three, hitting not the first option, but the best one and preparing that pass with a lookoff and a change of body angle. I like his multiple scanning on retrievals; if he can add a bit more acceleration, I feel he could really become a transition force in every situation, even when he has his



back turned. The passing remains the best thing about his offensive game. Easy distribution on the powerplay: fast, right weight, freezes high D first, but a bit static. He isn't moving or displacing the defensive box. The shot is really bad. No other way to put it. He had trouble even elevating the puck; release point is too far from his body. The skating form is probably a big part of his lack of power on shots; upright stance equals lack of weight behind the release.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 28th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

I might've underrated Hanzel's skating skills. There's some evasiveness from his punch turn and spins, and he exited two of them with crossovers this game. But he sets everything up off his inside edges, often turning back into pressure then making a desperation play to maintain possession. Too upright through his hips whether he's striding or escaping pressure, which limits his push off power. Established his gaps early and killed a few plays a result, but his off-puck defence remains a problem: late on switch-offs, late to grab his man, overplays the passing lane, and doesn't keep his stick on the ice. Rush activation in this game, getting a give-and-go to gain the zone. No hesitation: he's immediately into the rush without any hesitation, adjusting route and speed as necessary. Manipulates on the regroup to gain the inside lane, using crossovers, eye deception, and attacking an angle to mask his intentions. Not content for point shots, he actively tries to hit teammates moving to the slot with passes, often set-up with the shot fake. He's good, but a long-term project. Skating's probably an NHL average projection, passing is a half grade above it, and his activation and playmaking are both legit NHL skills. Probably a late-second/early-third type given the uncertainty of the projection.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2021

Everett Silvertips vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Hanzel's defence remains a work in progress. Good news: he works hard and has some defensive instincts. Keeps a tight gap on the backpedal, but on the regroup/following a turnover, he just concedes the space instead of trying to make it up. No confidence closing space when he has support, presumably from his pivots (crossovers, can't load up, loses speed). Lots of reaching, too. In DZ coverage, he's often too late grabbing his man or letting them slip behind him. Doesn't communicate. Mirroring footwork is lacking -- he tries to follow but ends up conceding space. Less activation in this game, but more offensive skill than in previous viewings. Hit a couple of shot-passes to create scoring chances. Used the threat of the shot to set up a couple of looks on the PP. Stretched the ice with his vision on the exit, and drove plays to the inside when possible. Beats a player, then cuts off their recovery

route. Flashed a delay game when carrying the puck himself. He's a pick, but it's going to be a long, uncertain road.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2021

Everett Silvertips vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Hanzel had some really impressive moments in this game. He joined the rush, looked for the cross-slot pass from the point, and tried to use the inside lane. Most active on regroup and resets in the NZ, where he's comfortable passing against the grain, even when pressured. Closed space quickly in the DZ from pre-scanning and constant adjustment. Those are probably worth a draft pick, but there's a lot of work to be done. He's passive through the NZ, and struggles to handle pucks. He has the right idea, but exposes the puck constantly, and struggles with backhand-to-forehand transitions. Lacks small-area skating skills and evasiveness, but he moves the puck quickly after pre-scanning. Need more viewings before sticking him on the board.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2021

Everett Silvertips vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

More puck management issues in this game from Hanzel. His hands really kill otherwise intelligent and crafty plays. He doesn't protect the puck all that well, exposing it to sticks and doesn't keep his weight over top the puck. But ignoring the turnovers, he pushes plays to the inside, passes through pressure, and shows a bit of escapability. I really think there's something here. His rush defence was great tonight, pivoting and surfing across to angle out the attack. Diffused more complex rushes. Hit and miss DZ coverage, but the fundamentals are sound. He's a pick for me, but a late one.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 31st, 2021

Everett Silvertips vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

What a game. Hanzel scored the game winner, peeling off pressure, working the give-and-go, then cutting off the defender's recovery route and using his bottom hand to get free, then scoring with a bouncing puck. The ability to link all of those details together is rare for a non-big name prospect, especially a defenceman. All game long, his activity in the rush, both joining and leading, stood out. Passive gap through the neutral got exposed all game long, but he closed space and disrupted a few plays. Pre-scans on retrievals, establishing positioning, then moves the puck quickly. Pushes knees over toes, gets hips involved -- pretty much a properly loaded stride. A few tweaks on the extension and recovery are necessary, and he didn't seem to have a ton of small-area skating skills. Need a closer look, but seemed like an easy draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 28th, 2021

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Tough night for Hanzel on the breakout with Portland's forechecking generating turnovers all night. Hanzel's lack of separation skills were pretty noticeable. He's very inside edge-dependent, even with adequate posture, preventing him from linking together skating moves. Even exiting his turns with a crossover would make him a lot more projectable. Lots of activation in this game, as usual: flying up the weakside to get a pass, then delaying to find the trailer and give-and-goes from the point. Sometimes he wanders a bit, but mostly, he's in the right place as an activator. Scanned for off-puck threats, but he's a bit reactionary. He works to get back in position and had a few break ups on recoveries. Overplays the passing lane instead of erasing his man. Tough game, still showed draft-worthy skills in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2021

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

There's a ton of refinement required, but Hanzel's one of the best activators in the draft class. He instantly accelerates out of passes to gain positioning on his man, then jumps into the rush. Once he's in, he's committed, showing a bit of playmaking skill to bring the puck to the inside lane. Steps inside before firing, too. From the point, he fills weak side space and dips into space while managing his gap. He's not making Behrens-esque reads to jump behind his man and fill space in coverage gaps, but I wonder if those will come with more experience at this level and better OZP touch habits (he takes too many pucks flatfooted). Establishing body positioning on retrievals and quickly moves the puck, before getting into the play. In transition, he always looks to the inside, often skirting pressure and then hitting a moving target. There's no pop out of any of his turns or spins -- it's one move, stop, and then another move because he lacks depth and he's inside edge-dependent. He problem-solves with his hands a bit too much -- that'll get exposed at the next level. And his rush defence is a problem at this level because he doesn't load up his pivots (all crossovers instead of the mohawk). Some wandering off-puck, letting threats work around him. Definitely a pick, but the layers that he adds over this shortened season will determine where he ends up on the board.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Spokane Chiefs - WHL

Standout give-and-go game. He takes the pass in motion, makes the next pass in motion, then jumps into the rush. Finishes his routes, too. Always in the middle of the action in transition. Always looks inside first, often making a play up the middle or cross-ice to change the point of attack. Layers on just enough deception to mask his intentions at this level, but

he'll need more to fool NHL forecheckers. Doesn't just stick to the points -- jumping into space on the weak side. His shot's pretty awful right now, with that arm completely locked to his feet and getting no downward pressure over the puck. His skating has the basics -- knees over toes, full extensions, and proper hip-knee-toe alignment -- but his lack of explosiveness, push offs in his crossovers, and skating skills on retrievals limit his effectiveness. There's notably inconsistencies in his form, so strength's surely an issue here. Can't forget he was playing AAA last season, either. But the brain's really strong. With more defensive refinement (he has good athletic posture but plays too passively), I think he's a potential bottom-pairing defender. He's a pick, maybe in the late second.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 20th, 2021

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Admittedly, Hanzel's shot and lack of skating refinement are a bit concerning. He doesn't exit his punch turns with a crossover, killing the effectiveness of the move. He pivots with a crossover rather than a mohawk, and lacks any sort of push off power -- easily beaten to the outside. In-zone defensive errors are a problem, too, as he lets his man slip behind and chases the puck. But his engagement is so impressive. He recovers on mistakes by sheer reaction speed and hustle alone. Once he's in the rush, he stays in the rush. Confidence to hold the offensive zone and look for high-value passing targets instead of endlessly rimming the puck. He steps into space before firing, uses hook passes to beat sticks, and pushes pucks into the middle. This performance doesn't scream NHL draft pick, but his details and vision suggest there's a lot more here than we've seen so far.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 19th, 2021

Spokane Chiefs vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

WHL debut for Hanzel, and it was a good one. Right away, his transition smarts were evident, even with some pace-related turnover issues. He hunts the give-and-go, makes and takes passes in motion, and doesn't hesitate to activate into the rush. It was evident on his goal, where he used two give-and-goes: one to break the puck out, the other to gain the zone and get open for a one-time finish. That mentality translates to OZP, where he slips behind his man to fill space and looks to become an easy passing option. The shot is a major hurdle: he sweeps the puck, doesn't establish distance between his feet, and can't immediately transition into his weight shift. But he used the threat of the shot to distribute, connecting with a cross-slot pass for a chance. Consistent DZ engagement, scanning for threats and adjusting, but he wasn't able to leverage those into any sort of defensive stopping power. Based on this game, he's easily a draft pick. Some of the best activations I've seen from a defender in this class. **P**



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



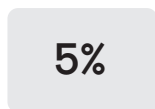
Hockey Sense



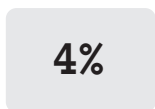
Physical

# JACK HARVEY

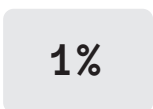
F | CHICAGO STEEL



2022 XLS



3Y REGR.  
bXLS



3Y REGR.  
iXLS



SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. OCT. 31, 2003  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS LEFT

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	60	26	23	49

> Committed to Boston Univ.

## Scouting Report

While we ranked Jack Harvey as the 80th-best prospect in the 2021 Elite Prospects Draft Guide, NHL teams didn't agree. It made sense, as a sub-6' player without much of a physical game and limited point totals, our confidence in Harvey wasn't likely to be shared by many. But after a breakout season, Harvey's earned another look.

Puck skills are the engine that drives Harvey's game. He seamlessly strings together pass receptions, dekes, and shots in motion. Hand speed and creativity combine with projectable set-ups – attack at an angle, slow down to bait the defender's stick, then accelerate – make his puckhandling an above-average NHL skill.

The puckhandling appears in Harvey's shooting in the form of curl-and-drag wristers and tricky off-the-pass shots. A mechanically sound wrister – hands extended in front of his body, elbow elevated, and chest up – not only generates significant power, it allows him to shoot from all sorts of compromised positions.

Harvey's biggest area of growth this season was the play-making, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown details: "He set up a goal with a quick shovel

pass, delayed after gaining the zone to set up teammates, and even cut back into a spin pass. And the crafty play-building plays that make him effective continued to appear."

For all of Harvey's skills, his touches remain infrequent and execution remains inconsistent, the reasons for which are tri-fold.

"First, he's inconsistent about engaging in battles and establishing body positioning. Both have improved this season, but remain weaknesses," Brown wrote in an April game report. "Second, he's a selective defender who plays a low-pace style but doesn't have the proactive positioning and awareness to justify it. Third, he's often inefficient with his touches, making plays overly complex, misses better passing opportunities, or brings the puck to the perimeter with the inside lane open."

Perhaps Harvey's progression wasn't quite as significant as the point total improvements would indicate, but he remains a player with draftable qualities. It'll take plenty of development and time, including at least three years at Boston University, but he could be a skilled third or fourth liner.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Another game without a ton of touches from Harvey from

the usual sources. In transition, he's mostly an off-puck player, getting ahead of or trailing the player to find space to use his shot. When he gets the puck, he makes short-

range plays, including the occasional tricky pass through defenders. The shot and handling skill remain the core of his projection. Whiffed on two great off-the-pass chances, suggesting some pass reception difficulties. He's always ready to shoot, scoring off an unlikely pass to the inside. Given time, he shows a textbook outside leg wrister: hands in front, elbow up, shoulders square – a base that allows him to explode through his shot and change the angle. I'm on the fence about Harvey's draftability. He clearly has NHL skills, but he remains a long-term project. He progressed, but the improvement wasn't as significant as I hoped. Could be an interesting late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Maybe Harvey's playmaking has improved. He set up a goal with a quick shovel pass, delayed after gaining the zone to set up teammates, and even cutback into a spin pass. Still showed the crafty play-building plays that make him effective. The hands and shot remain the best of his game. Pass receptions, in-motion plays, and handling form are all strengths. First touches are consistently strong, placing him in position to make the next play immediately. Fakes, then fires. Changes the angle inside the shot. Off-puck offence remains a strength: he understands how and where to support plays. Defensively, he's a complex projection. Stick's never in the right areas, even though he supports. Not afraid of contact, and he even proactively establishes body positioning, but he occasionally avoids contact entirely. The skating's still an average-to-below-average projection. He lacks ankle flexion. Lacks quickness. Edge work only appears at a standstill. Probably not a pick this year, but the puck skills are undeniable.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Not many touches for Harvey at 5-on-5 in this game. The source is tri-fold. First, he's inconsistent about engaging in battles and establishing body positioning. Both have improved this season, but remain weaknesses. Second, he's a selective defender who plays a low-pace style but doesn't have the proactive positioning and awareness to justify it. Third, he's often inefficient with his touches, making plays overly complex, misses better passing opportunities, or brings the puck to the perimeter with the inside lane open. The core of the projection is still the handling, shooting, and manipulation. He slows down to encourage the defender to lunge it, then accelerates. Not a draftable performance.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Harvey doesn't create a ton of offence because he's often kept to the perimeter, lacks an extra defensively, and doesn't have the physical skills to consistently win battles. One sequence where he established positioning, fought off the defender, then cut inside for a chance encourages optimism. Best chance: an off-the-pass wrister that he killed by handling instead of shooting immediately. He manipulates defenders in transition, dangles around them, and keeps showing improved playmaking skills. But he spent most of this game in his own zone. Not a draftable game, but an interesting one for the one standout sequence.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

A really effective game from Harvey, who combined his off-puck positioning, improved passing, and shooting game to great effect. Scored with a give-and-go after gaining the zone, finding the trailer before one-timer the sharp-angle return feed. Cut inside, then set up a scoring chance, showing his vision and handling in the process. Quickly identified options in all three zones. Once he winds up his shot, the shot always comes. But he's deceptive with the timing and release point. Some poor plays and inaccurate passes, but this game showed the steps necessary to get him drafted this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 26th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Harvey's playmaking appears to have taken some steps this season. He's more patient with the puck, waiting for the lane to open before passing. The manipulation that allows him to slice through defenders has translated to his passing, opening up lanes through look offs and deceptive body positioning. Without the puck, he's tougher to project. He's inconsistent about gaining positioning on defenders and has a selective motor. When he's working, he's disruptive. When he's not, he's missing opportunities to put his team back on the attack – that directly impacts the quality of offence he creates. Whiffed on his best chance of the game. Misses opportunities to find the best space, but he generally times his movements into space with the play around him. Not a standout performance, but there's an argument he's worth picking this year. The skill level is high.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Harvey's still one of the most skilled players any time he steps on the ice. He's a deft handler who manipulates defenders, steps inside, and has an NHL shot. Ability to chain

together different actions (pass reception -> deke -> shot) really stands out, even in a game featuring Fantilli, Perron, and others. Consistently gets open in the right areas, and the motor looks better. He's more engaged on the backcheck, takes the extra stride, and he's better at using his body to seal off pressure (still a weakness). But he's just so passive. He goes lengthy strengths of not really trying plays. He's content to let his teammates do the work. It's fine for a draft-year player on an ultra-deep team, but he needs to take charge to be a draft pick this year.

**J.D. Burke:** September 25th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Talk about coming through in the clutch. Harvey finished with the game-tying goal, scored on a breakaway with barely a minute left in this hockey game, and then scored the first shootout goal in a winning effort. Hell, Harvey almost scored the overtime winner, too. He looks a lot quicker than he did last season. Made a great backcheck in this contest to disrupt a sure thing goal. Found teammates through layers consistently in the offensive zone. Played on the inside. Strong effort. Looks like a player who could hang on our board again this year.

**Cam Robinson:** May 22nd, 2021

Chicago Steel vs Fargo Force - USHL

Quiet outing in the championship final for Harvey. His line saw very limited even-strength time. His best moments were some sound positioning as a secondary PK option, a slip pass to Coronato for a chance, and a snapping outlet pass under duress. He made a slippery little move to maintain control on an exit in the 3rd as well. He's not one to really push the pace, a lot of coasting and watching. He's a smart player who clearly has good hands but the shorter legs/extension limits his effectiveness.

**Cam Robinson:** May 21st, 2021

Chicago Steel vs Fargo Force - USHL

Harvey was active in this one. He was smart in open-ice to find some soft spots and receive it in motion for a chance. Came down the wall with speed and had a defender on his hip but managed to pull a very trick drag and curl. Went hard to the paint for a secondary opportunity. Had several shot attempts - at least two dangerous. Had a nice slip pass in the NZ to turn a passive rush into controlled entry and some sustained pressure. Jumped into the middle to grab a turnover and worked the front end of a give-and-go but didn't get it back. Would've been a HD chance. Noticeable let up on turnovers in the OZ though - you could see the pace fall from his skates. Technically, his skating looks okay. The

extension appears a bit short even for someone his size (5'10). His acceleration needs a lot more pop from a standstill, but he's shifty and smart. He clearly needs more strength. Looks like a nice upside pick in the later rounds.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 24th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Mostly a quiet offensive game from Harvey but impressive defensive growth on display. The motor's working more, with much better involvement on the backcheck and forecheck. Took the extra stride to come across the hips. Prevented point shots by closing out in a non-committing way. The skill's still the strongest element: independent hands and feet for manipulation in transition, first-touch dekes, nasty toe drag that fired a pass out of, and some shooting skill. Better off-puck reads than in previous viewings, identifying space around the slot, getting between checks. Accelerated into that space -- clear there's been recognition improvements. Still needs to do a better job supporting in OZP. Shooting mechanics are 5.5 or above: elbow up, top hand forward, catches puck in shooting motion, generates down force. Skating lacks some refinement, notable posture wise. Ankle flexion is almost there, but hips stay too high. As a result, can't engage his hips into crossovers or turns. This should improve given the separate hands and feet. He's not explosive, but he has some quickness and there's a path where he can become an above-average NHL skater. Second or third rounder.

**Daniel Gee:** April 3rd, 2021

Chicago Steel vs Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Harvey had very limited limits in the first half of the game, but as the Steel's lead increased, so did his playing time.

There were some considerable positives to Harvey's overall game against Dubuque. He was involved in three high-danger scoring chances, and recorded a primary assist late in the third. The first chance was a product of a great situational read in the neutral zone; first Harvey identified that a Dubuque defender pinched too aggressively, streaking up the left-hand boards as soon as possession changed to the Steel. From there, Harvey facilitated a two-on-one pass in which he dragged and faked a shot (great eyeline deception), sending the puck through layering to a teammate who had some puck control issues. Later in the second, Harvey activated off an offensive zone faceoff, cutting into the slot and unleashing a shot within seconds of the puck being dropped. His shooting mechanics are a bit strange -- his right ankle was completely planted parallel with his shoulders as he transferred his weight but the execution speed was significant. (Great upper body mechanics -- arms off hips, balanced over puck). Harvey's final chance



Rank



Grade



Skating



Transitions



Hands



Tracking



Post



Depth

# HUGO HÄVELID

G | LINKÖPING HC J20

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JAN. 1, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 CATCHES LEFT

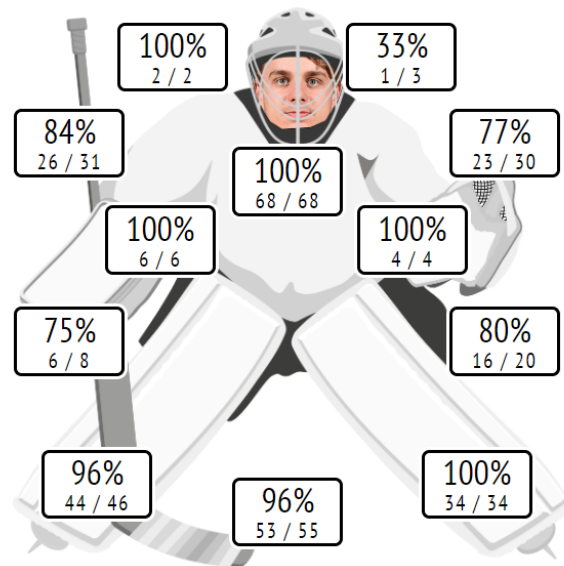
LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
J18 Region	6	2.34	.921	1
J20 Nationell	28	1.82	.920	5
WJC-18	5	2.41	.929	-

## Scouting Report

When we last checked in on Hugo Hävelid, the undersized tender was leading Sweden to U18 World Hockey Championship gold. Talk about ending the year on a high note.

So, don't be surprised if a team takes a flier on Hävelid in the later rounds of the draft with that performance fresh in mind. There are a lot of questions with the Linköping goaltender's game that could push him to the late rounds or even out of the draft entirely though, both in terms of what sort of ceiling is there and how long it will take to get him there.

Listed at just 5-foot-10, Hävelid just barely scrapes in above the silently-accepted industry floor for goaltender height at the draft. He's better than most smaller goaltenders at holding his positioning, preferring to stay closer to the goal line and dart out for an attack when trying to challenge shots. Like many Swedish-developed goaltenders, though, he's almost too reliant on playing from his knees – and at his height, it only takes an opponent with good wrist movement and a quick release to beat him up high. He utilizes his hands and quick, strong pad movement to take away most lower shots,



forcing opponents to aim high and sacrifice the hope of a juicy rebound in order to try beating him on the first shot.

Still, he leaves his top corners a little too exposed – and lacks a bit too much in the creativity department – to consider him a sure thing just yet.

## Game Reports

**Jimmy Hamrin:** May 1st, 2022

Sweden U18 vs USA U18 - WJC U18

An amazing performance in the gold medal game. Havelid let in 4 goals but made 46 saves as well. He played positionally sound, quite far in the crease with short distance to move sideways. He stretched out well widely and played with good reach although being undersized. I like the way he read the play but also his quickness to new situations. He

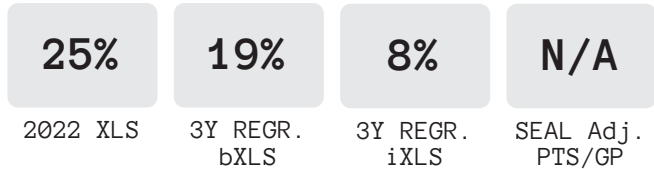
would want one angle shot back from the goals but all-in-all, he was solid. He played composure and saved many grade A chances from the USA. He saved a breakaway by just waiting out the shooter, reacting quickly and stretched out and made the save look easy. He was able to put up such a great performance due to good habits rather than luck. He displays good hockey sense, flexibility and speed. To that we can add competitiveness.



# AVERY HAYES

C/RW | HAMILTON BULLDOGS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. OCT. 10, 2002  
 WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	66	41	38	79

## Scouting Report

Following a breakout season with the CHL's top team, the Hamilton Bulldogs, Avery Hayes has earned another look in the NHL Draft.

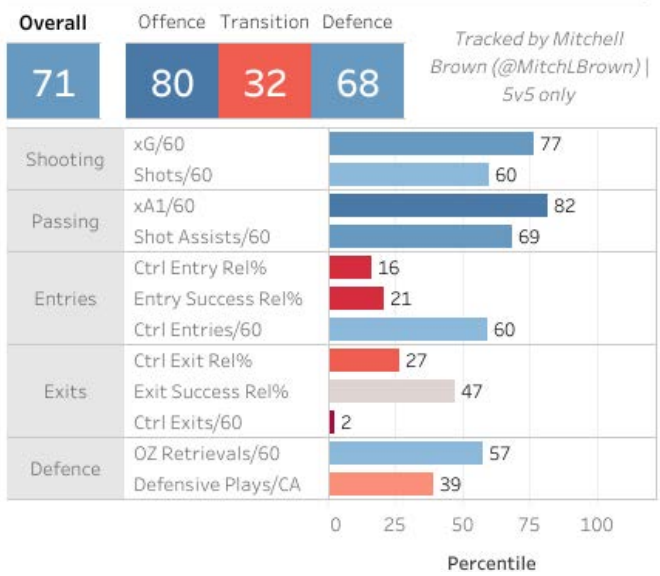
In flashes last season, Hayes showed a nuanced, deceptive approach to playmaking. He combined look-offs with fake shots to pull defenders towards him, then passed through them into the space they just emptied. Capable of slipping pucks through defenders or hooking passes around their sticks, he showed promise of becoming a small-area playmaker.

Now, those flashes are full-time features in Hayes' game.

With the playmaking, Hayes brings flashy, yet projectable puckhandling and shooting. The off-puck instincts that put him in the middle of plays last season became increasingly used to place him at the end of the sequence. Without fail, he knocks down tricky passes into two-touch wristers and fires contortionist-like one-timers when necessary.

Skating and pace limited Hayes' NHL odds last season. While the concerns remain, Hayes' skating has improved, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown details: "He gets deeper into his stance now. Skating skills are relatively limited and the stance remains high, but I'm a lot more confident in projecting his game to the NHL

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 90.6



now." And there's also the fact that he doesn't play a game that depends on speed, instead operating in the seams that a game based on out-racing defenders has created.

Further skating improvement should improve Hayes' transition and puck protection abilities. To make it to the big league, he'll need both to get as close to NHL average as possible. If he does, he could become a skilled third-liner with powerplay ability.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 25th, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Upon closer inspection, Hayes' skating has improved this year. He gets deeper into his stance now. Skating skills are relatively limited and the stance remains high, but I'm a lot more confident in projecting his game to the NHL now. Plus, he doesn't play a game that's dependent on speed. He doesn't cutback, but he slows down, waits for pressure, then passes. He spots the trailer, gets open off-puck, and turns a good chance into a great one by making the extra pass. Handling skill projects as above-average, owning hand speed, projectable mechanics, and a consistently strong first touch. Sneaky effective shot, largely based around his handling (changing angle, turning tricky passes into shots). I'm not convinced he gets picked this year, but he'd be a worthwhile late-round investment.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Hayes is Hayes. The skating looks a bit better than last year. He's a skilled handler and shooter. He has some off-puck instincts, complementing his off-the-pass shooting. Manipulates defenders in the offensive end, largely through looks off before passing. He's not much of a transition threat, preferring to defer early or making a quick pass to the inside and lurk. But I'm a fan of his game. There's upside here. Probably not significant, but he's flashy, confident, skilled, and inside-driven.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 3rd, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

Hayes ended the season on a 9-game point streak and was as offensively dominant as you would expect a 19-year old to be in the OHL in this game. Unfortunately, I don't know if I saw anything noteworthy aside from his goal - picked up the puck in the high slot and waited before ripping it into the net. Probably a pick because of production this season but as an average player, I don't know if I was all that impressed.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Skating and pace will prove limiting for Hayes at the next level, but he's an intelligent, creative player. Connected with several high-skill passes, including one that I didn't think was remotely possible. He doesn't just read openings, he anticipates them and leads his teammate into space with his passes. He's not much of a transition player; mostly just referring to teammates or getting pushed into the boards. But there's enough skill here to consider him in the late-rounds.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 11th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Hayes had the gamely insane puckhandling sequence, deking out two defenders before getting a chance. That was essentially all he did. The skating and pace remain issues. Occasionally deceptive, but didn't connect on any of his difficult passes. I appreciate his defensive energy and timing, but he's not a high impact player. Didn't look like a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Hayes' skating and pace will need serious work. He only looks to slow the play down, and defers a lot with possession. For a late-02 re-entry, I want to see more aggressiveness with the puck. But there's no doubting his offensive mind. He makes some crafty small-area passes, usually through defenders. There's deceptiveness to his setups, and he usually seems like he's thinking a step ahead. Awareness in general is a strength, as he arrives in the right places, shows some timing, and understands how to leverage that skill into playmaking. I'm curious to see how he develops this season.

**EP Rinkside Staff:** October 8th, 2021

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

Played on the top line with Mysak tonight and it looked like a good fit. He made smart, simple plays with the puck, drove the net on numerous occasions and followed up plays to generate 6 scoring chances and 4 shots on goal. He showed poise with the puck, accepted contact and made positive plays to his teammates. His skating seems to have improved, using linear crossovers on a few occasions to change angles on zone entries, as well as creating space while driving wide. He was used on the penalty kill and managed to create some offence off of a good read. He pressures with purpose and though his stick swings a little too much which can put him off balance, he was able to cut passes off. Overall, a pretty good game from Hayes to kick things off.

**David St-Louis:** February 26th, 2021

Martin vs Levice - Slovenka HL

Hayes's skating looks a bit better this season, but he continues being only a playmaker. Pace is slow, but he can keep the puck under pressure with rapid stickhandling moves and deceive opponents to create lanes. On the goal-line on the powerplay, he received the puck and looked at his bumper teammate, misdirecting the defence into thinking he was passing there, but he fed the puck cross-crease to his other teammate who came down from the opposite half-wall. Otherwise, some good puck protection habits. He doesn't



have the most balance, but he turns his back to opponents on reception and can find outlets under pressure. He looks like a pick.

**David St-Louis:** March 7th, 2020

Saginaw Spirit vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Skating looks like a big limiter. Extremely hunched over and barely any ankle flexion. Hayes is still young, but it feels like part of these mechanical flaws are here to stay due to just how pronounced they are. It really reduces his opportunities on the ice. He could have had a breakaway this game, but the backcheck easily caught up with him. He is adaptable and an above-average passer and playmaker, but not to the point of alleviating the skating concerns. Away from the puck, he shows decent timing to attack scoring areas and an effective usage of his stick to angle and deny passing lanes defensively.


**David St-Louis:** February 28th 2020

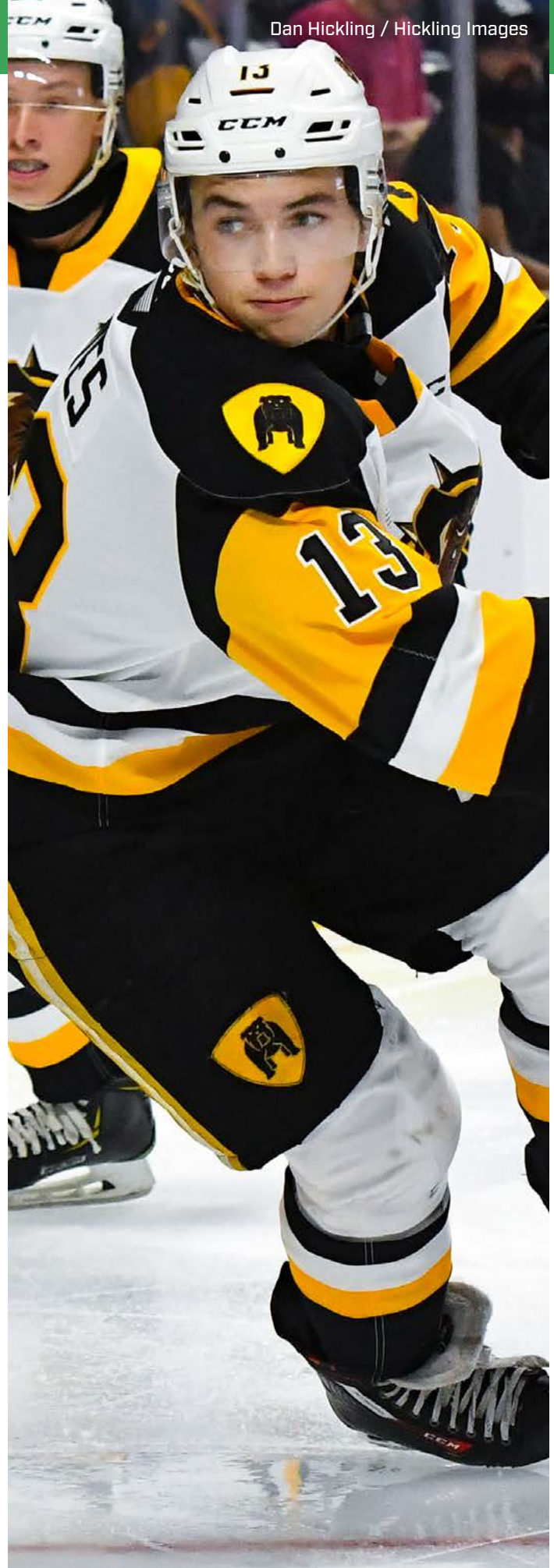
Hamilton Bulldogs vs Flint Firebirds - OHL

What a weird, interesting player. Avery looks a bit smaller than his 5'10" on Eliteprospects. He plays the game at a ridiculously low pace -- I've seen MHLers who move around faster. It's not necessarily a problem of skating ability. With some work, I think Hayes could get his stride up to NHL level, but more just a preference for approaching the game slow, his poise serving him to manipulate defenders, to make them uncomfortable. He is not much of a shooter, but a deft passer who always pre-scans and can slip or lob the puck around bodies, making all his plays through layers with pin-point accuracy. Lots of downfalls, but one talent that could elevate his whole game. Does it matter that he doesn't move if the puck, coming off his stick, always connects with teammates in a better position? Well, yes. But still. Great passing ability.

**David St-Louis:** January 4th 2020

Kingston Frontenacs vs Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Hayes's pace was pretty low again. His game is all passing and moving slowly to another spot, but he is smart about his approach, catching the puck to rapidly feed it to another teammate or dangle a first defender and then do it. He has some manipulation in his game, but nothing super effective right now (again due to a lack of pace). He scored a great goal by popping open for a teammate cross-ice ahead of time, perfect read and timing. Hayes seems to use a very long stick. It limits his puck maneuvering a bit. 

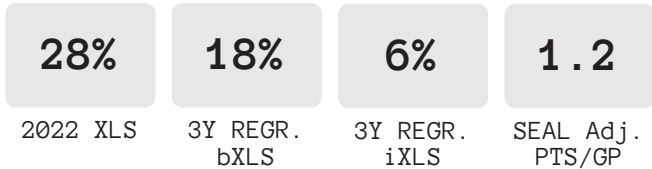




# GAVIN HAYES

RW | FLINT FIREBIRDS

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. MAY 14, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	65	19	30	49

## Scouting Report

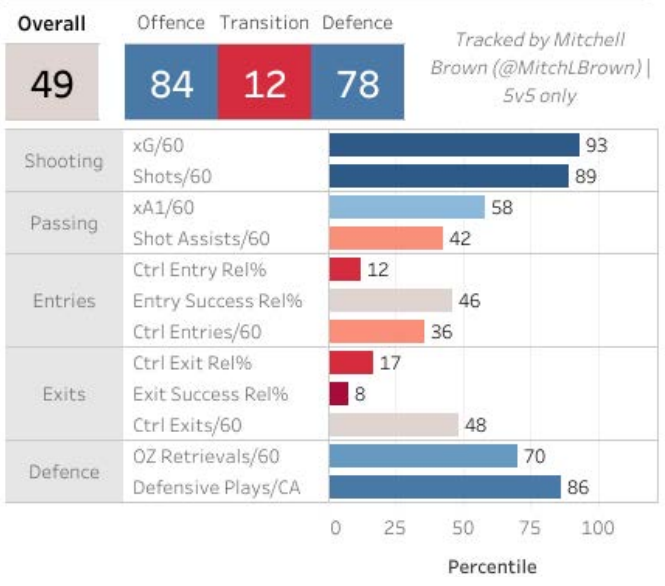
Despite bouncing back-and-forth between top-six minutes and a depth role, Gavin Hayes finished fourth on the Flint Firebirds in scoring. Contextually impressive scoring aside, he left our scouts scratching their heads more often than not.

Hayes isn't short on puck skills. When he's looking to create, he shows quick hands and a soft touch to navigate pressure. Some flashy passes and open-ice handling skill suggest there's more upside, too. And he has a projectable shot, especially off the pass. He adjusts his feet to maximize his contact through one-timers. In one smooth motion, he'll take a pass, establish body positioning on backpressure, and fire. Many of his placements are creative, like shooting in the direction the goaltender came from.

The other exciting element of Hayes' profile is his physical game. It doesn't appear consistently, but when he's in top-form, he's throwing hits, winning battles through body positioning, and creating space for himself with subtle shoulders and crosschecks. Over the course of the season, he became an energetic, disciplined defender, too.

For Hayes to make the NHL, it's going to take a lot of careful development. OHL scout Lauren Kelly expressed concern about Hayes' skating and his "inability to create space for himself at even-strength." Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown echoed similar concerns, while also highlighting his inconsistent off-puck offence: "He

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 90.6



doesn't put himself in position to get favourable touches. Skates his routes but never adapts to the play around him." Hayes also forces plays up the boards, defaults to dump-ins, and misses opportunities to make plays to the inside lane.

Hayes clearly has an appealing package of skills, even if they're inconsistently used. Off-the-pass shooting, puck skills, and physical potential all stand out in this regard. If he makes it, his NHL game could be the always-valuable hard-nosed shooter with in-tight skill.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Hayes had two chances in quick succession at the end of a powerplay. That was about it. He's glued along the boards in transition. Throws the puck away constantly. Sometimes physical, but usually chases the play. Passing isn't a part of his game unless the lane's obvious. Maybe I'm just getting sample size'd, but I haven't seen anything that suggests a player with NHL upside. No plays and reactionary.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

Hayes scored with a curl-and-drag wrister off the rush and set up another chance. But that was about it in this game. It's clear he has handling skill, but he doesn't use it to open lanes or prolong openings. His game is mostly based around reacting to problems, sometimes solving them, and relying on his teammates to get him the puck. Defensively, he's active, engaged, and physical. He gets steals by cutting off the top and anticipating passes. He doesn't overshoot his check, either. Quite disciplined in that area. But I don't see anything that suggests a draft pick. He's a solid player.

**Lauren Kelly:** March 27th, 2022

Kitchener Rangers vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Hayes opened the scoring in this one and scored the insurance marker, but the first was a shot from distance on a 4-on-3 powerplay and the second was just him being in the right spot on the doorstep to finish off a rebound. A lot of wrist shots from the hash marks, especially early on. Showed some nice puckhandling moments, but he wasn't really doing anything to drive offence off the rush. Couldn't find lanes to the net, establish body positioning on defenders... he seemed to back up from space at times, too. Engaged physically, laying hits along the boards (more to finish checks than actually separate player from puck, though). Skating is a mystery... he doesn't lengthen his stride or generate a lot of speed, but his edgework is decent and he can spin off checks in small areas well enough right now. He's the most dangerous when he has space (like on a powerplay) to wind up for shots, but didn't do much to create space for himself at even strength. There's something here, though. Could be worth a pick in the mid-late rounds.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 12th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Hayes threw a couple of hits, tried off some low-percentage shots, and grabbed a pair of essentially nothing assists. The energy's appreciable, even if a bit misguided sometimes. He

chases and overextends. He didn't get many touches, but he also doesn't put himself in position to get favourable touches. Skates his routes but never adapts to the play around him. Clearly has some shooting ability, highlighted by a mechanically sound wrister off the pass. Took the puck across his body instead of handling it. But I just don't see anything that suggests an NHL player. He's not doing anything in these viewings.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

Nothing too interesting from Hayes in this game. Failed nearly every pass he tried on the breakout. He didn't scan, rushed his pass, and didn't read incoming pressure. Entries weren't much better; he got angled to the perimeter too often. I didn't see the problem-solving ability to regain the middle, let alone the planning or manipulation ability to gain the middle in advance. He put in the work on the backcheck. When getting above the puck wasn't an option, he drove the play carrier into the carriers to force a dump-in. But that was about it. Didn't seem like a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 30th, 2022

Saginaw Spirit vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

I still haven't seen a ton from Hayes. He has moments, like the odd crafty pass through a defender, a quick deke on the PP, or a step-in wrister for a chance, but nothing that suggests NHL ability. He's not playing a ton, but he's also not giving the coaching staff much reason to play him more beyond the acceptable defence and dash of physicality. Far too conservative with the puck in transition - doesn't try to make any skilled plays. Sometimes, I wonder if he's not seeing options or if he simply doesn't want to take the risk. He generally has the right idea of where to be on the ice in any given situation, so it's not like he struggles to get the puck back. Weird player, but also a weird situation. Not sure he's a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 16th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. Windsor Spitfires - OHL

Hayes really struggles with the puck, and when he's not bringing a ton of energy on the defensive end, it's hard to see a path to the NHL for him. Right now, he's just a straight-line attacker who consistently dead-ends himself with the puck. Very little awareness of his surroundings, whether that's space, options, or threats. Fixates on plays and doesn't adjust when a better one opens, and he's too dependent on his weak glide to be a natural problem-solver. However, he's

also clearly a capable off-puck threat with some anticipatory ability. He should be scoring more by this stage. Probably not a draft pick, but worth keeping an eye on given his profile coming into the season.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 5th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Not much of an offensive performance from Hayes, save the 2-on-0 chance at the end of the game and a failed deke leading to a breakaway. But, he was terrific defensively. Several well-timed stick checks dislodged possession and created a scramble higher in the zone. Positioning was consistently solid, and he scanned for threats and eliminated options deeper in the zone when necessary. Threw a couple of hits to force a dump or turnover. I didn't see much skill, but this was an encouraging performance.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 24th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

First two OHL goals for Hayes in this game. He's certainly skilled. Hit a Zegras-style spin pass to a teammate for a scoring chance, and grabbed some scoring chances with NHL-quality shots. Generally, he occupies the right areas in the OZ, but his lack of movement and timing hurts him. Still, he grabbed a two-touch scoring chance after taking a pass on the backhand and transition quickly into the slot. At this stage, he has a significant lack of details. Unaware of body positioning, zero puck protection mechanics, and doesn't scan off-puck. He throws himself at the puck carrier to try to get a stop, but takes himself comically out of position in the process. He's a long ways out. Check again in a couple of months.

**EP Rinkside Staff:** October 29th, 2021

Erie Otters vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Hayes only had 8 minutes of ice time in this one, and it isn't difficult to see why. He did not play in the third. His first two shifts included 3 defensive zone turnovers where he had time to make a play and did not. What is noticeable however is his desire to play both sides of the puck. He comes low in the zone to support his defensemen, back checks with purpose (he broke up two clear odd-man rushes), and generally makes an effort defensively. The details are lacking which leads to the turnovers in dangerous areas of the ice, and for an individual of his size, he loses too many puck battles. It looks to be a balance issue more than a competitive one. He spots passes very well, but lacks the ability to execute - it seems as though his brain is at one level and the rest of his tools are unable to execute at that level.



**"Hayes clearly has an appealing package of skills, even if they're inconsistently used. Off-the-pass shooting, puck skills, and physical potential all stand out in this regard. If he makes it, his NHL game could be the always-valuable hard-nosed shooter with in-tight skill."**



# MAREK HEJDUK

F | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. JAN. 3, 2004  
WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS RIGHT

3%	4%	1%	0.8
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	52	10	9	19
USHL	27	3	6	9
WJC-18	2	0	0	0

> Committed to Harvard Univ.

## Scouting Report

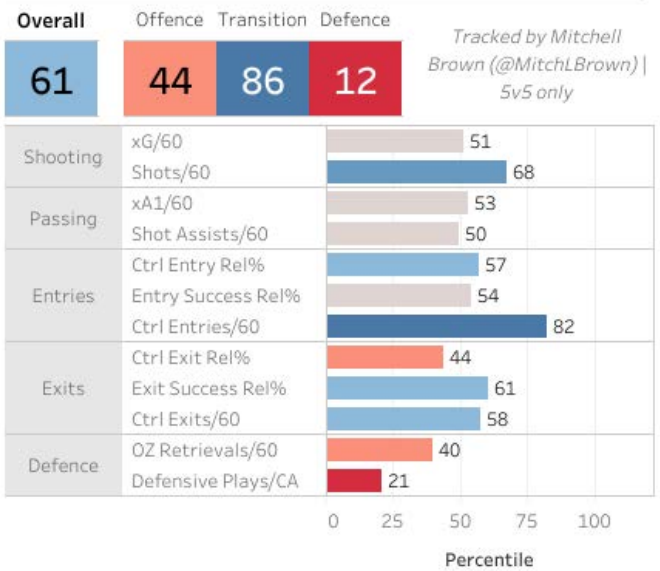
Marek Hejduk, the son of former long-time NHL Milan Hejduk, is one of the better handlers in the draft and not just because he can take USHL defenders 1-on-1 and come out ahead half of the time. He also possesses other handling skills, like the ability to underhandle, to keep the puck on his forehand to let lanes develop, and to use his backhand in tight spaces.

Those abilities, combined with the right deceptive habits and improved awareness of teammates, could make him a legitimate playmaking threat in college with the right development.

It's hard to look further than those college years for Hejduk, however, as his game at this stage is too raw to project to the NHL. The consequence of his dangle-heavy playstyle is that the puck often escapes him, going right back to the other team. His multiple turnovers reduced both his offensive and defensive value on the ice and, in turn, on Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown's manually tracked data set.

"Hands are Hejduk's best tool," Brown wrote in an October report. "Top hand in front, some deceptiveness, and he doesn't overhandle. He's not shy about getting inside either.

Games Tracked: 14 | Minutes Tracked: 147.0



He fakes the outside rush, waits for the pivot, and then cuts back inside. Skating lacks some power, but he's a fast read-and-react decision-maker."

Hejduk's puck management will have to improve if he wants to ascend to an NHL career or even to a top-six role in college hockey.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Solid outing for Hejduk, who usually plays a turnover-heavy game. Everything runs through his hands, which admittedly projects as above-average because of the technical proficiency, control, and set ups. After breaking down a defender, he looks to the inside lane. There's some foresight here, like slowing down to encourage a defender to chase before he chases towards the middle. The lack of teammate use is concerning. Don't see a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Hands are Hejduk's best tool. Top hand in front, some deceptiveness, and he doesn't overhandle. He's not shy about getting inside either. He fakes the outside rush, waits for the pivot, and then cuts back inside. Skating lacks some power, but he's a fast read-and-react decision-maker. Neither the shot nor passing skill stands out. He's not much defensively, either.

**David St-Louis:** October 29th, 2021


Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - NCAA

I thought Hejduk's skating looked above-average in this game

and I especially liked the occasional changes of speed from him off the rush. He can protect the puck as he carries it and create effective delays to hit trailing options. He stole the puck from an opponent at some point in the game, transitioned it to the offensive zone, and after engaging with an opponent, and seeing no immediate options in the slot, made a tight turn to hit his defenseman coming in with speed, leading to a shot from the middle of the slot. Playmaking seems to be his strength. He is not forcing, but taking what's available, and creating more with patience.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Hejduk had some moments in this game. Elbow up, pull-in wrister led to his goal. Some off-puck movement and skating sequences to get open, usually in transition. He's a skilled individual creator, flashing mechanically sound handling, change of pace ability, and a touch of creativity. He didn't have so much playmaking, vision, or foresight in any of the game, making him turnover-prone while consistently leaving value on the table. I'm intrigued, at least. 

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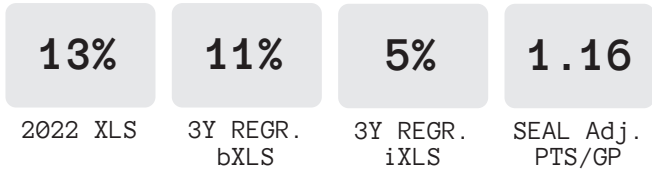
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# BEN HEMMERLING

F | EVERETT SILVERTIPS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. APR. 21, 2004  
WEIGHT 159 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	57	10	37	47

## Scouting Report

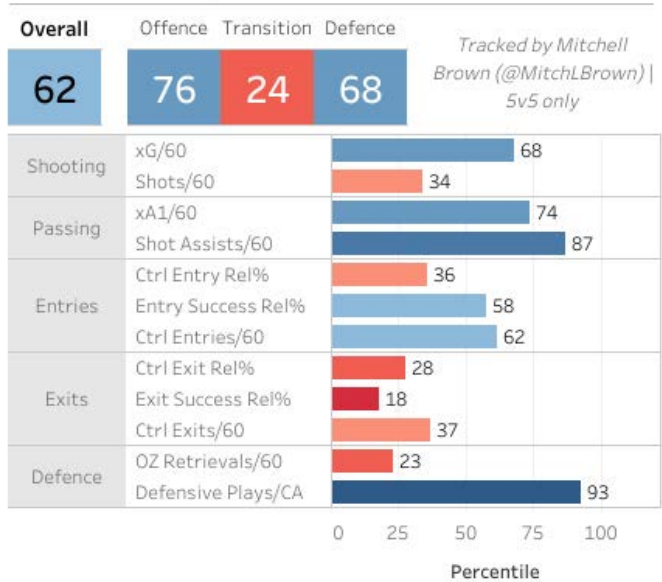
It doesn't take much effort to figure out Ben Hemmerling's game. He's a playmaker, as the impressive assist totals year-after-year suggest.

Off the rush, Hemmerling looks to beat defenders wide, then throw the puck back into the slot. He makes tons of short-range plays from the perimeter to the inside, occasionally slipping a puck through a defender on the backhand. And he shows similar skills off the cycle.

Despite the skills, Hemmerling's an inefficient playmaker. "[He's] not a proactive passer; he always looks to pass, but only after beating a defender wide or running out of space trying," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote. "The result is otherwise sound passing skills and ideas that result in turnovers." Additionally, he tries to force passes through lanes, rather than deceiving to open them first.

Hemmerling's much more than just a playmaker, however. He's a physical presence along the boards, using body positioning and the occasional big hit to win battles and force turnovers. After passing, he immediately sprints to fill the next lane, often getting him a scoring chance in the process. And he's a proactive defender away from the puck

Games Tracked: 6 | Minutes Tracked: 93.2



and a determined one when in pursuit of the puck carrier.

When Hemmerling's in open ice, he shows more projectable playmaking ideas - quick, short-range passes to open teammates. Transferring that style to perimeter game, along with more diverse rush patterns, could land Hemmerling a spot on a team's fourth line.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: April 10th, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Hemmerling's not a proactive passer; he always looks to

pass, but only after beating a defender wide or running out of space trying. The result is otherwise sound passing skills and ideas (i.e., short-range passes from the boards

to the middle through a defender) that result in turnovers. Likewise, much of his playmaking is hope passes. He does scan, but he tries to force pucks through lanes rather than adapting the puck positioning pre-pass. He has some board skills through desire to make contact and body positioning. Gets defenders on his back, but there he's usually looking for simple passes. Some off-puck ability, certainly more than his goal totals might suggest. I don't see the extra layer of skill necessary to bring his game to the NHL. I don't think he's a candidate for our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Vancouver Giants - WHL

Hemmerling had some chances in this game, mostly rebounds and short-side jam plays. One deke and inside drive for a look. Motor on the backcheck really stands out. In transition, he's mostly a straight-line attacker. Strides are short with a wide recovery. Low crossover use and his hands and work are locked in rhythm. He has the right idea on most of his passes, even showing some play-planning ability, but he can't manipulate defenders to open the lanes. Really, he's not even deceptive enough to keep already-existing lanes open. He's scoring because of his role, but I don't see much NHL ability here.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

A bit of a quiet game from Hemmerling. There are a lot of little appreciable details in his game, from his defensive zone support to his body positioning. Turned body positioning into spin pass for a scoring chance. He's a relatively physical player who looks to make contact along the boards, but he tends to lunge and overshoot in open-ice. He's not much of a transition threat or manipulator. He's not deceptive either. Mostly a straight-line player without much of a shooting threat. NHL upside, but I doubt he makes our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 21st, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

A cleaner transition game from Hemmerling than normal, as he was able to capitalize on speed differentials to gain the outside lane. A couple of chances following up a rebound, but

while he shows some off-puck instincts, he's rarely looking to shoot. Missed a couple of passes for scoring chances but the ideas were sound. He's mostly a short-range passer without a ton of qualities that suggest he'll keep having success at the next level. Don't see the upside.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 12th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

Hemmerling has some crafty passing ideas: he finds the trailer, beats defenders wide then throws the puck into the slot, and makes slip passes off the backhand. Many of his deliveries are inaccurate or to no one in particular. Overly reliant on outside speed in transition, and doesn't have the skating to consistently make it work in the WHL. He has some physical components, ranging from body positioning in puck battles to the occasional hit on the forecheck. But I didn't see anything that suggested an NHL player.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 28th, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Hemmerling is a classic Silvertip prospect, beyond size. He wins battles and looks to work play to the inside. Crashes the net at the right times. Pushes off his check just in time to receive a pass or deflect a shot. He's a pest around the net more than a skilled finisher. Passing lacked accuracy and advanced ideas. Mostly a straight-line player. No skilled plays with the puck in this game. Didn't look like a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 19th, 2021

Everett Silvertips vs. Vancouver Giants - WHL

Hemmerling stood out for his passing. His best was a look-off forehand pass to the slot for a chance. He threw several pucks into the slot blindly, but connected with a couple. His best work comes from a controlled glide – lacks pace. Turned down an easy pass to the slot for a net drive that failed. Overall, an interesting playmaker. He's a bit deceptive and has some advanced ideas, but lacks the passing skill and scanning to make the most of his abilities. With the playmaking comes intense pressure on the puck carrier and forechecking ability. A simple, straight-line transition player glued to the perimeter. Didn't see draftable qualities in this game, but he's close.







# RYAN HOFER

C | EVERETT SILVERTIPS

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. MAY 10, 2002  
WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS LEFT

6%	4%	1%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	67	25	33	58

## Scouting Report

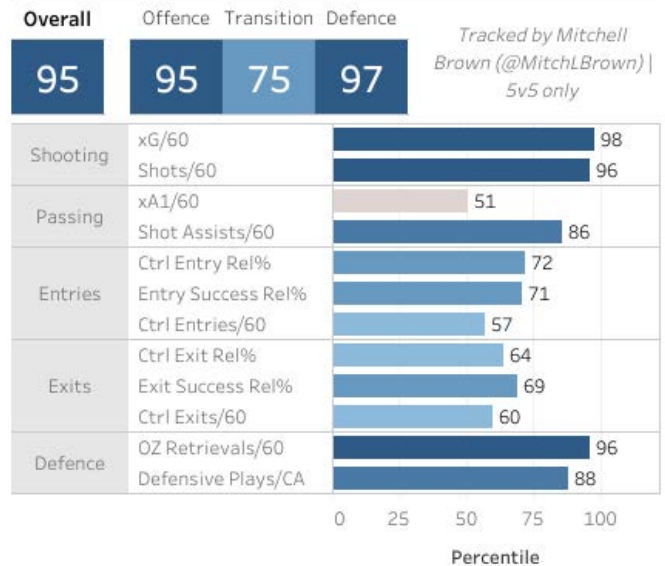
Sub-point per game draft-plus-two forwards don't usually get drafted, let alone make the NHL, but Ryan Hofer has the skills to beat the odds.

Shooting is Hofer's best skill. "[His] in-stride wrister is a legitimate NHL shot: elbow and chest up, ankle flexion, knee bend, and initiates the downforce by landing on his heel after a hop," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a January game report. He combines that shot with off-puck movement, timing his dashes to the net and gaining inside positioning on the nearest defender to keep his stick free. At the WHL level, he's a scoring chance machine.

With the shot comes several qualities that could make Hofer an effective checker in the NHL. He's always involved in the defensive end, supporting the puck and eliminating off-puck threats. Those same skills combined with a physical game make him a forechecking presence. Along the boards, he throws reverse hits and establishes body positioning to keep defenders on his back, then drives to play to the inside.

To make it, Hofer's skating must improve. An upright stance limits his quickness, but more important for his game, it

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 130.2



limits his leverage along the boards. By swapping out the straight-line rushes for give-and-gos and developing more passing skills, he'll become less reliant on advantages he won't carry to the NHL.

With those improvements, Hofer could beat the odds and become an effective NHLer.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: March 18th, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Vancouver Giants - WHL

The shot, defence, and physicality were here in this game, but I didn't see enough to place Hofer on our board. The

skating's always limiting, but it was especially problematic in this game. He struggles with transition play, pursuit, and puck battles because of it. He works hard to offset his limitations, but he's probably not quite strong enough as a playmaker

to bring his transition game to the net. He scans and often has the right ideas in the OZ, but his timing on his passes is consistently off and he lacks a slip pass. In transition, he defers but rarely takes control with a give-and-go. Has interesting NHL elements (shooting, off-puck, puck protection instincts), but his skating and playmaking are too limiting at this stage. He'll get picked, but will require significant development.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

Hofer has some net-front skills, shooting deception, and some off-puck instincts. High work rate, especially in pursuit. The skating's bleak. He has the right idea along the boards – deceive, get pressure on back, cut inside – but his lack of depth allows smaller defenders to knock him off balance. Limited playmaking in this game. He recognizes basic opportunities but lacks the skill to access tricky lanes. No high-level vision or skills on display. To transfer any of his interesting attributes to the NHL, significant skating refinement is required. Probably not a pick for us, but I suspect an NHL team will take him.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 21st, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

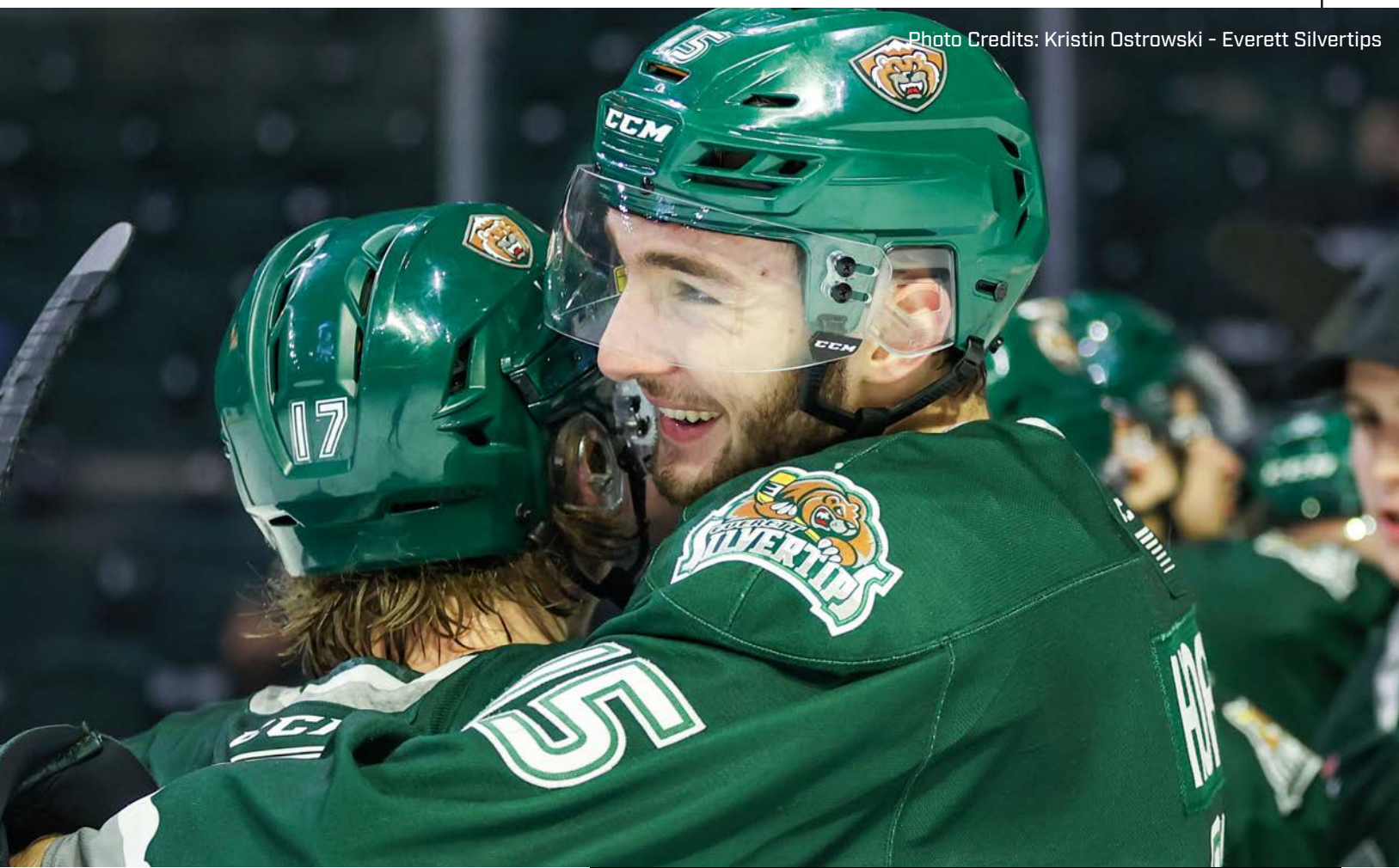
There are a number of things working against Hofer: he's

a D+2 and a 4-grade skater while only scoring around a point per game. But he also has a number of standout elements, starting with his shot. It could be a 6 or even higher. There's little wind up in his outside leg shot, transferring his weight quickly without many tells. Prefers to shoot inside crossovers in transition, using a textbook set-up: hopping onto the inside leg, landing heel first, keeping his chest and shoulders up, while using ankle flexion to generate the downforce for the shot. Understands how to support the puck in all three zones, even showing more advanced off-puck movement like delaying, then sprinting around the back of the defender. Constantly establishes body positioning. Well-timed cutback use in all three zones, delaying for breakdowns and creating space in the OZ. Didn't see much creativity or playmaking, but he looked like he had an NHL shot and mind. The skating lacks ankle flexion, hip engagement, consistency, and he has little quickness. We'll see how he plays down the stretch, but he could be an interesting late-round player.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 12th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

Hofer's puck protection was his best element in this game. He pre-scans before getting pucks, deceives by angling his feet in the opposite direction he's planning to go, and then



establishes body positioning. Throws reverse hits with perfect timing, then moves to the inside. He's mostly a shooter, showing an NHL-calibre in-stride wrister, as well as some off-puck instincts. Lots of playmaking, but mostly simple plays. Timing on passes from the boards to the middle was off. Skating's the major hurdle. Doesn't get his knees to his toes. Shockingly good skating habits (high crossover integration), but his skating might prevent him from becoming an effective AHLer, let alone NHLer. Still, he has some interesting elements.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 28th, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Simple, effective game from Hofer. Shot is the most projectable skill, firing off either leg and generally choosing the right shot for the situation. In-stride wrister is as legitimate NHL shot: elbow and chest up, ankle flexion, knee bend, and initiates the downforce by landing on his heel after a hop. Drives play to the inside consistently, even if it's not pretty. At the end of a shift, he gained the zone, delayed, and passed to a teammate instead of dumping the puck. Otherwise, he mostly deferred in transition. Physical game has projectable elements (timing on cutbacks, getting pressure on back). He's not an NHL player without significant skating improvement, which will probably keep him off our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 15th, 2022

Everett Silvertips vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

I suppose Hofer's actually a bit more interesting than the standard D+2 mere point per game prospect. There's a very clear weakness that holds him back: skating. It prevents him from getting space that he clearly anticipates, from accessing passing lanes that he spots, from beating defenders despite proper set-ups. Improve it, and there's likely a significant shift in his effectiveness. He already plays a modern off-puck style complemented with an NHL shot (particularly off the inside leg, along with a projectable cycle game where he's preparing space, making contact early, and cutting back into space. Consistently attacks the inside in the OZ, although his

game can be a bit too straight line in the NZ. The defensive engagement and anticipation on retrievals are pluses. Tries some advanced passing plays but lacks the skating and hand skill to properly access those lanes. He's interesting, for sure. Not sure how to project him.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 1st, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

Hofer's skating is a huge hurdle. There are moments where it acceptable as a bottom-end NHL projection, but it's mostly clearly not NHL-calibre. He gets little ankle flexion, and subsequently, little hip engagement. He recovers wide (inconsistently), doesn't finish his strides, and doesn't engage his arms. Covers ground quick enough, but that won't be enough going forward. Still, there are some reasons to appreciate his game. For one, he's an NHL shooter, and any skating improvements will be directly visible in his shot. He occupies the right areas of the ice, but I'd like to see better movement. A physical presence, and more importantly, he leverages that physicality into steals and body positioning. Diligent on the defensive end – always give himself a chance on the backcheck. I don't know if it's NHL calibre, but most players with this profile aren't this interesting.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 19th, 2021

Everett Silvertips vs. Vancouver Giants - WHL

The stride's not even close to NHL-calibre, but Hofer overcomes mechanics with pace. It won't work at the next level, but he anticipates, sprints, and never takes his foot off the gas pedal. Physical style with some puck protection potential if the skating comes along (deceptive on retrievals and keeps pressure on his back). Attacked the middle, drew defenders towards him, kicked the puck out to the perimeter. Lots of no-chance passes to the slot, but he scans for options first. Rather, his limitation comes from hurrying his plays and a lack of ability to open lanes. Re-entry with mediocre numbers, probably not a player but he's worthy of additional viewings.



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# OTTO HOKKANEN

F | SAIPA

HEIGHT 6'2"

D.O.B. FEB. 10, 2004

WEIGHT 187

SHOOTS LEFT

36%

2022 XLS

27%

3Y REGR. bXLS

14%

3Y REGR. iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s.	14	6	10	16
Liiga	30	1	0	1
WJC-18	5	0	0	0

## Scouting Report

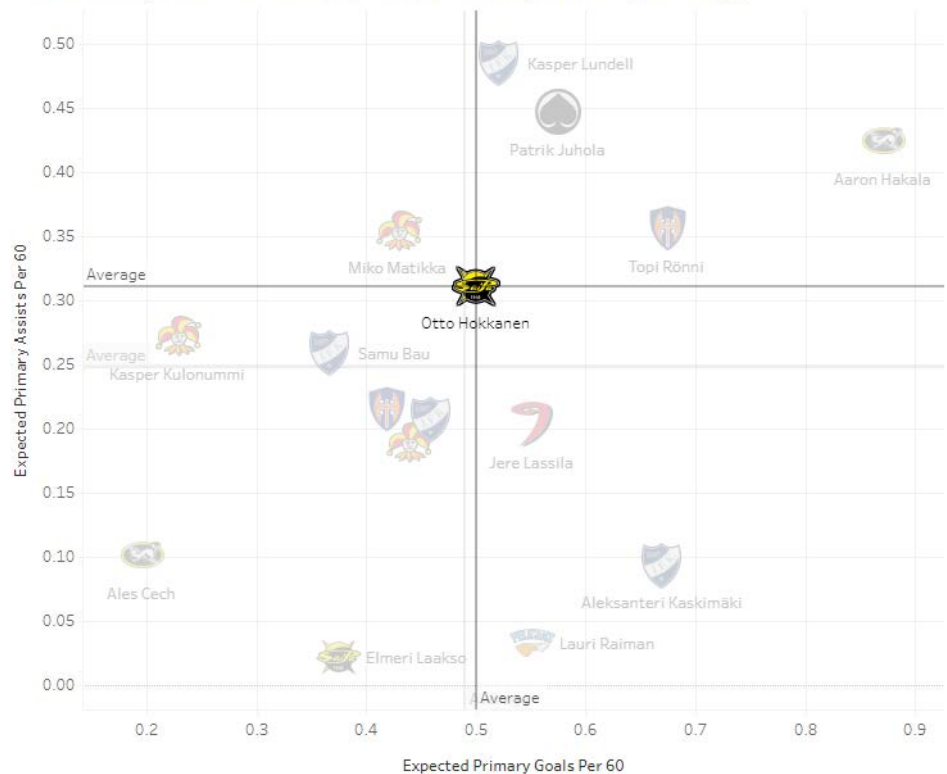
Even though Otto Hokkanen was a top-line forward among the '04-born Finns internationally as recently as a year ago, it doesn't seem likely at this stage that he'll even walk the stage in Montréal at this year's draft.

You can see that fall from grace in the way that he barely made his country's U18 roster this last spring, settling for a bit part on their fourth line. Some players peak early, and that may well be the case with Hokkanen.

Things just didn't go well for Hokkanen this season. He averaged eight minutes a night over 30 games in the Finnish Liiga last season, and when he dropped down to the U20 SM-Sarja, he joined a team that failed to make much noise at all this year in SaiPa.

Partly because of the context of his draft year, it was hard for our staff to identify potential NHL elements in Hokkanen's game. His tools mostly ranked below-average, though Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen sometimes caught flashes of handling and passing ability.

U20 SM-sarja 2021-2022: Expected Primary Points (5v5 only)



We'll get a far more accurate picture of Hokkanen's game by the end of next season, and perhaps we'll have to revisit him in time for the 2023 NHL Draft. For now, there wasn't any justifying find a place for him on our board.

**Lassi Alanen:** April 23th - May 1st, 2022 - U18s

Hokkanen spent the entire tournament centering the fourth line aside from the one game he missed due to a suspension after a stupid check from behind. Not a whole lot to say as he was clearly the third-most effective player on the fourth line and got outplayed by both of his wingers. Didn't contribute much offensively and didn't have a huge impact on the defensive side, either. Hokkanen's stock has really fallen from the start of the season.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 12th, 2021

Finland vs. Switzerland U18 Five Nations

If anyone had a disappointing performance in this tournament, it was Hokkanen. There's not much to write about, because he didn't catch my eye in any game. He started on the second line, but got moved to the fourth unit after the opening game where he played both center and wing. There were literally just a couple of occasions where he did anything notable with the puck in the entire tournament. Mostly, he was just chasing the play and being very invisible. Not a very encouraging sign going forwards and consistent with most of the previous viewings this season.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 6th, 2021

SaiPa vs. Pelicans - U20 SM-sarja

This was yet another more promising showing compared to the start of the season. Hokkanen scored off the rush by crashing the net from the weak side and backhanding the cross-ice pass from the net-front. He also added a primary assist by creating an OZ breakup, passing the puck to the point for a shot that ended up going in. He could have also added a second one, getting the puck in motion near the OZ blue line after a stretch pass, challenging the defenders by trying to break free through the inside lane, and managing a last-second pass to his side for a HD chance. I'd still want to see him driving more offence and making more complex plays, but this is definitely a step forward. Caused havoc on the forecheck, too.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 5th, 2021

Lukko vs. SaiPa - U20 SM-sarja

Hokkanen had probably his most productive game of the season, having multiple high-quality chances and eventually scoring the game-tying goal with a quick snap shot from a tricky position. Some of Hokkanen's chances came by the way of being in the right place at the right time, but in some, he was the single-biggest contributor. I still don't see similar level of skill I saw at times last season, but I guess this was still a step in the right direction. He had some decent de-

fensive moments down low, but also some positional errors.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 24th, 2021

Jukurit vs. SaiPa - U20 SM-sarja

Hokkanen took a bad-looking high stick in his second shift of the game and was out for a quite bit of the first period as of result, but resulted after 15 minutes or so. This was his chance to play against a bit weaker competition compared to my previous viewings, and his line didn't get caved in as hard as of result, but I also didn't see any particularly intriguing stuff from Hokkanen. His offensive game has been very bland. His skates at an okay level, but doesn't really have manipulative rush patterns, good edges or super-fast straight-line stride. His hands have been pretty underwhelming, often handling in front and not being able to beat defenders 1-on-1 in tight. The glimpses of intriguing playmaking from last season have been obsolete, as he hasn't made a single high-end pass in the games that I've seen. Right now he's just a dime-a-dozen center at this level, which doesn't bode well in terms of the draft.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 16th, 2021

Tappara vs. SaiPa - U20 SM-sarja

Hokkanen's line continues to get caved in by way superior teams, which means a lot of time in the defensive end and very little puck touches. The most memorable play was when he got a decent off-the-rush one-timer chance, but even there he didn't have to do much (aside from the off-puck route and slight chance of speed). Very hard to draw many conclusions from these kinds of games, but I think it's safe to say Hokkanen hasn't progressed much from last year, actually the reverse seems to be the case. He's not showing the same OZ playmaking or skill flashes that I saw a year ago. Handling looked a bit shaky. Defensive zone play isn't necessarily a strength. SaiPa plays a man-to-man defence and Hokkanen was a bit sloppy at times with his coverage, reacting late or giving too much space to his man.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 15th, 2021

TPS vs. SaiPa - U20 SM-sarja

Not a very memorable game from Hokkanen's perspective. The skill discrepancy between these two teams was huge, and Hokkanen's line got caved in for the entire game. He really got to make one noteworthy play with the puck aside from few exits passes, which was a nice drop pass off an entry and cut to the middle that resulted in a high-danger chance. Hokkanen has some explosiveness from standstill, but his edgework and quick turns weren't very promising. Some decent off-puck moments, but also some very weird

DZ wandering despite ok amounts of scanning. Oh, and he got absolutely manhandled trying to steal the puck from Juraj Slafkovsky along the boards.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 8th, 2021

Ässät vs. SaiPa - Liiga

A little bit better viewing compared to my previous one of Hokkanen at the Liiga level. At least this time, he was able to get a scoring chance with decent off-puck movement, being in position to receive a cross-slot pass that he one-timed pretty well from an awkward stance. Really good hustle on one backcheck, too, preventing a 2-on-1 situation by getting his stick in the way of the shot. Other than that, he was mostly very invisible. Couldn't win many battles, struggled to hold on to the puck, had some issues with handling. Stride isn't that pretty, lacks ankle flexion, but hustles hard, which masks some of the technical deficiencies. Could be a bigger issue if he plays more and can't go all out on every shift.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 10th, 2021

KooKoo vs. SaiPa - Liiga

Under seven minutes of ice time for Hokkanen in his regular season Liiga debut with SaiPa. Not too much to write home about. His line wasn't able to generate any kind of offence out there, only adding one shot attempt during that time. Hokkanen's puck touches were very limited and even when he got the puck, it mostly resulted in a turnover either by bad handling and no scanning. Skating looked fine for this level, I guess. Lacked ankle flexion, but had pretty solid knee bend and had decent skating habits. Probably projects as an average skater right now. Received one shift on the power play where he didn't do much.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 22nd, 2021

Pelicans vs. SaiPa - U20 SM-sarja

This was yet another game where Hokkanen had impressive flashes, but the output just wasn't consistent. He was drifting a lot without the puck, not skating to make himself available or being late on the rush because he was deep in the defensive zone. Part of it might be the team just being worse than the opposition on most nights, though. Hokkanen's puck rushes are quite good when he gets the chance to do it. He's not attacking in straight lines, but instead uses crossovers and speed differential to try to beat defenders. His hands are

good, too, and he likes to push the play towards the middle. There was one especially good scenario where he just rushed up the ice, establishing body positioning with crossovers to cut in front of the opposing center, getting a high-danger chance that he unfortunately couldn't bury (the pass came from his weak side). Hokkanen shows intriguing flashes, but we'll have to see whether it becomes more consistent. Right now, the puck touches are very limited.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 10th, 2021

SaiPa vs. Pelicans - U20 SM-sarja

Hokkanen logged over 15 minutes of ice time in this one and showed flashes of very intriguing skills. His offensive instincts seem to be good. He made one really nice give-and-go play, moving the puck back to his middle-rushing linemate with one touch. Hokkanen's hands seem to be pretty good. He's a top-hand dominant handler who has good reach and maneuvers well. There was one particularly good rush where he attacked the defender on an angle, beating him outside with a well-timed move while keeping his feet moving and then looked to pass the puck to the middle with backhand. He showed good transition skills in a few other scenarios, too. He lacks ankle flexion, but his back angle stays consistent and he has good explosiveness, even if the stride needs some work. He flashed the ability to absorb contact before taking the puck in the corner, but it wasn't frequent. His off-puck defending was a lot of contact, but when he initiated it, he seemed rather soft despite his size. He did a fine job defensively for the most part, sometimes failing to scan enough and get his stick more involved. Played on the penalty kill, too.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 11th, 2020

Kiekko-Espoo vs. SaiPa - U20 SM-sarja

Hokkanen played close to 17 minutes on Saipa's 2-4 loss against Kiekko-Espoo. Hokkanen wasn't doing that much in this one. He played a lot on the power play where he was put in front of the net/behind the net and didn't get very many puck touches. He was used on the penalty kill for a few shifts, too. Hokkanen had a few good stickhandling sequences where he showed a dominant top-hand. His skating seemed average for his size and his turns had power and quickness behind them. He could have been more active off-puck and made himself available more often. Too many times he was just standing stationary in front of the net.



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# RYAN HOPKINS

D | PENTICTON VEES

HEIGHT 6'2"

D.O.B. APR. 15, 2004

WEIGHT 174

SHOOTS RIGHT

16%

2022 XLS

10%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

10%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.4

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
BCHL	47	7	24	31

> Committed to Univ. of Maine

## Scouting Report

Like many other prospects in this year's draft, Ryan Hopkins missed the entirety of his 2020-21 season. Contrary to expectations, his adjustment to the BCHL didn't take much time at all, despite the league representing quite a step up in competition up from the boarding school hockey he played in Québec.

Hopkins doesn't complicate plays on the ice. He backs off the offensive blue line way ahead of offensive turnovers to safeguard his team, steps up in the neutral zone to stop the opposing rush, and chooses the most evident outlet with the puck every time, the short breakout pass or the chip off the glass to a rushing teammate. His simple but effective playstyle

earned him minutes on the back-end of the Penticton Vees and will certainly give him a steady role at the University of Maine, too, in 2023-24.

"With improvements to his skating and handling, he could take off as a shutdown defenceman in the NCAA," Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis wrote in a March game report. "The stride looks better when he gets to speed, which is encouraging. At the point, he made some fakes to create lanes, but otherwise, his game is mostly simple passes."

Hopkins' below-average to average skill level, in terms of projection, doesn't inspire much confidence in an NHL projection, unfortunately.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** March 5th, 2022

Penticton Vees vs. Trail Smoke Eaters - BCHL

The skill game is quite limited in Hopkins. He tries to make some plays but the timing and setup are off, even at this level, which doesn't project all that well to the NHL. That being said, he's effective because he's engaged defensively and still aware of his options. His plays have a purpose. With improvements to his skating and handling, he could take off as a shutdown defenceman in the NCAA. The stride looks better when he gets to speed, which is encouraging. At the point, he made some fakes to create lanes, but otherwise his game is mostly simple passes.

**David St-Louis:** March 3rd, 2022

Penticton Vees vs. Wenatchee Wild - BCHL

Uneventful performance from Hopkins. If I wasn't looking for him, I would not have noticed him. The breakouts were slow in terms of execution and, while he managed to close his gap quickly, he didn't have a lot of stopping power, standing flat-footed at the blue-line and not having the balance to resist contact. I liked the defensive engagement in general. The tools look below-average to average in general, but Hopkins did distribute the puck well at the point, making a good use of feints.

# JAKUB HUJER

LW | ROUYN-NORANDA HUSKIES

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. JUN. 17, 2004

WEIGHT 194 SHOOTS LEFT



<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0.89</b>
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	49	9	15	24

## Scouting Report

This was Jakub Hujer's first year of North American hockey, after joining the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies ahead of this season via the CHL Import Draft. Standing at 6-foot-3 and with a modestly productive QMJHL rookie year under his belt, it's not hard to see why NHL Central Scouting was drawn to the Czech blueliner.

For our staff, though, Hujer has a long way to go before he's a legitimate NHL prospect. He will need to develop

nearly every part of his game significantly to get there. You'll find his skating and pace somewhere near the top of the list. Hujer struggled to keep up with the QMJHL game last season, and his high stance limited his stride's extension and overall speed.

His ability to distribute the puck and mete out hits both rate as junior-level tools, but that's about it for a skills foundation there. Hujer is a long-term project if there ever was one.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 1st, 2022

Victoriaville Tigers vs Rouyn-Noranda Huskies - QMJHL

Hujer seems too far behind mechanically to become an NHL prospect. The skating projects as significantly below-average, in terms of speed, acceleration, and agility. His stance is high, very high even, and he's behind the play. There were some good passing moments in this game, but nothing that suggests he will become much more than he already is.

**J.D. Burke:** August 6th, 2021

Czech Republic U18 vs. USA U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

A pretty grim outing for Hujer. Even the most simple plays with the puck seem agonizingly difficult. He's every bit as clumsy a player as one would expect a 6-foot-3, about 200-pound winger to be at this stage in their development. His first touch especially... woof. His skating stride leaves him behind the play more often than not; it's high, tilted at the hips, lacking depth, etc. Couldn't connect on any of his attempted passes to save his life. However! He did pick up

a goal in the third period, in spite of his best efforts not to. Bobbled a loose puck high in the slot, but eventually settled it down and rifled it past the American goaltender. Not even sure this is a player worth considering at the end of the draft.

**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

Czech Rep. U18 vs. Finland U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Just a totally cromulent performance from Hujer. Some really great habits on display. Forced a couple of turnovers by playing high, above the puck, and making perfectly timed interventions to come away with possession. Supported well in the defensive zone and always made himself available as an outlet without cheating. He's sturdy, too. Absolutely put a Finnish defender on his ass with a reverse hit about halfway through this contest. High skating stride is problematic. Not a particularly fleet of foot player. Might be of interest for the later rounds, but probably not. I don't see any separating skill that augurs an NHL future.







Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

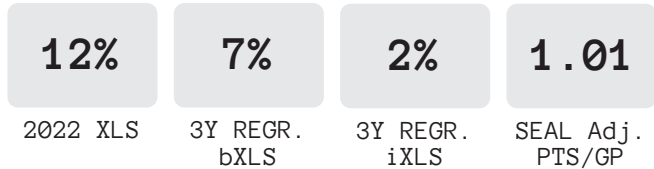


Physical

# CONNOR HVIDSTON

F | SWIFT CURRENT BRONCOS

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. SEP. 11, 2004  
WEIGHT 165 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	58	13	19	32
WJC-18	4	1	1	2

## Scouting Report

A breakout second half has Connor Hvidston looking like one of five Swift Current Broncos poised to hear their name called at the 2022 NHL Draft. Most of our game reports share one commonality: Hvidston's impact comes from his play away from the puck, especially defensively.

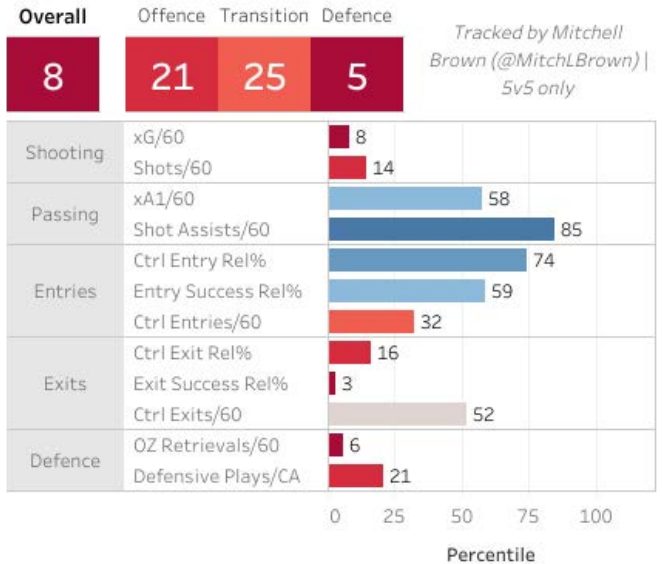
"Off-puck, he's always scanning, anticipating, and eliminating threats," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitchell Brown wrote in a late-season report. "He applies pressure without over-extending, coming across the hips to force dump-outs, intercepting passes, and getting steals."

Offensively, "Hvidston sprints his routes to push back defenders, eliminates sticks to create passing lanes, stops inside space when necessary, works to establish positioning on defenders in front of the net, and moves pucks quickly," wrote Brown.

When the puck arrives on Hvidston's stick, he uses one- and two-touch shots to beat goaltender's across the net and turn tricky passes into scoring chances. A hook pass as he wraps around the net and turn-around feeds from the corners are his go-to set ups in the offensive zone.

In transition, Hvidston isn't quite as effective because he plays a simple, straight-line game. He's often risk-averse with

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 102.0



the puck, although in late-season game reports he swung in the other direction.

To take the next step, Hvidston must improve his strength and lower-body flexion, as his lack of depth creates difficulty playing inside contact and fending off defenders along the boards. If Hvidston makes the NHL, he could become a fourth-liner who brings defensive value and off-puck offence.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: April 8th, 2022

Regina Pats vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

Hvidston's an advanced defender. Off-puck, he's always

scanning, anticipating, and eliminating threats. He applies pressure without over-extending, coming across the hips to force dump-outs, intercepting passes, and getting steals.

Physical, he lacks the skating depth to power through contact and separate with his edges. Offensively, he showed a number of different skills. He proactively filled space to become a passing option and shooting threat, both cutting in front of defenders and slipping behind them. Took a couple of low-percentage shots, including one where he actually opened up a cross-crease pass but took the no-chance wrister instead. Much of skill appears inside glides or one- and two-touch plays – the latter will be how he creates in the NHL. A couple of spinning passes to no one and overly optimistic passes without deception to mask his intentions led to turnovers, but he has also showed vision and playmaking from the boards. If he makes it, it's probably as a fourth-liner. But I like his game: defence, a bit of passing and shooting skill, and intelligence.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Not much from Hvidston in this game. He's a pretty simple player. Straight line attacks. Not any changes of pace or direction. He tries to deke through players in a glide with little success. Nearly scored with a two-touch wrister, knocking the puck directly into his shooting pocket while stepping onto his inside leg for the weight shift. Defensive impact comes and goes. The physical game is always there, but he shifts

from reactive to somewhat proactive. Didn't see anything that suggested a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Hvidston's more skilled than I thought. Took a puck off the boards, dangled around a defender, then connected with a look-off cross-slot pass for an assist. Consistently looks to the middle, even immediately after winning possession. Turned tricky passes into shots; he knocks the puck directly into his shooting pocket with ease. Consistent presence on the forecheck. He didn't just outrace; he outthought. He angled, then attacked as the puck carrier tried to cutback or pass through him. The skating still needs work, but his knees past his toes and engages his hips in his best moments. Doesn't keep that posture consistently. He could be a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 5th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

In transition, Hvidston mostly strides and glides. He misses opportunities to cut inside, manipulate defenders, and set up teammates. Prefers the simple play in most situations: passing to the point, straight-ahead breakout feeds, shots from the outside, and so on. But he also shows the awareness delay



Photo Credit: Ed Fonger - Swift Current Broncos

and outwait pressure along the boards and in transition. He uses hook passes and always scans before recovering possession. He's an effective off-puck attacker because he sprints his routes to push defenders, eliminates sticks to create passing lanes, stops inside space when necessary, works to establish positioning on defenders in front of the net, and moves pucks quickly. Add in the defence and it's clear he has NHL ability. It's at the lower-end of the line-up, and it'll largely be dependent on physical and skating growth. As he gets stronger, he should be able to maintain a deeper stance that will help him manage contact and play along the boards. A late-rounder, but there's not enough upside to justify inclusion on our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 11th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Hvidston scored the overtime winner, but that was about it. No shooting, passing, or handling skill demonstrated. He's a straight-line attacker without much creativity. Stride lacks polish, although he should maintain a deeper stance as he gets stronger. Worked to get back above the puck when possible. Supported plays in the offensive end, although his movements lacked the timing and pace characteristic for goal-scorers. Didn't see anything to suggest a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

Hvidston puck in the work defensively in this game. He intercepted passes on the forecheck, supported plays, ripped away possession in the neutral zone, and worked to get above the puck before pushing plays wide. A couple of third-period scoring chances, including one where he cut inside off the boards. Didn't force plays, instead cutting

back, stopping, and resetting to find better options. He didn't create much from those positions, but that he was putting himself in favourable situations should benefit his game. Clearly wants to be a physical presence out there - getting low to establish positioning, making early contact, throwing hits - but he's overpowered often. Looks like an interesting late-round candidate.


**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

More passing skill on display from Hvidston. He beat a defender wide, took a quick look over his shoulder to find a teammate in the slot, then passed off the backhand through a defender's feet for the assist. Cut inside and connected with a cross-slot pass through two sticks. Tried a net-drive on the penalty kill, getting low and skating through the defender's route, but was overpowered. Stride looks projectable with ankle flexion, even if he straightens his legs through crossovers and turns. Struggles to manage contact along the boards, but he's more than willing to engage. Lacks physical refinement but there could be something interesting here.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Impressive game from Hvidston, impacting all three zones. He won battles in the offensive end, forced dump-outs with pressure, and pushed attacks to the outside on the backcheck. Offensively, he cut inside for a scoring chance, set-up a look with a hook pass as he went around the net, and connected with a look-off pass to the trailer. Tools didn't look noteworthy, but he showed enough intelligence in these sequences that he could make it as a fourth-liner. Need to watch more. 

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# FRANCESCO IASENZA

D | DRUMMONDVILLE VOLTIGEURS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JUL. 11, 2004  
 WEIGHT 179 SHOOTS LEFT



3%	4%	2%	0.49
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	64	2	16	18

## Scouting Report

Most of our Francesco Iasenza viewings were largely positive this season. He's clearly a player who cares about making controlled plays at both ends of the ice. He treats the puck with the care it deserves, especially on the breakout.

His head is always turning, and his eyes move from option to option until he lands on the right one. He maps the ice quickly, but effectively. And it's the same story defensively. Iasenza stays close to his check and rotates well.

"His upside is fairly limited, but he shows me enough in his game to keep me watching," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout

David St-Louis wrote in a December 18th, 2021 game report. "Still not sure about his skating (maybe a 5-grade?), but his pivots are powerful and he's engaged defensively, physical, and good at identifying his check."

His game doesn't have much creativity, but it's effective, and with a little more skill development — his tools received average grades — and more offensive confidence and improvisation, he could become an NHL draft pick. A team could bank on his development.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Acadie Bathurst Titans vs. Moncton Wildcats - QMJHL

I continue to really appreciate Iasenza's ability to distribute the puck. He makes smart decisions and finds the best play. He's always scanning, always looking for something more. He's also engaged defensively. It's too bad the skill-level and the production is a little bit right now, or at least, not high enough to make him a legitimate consideration for our board. He's a player I will keep an eye on next year, if he doesn't get picked. He's young for this draft, maybe he pops with more experience.

**David St-Louis:** February 15th, 2022

Moncton Wildcats vs Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Iasenza continues to show confidence at the blue-line. He takes his occasion to jump off of it to attack down, even taking on the goalie himself one time, and he looks for the best play in his puck-moving. He's willing to try more complex ideas. He's aggressive in his rush defence. He didn't pop off too much in this game and the skill seems relatively average, but I do think the handling and the skating work together pretty well, smoothly, if you will.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2021

Moncton Wildcats vs Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Iasenza remains interesting as a late-round prospect. His upside is fairly limited, but he shows me enough in his game to keep me watching. Still not sure about his skating (a 5?), but his pivots are powerful and he's engaged defensively, physical and good at identifying his check. He holds the puck, attracts forecheckers and makes the better decision with the puck more often than not, like in a 2-on-1 where the passing lane was closed and he decided to fire. He establishes body positioning defensively and understands how to position to manage risk. Skill-level is not that high.

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2021

Moncton Wildcats vs Saint John Seadogs - QMJHL

Interesting performance from Iasenza. He's limited technically; I doubt that his skills ever receive more than average grades, but he's engaged in the play, anticipating and finding solutions, in transition and defensively. He pinched a lot and missed a couple of them, but I liked the aggressiveness in defending in transition.



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# KENTA ISOGAI

F | YOUNGSTOWN PHANTOMS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. AUG. 28, 2004  
WEIGHT 154 SHOOTS LEFT

3%	5%	2%	0.91
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	59	10	12	22

## Scouting Report

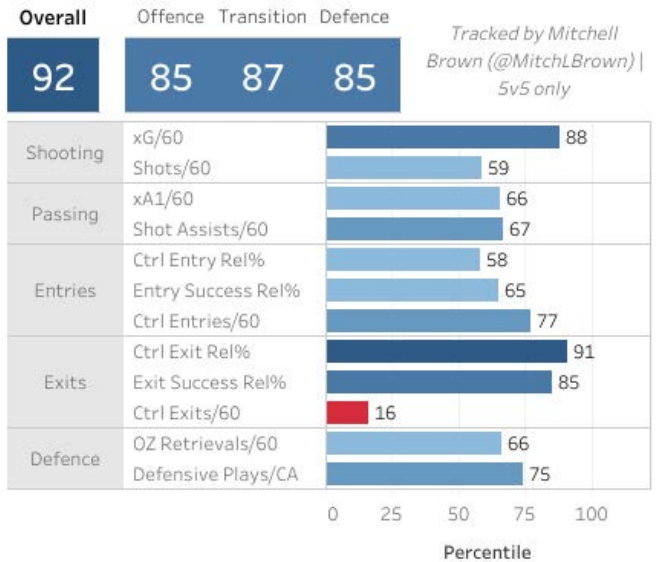
Points eluded Kenta Isogai for the better part of the season. By the end, he finished with just 10 goals and 14 assists in 61 games across the regular season and playoffs. That's hardly inspiring. Dig deeper, and Isogai's season should encourage optimism for his future, even if this isn't the year he hears his name called at the draft.

In a sample of over 450 CHL and USHL forwards, Isogai's expected goals per 60 output – a measure of a player's scoring chances – landed in the 88th percentile. That was on relative average overall shooting volume, suggesting a player who knows how to get the middle.

That suggestion is correct. Isogai's a fearless, relentless attacker who shows no hesitation to challenge defenders to a race to the net. A series of crossovers launch him past USHL defenders in transition. In the offensive zone, he plants himself in the slot, welcoming any and all contact, showing craftiness and quick hands when the puck arrives.

That's not an entirely sustainable way to play going forward, but Isogai's shown glimpses of better decision-making. Later in the season, he started faking the outside lane attack, then cutting across the front of defenders. Instead of racing defenders along the boards, he started slowing down to draw in pressure, then hitting the gas pedal. Best of all, he learned how to initiate give-and-go sequences and use his motor as an off-puck offensive weapon by backing off defenders to

Games Tracked: 10 | Minutes Tracked: 113.0



create space behind him.

If Isogai turns those flashes into key parts of his game, points won't be so hard to come by. They'll create more playmaking opportunities, allowing him to use his speed and handling skill as more than just a get-to-the-net skill. Turnovers will decrease, too, giving he and his teammates more touches and more time to work on the offensive end. Most of all, they'll give this fearless and always-engaged attacker far better NHL odds.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

For the most part, this was a standard Isogai performance. He's fearless. He takes every opportunity to race defenders to the net. It won't work at the next level – it barely works at this one. In one shift, however, better habits appeared. He faked the net drive, then cut to the middle and tried a hook pass to a teammate racing down the middle. It didn't work because the timing was off, but flashes like that change his projection ability. If those were more common, he might become a player. He plays fast, wins battles, and tries to get to the middle. Better scanning habits and more consistency in entering more advantageous positions (triple threat, cut across defenders, delay) will improve his playmaking with time. I fear that he's probably just a late-rounder, at best. Or an NCAA free agent.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 5th, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

A pair of goals from Isogai. Neither were NHL goals. A jam play that worked because the goaltender wasn't tracking the play and an outside lane net drive around a defender that couldn't pivot. His best plays were gaining the zone, making the early pass, and relocating for a return pass. Always back above the play if he's not in pursuit. He's far from a best-play creator, but he understands how to back off defenders and use his speed to his advantage. Playing slower with the puck will benefit him; delay to wait for pressure, then dart to the inside. He has upside, but development is particularly critical for his game. Probably a late-rounder or a signing in a few years.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

I'm warming up to Isogai's game. He's a skilled handler who likes to play on the inside, and has some quickness. Dynamic qualities are few-and-far between, but he does have potential to add them. A change of pace game with more frequent crossover use will be the shot. He also has difficulty accessing the inside lane, partly because of his lack of strength and partly because he tries to outrace defenders along the perimeter. Scored by pulling a rebound away from the goalie and beating him to the post – it was a crafty play. Playmaking is greatly limited by scanning – he just doesn't do it enough. Sometimes, that means he's forcing passes that aren't there at all. More often, there's too much time between his last shoulder check and his passing, meaning he's passing on outdated information. He has a potential because of his pace, quickness, and inside game. I doubt NHL teams will be as interested.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Isogai showed more playmaking than normal. He was looking for teammates on the inside from the boards, instead of rushing the inside with every possible opportunity. He connected with both looks, and even set up a high-danger chance. The usual pace and forechecking were clearly visible. In one sequence, he won possession, beat a defender off a stutter step, and then drove the inside. It's rare to see Isogai change pace like that. It bodes well for his future. Of course, he's still an inefficient puck transporter overly reliant on plays that won't work at the next level. But these flashes suggest he has the skills to alter his play skill; it just requires more consistency. If he's a pick, he's a late-rounder. But he could be worth the investment if a team is confident in their development staff.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 11th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Every Isogai performance is the same. He plays fast, trying to outrace defenders to the net with every opportunity, and sometimes succeeding. Scored with a deflection. He's not a particularly creative or toolsy player, but his speed will help him play a role in the NCAA. The odd weight shift move or manipulation sequence to bait the defender before cutting to the middle suggest there's a bit more upside here. But his basic creation loop isn't projectable and his tools don't seem to provide any easy solutions. Not a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Isogai's limited by his stride and lack of strength, but he plays fast, attacks the middle, and wins battles through effort. There are no dynamic qualities to his game, save for the odd dot lane-crossing rush. Along the boards, he identifies options and passes quickly, avoiding needless cycling and battles. Won't create the best play or even try a great one, but he's an overall positive player in terms of decision-making. Not a draft pick, but he could become one with added mechanical refinement.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 26th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Isogai was probably the most effective of Youngstown's draft eligibles in this game. He's clearly skilled. He drives the puck to the inside, combining finesse with determination. Deceptive and creative with the puck, even in tight and under pressure. Constant off-puck movement, which he used to fire off a pair of scoring chances and consistently put himself in the

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**"Isogai's a fearless, relentless attacker who shows no hesitation to challenge defenders to a race to the net. A series of crossovers launch him past USHL defenders in transition. In the offensive zone, he plants himself in the slot, welcoming any and all contact, showing craftiness and quick hands when the puck arrives."**

middle of the play. The stride's an issue but he consistently won footraces on retrievals, even from a disadvantage. Now, keeping the puck is an issue. Defenders knocked him off the puck without much effort. I don't see any dynamic qualities to his game. Keep watching, but I doubt he's a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Madison Capitols vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Isogai loves to attack the inside. He recognizes the tiny pockets quickly, darting into the before defenders even realize he's a threat. He's more a quick-twitch handler than a dangler, evading sticks than manipulating defenders. His game lacks control, hurrying plays and missing opportunities. Plays too fast. Doesn't really understand how to protect the puck, even if he's first on it. The defensive work rate and off-puck movement are both strengths, but he lacks timing on both ends. Probably not a draft pick, however admirable his game is.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 8th, 2021


Youngstown Phantoms vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Isogai plays fast and fearless. He attacks the middle with

little concern for his safety. His game doesn't scream translatable, but he gets a step on defenders with his crossover acceleration. More strength will help him get deeper into his crossovers and increase his push-off power. It will also help in battles; he's easily pushed off backs and can't fight through contact, despite his motor. Didn't see the teammate use, individual skill, or off-puck instincts to justify a pick. But his game probably pops more in the CHL, where teams are more willing to play a skilled, east-west game.

**J.D. Burke:** September 22nd, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Lincoln Stars - USHL

The thought process on a lot of what Isogai wanted to do in this game was just swell, but the execution left a little to be desired. Had a great net-drive off of the half-wall in the first period for a scoring chance and a drawn penalty. His desire to get the puck inside is admirable, certainly, but he's a bit easy to keep to the perimeter at present given his modest build. He struggled a bit with the catch and release wrist shot in this one. Smart shot placement. 



# ILYA IVANTSOV

F | SKA-NEVA ST. PETERSBURG

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JAN. 27, 2003  
WEIGHT 154 SHOOTS LEFT

0%	0%	0%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
VHL	41	9	26	35

## Scouting Report

There are some pretty substantial obstacles between Ilya Ivantsov and a long, productive NHL career. His slight build and below-average skating combo, specifically, could be a death knell for his big league prospects, as far as many in the industry are concerned.

Even so, Ivantsov made strides in the VHL this season, figuratively and literally, for which he deserves credit. While his skating form is still far from perfect, he has developed better habits to compensate for these deficiencies. His rushes are now heavy on crossovers, a skating pattern that helps him gain speed and beat defenders wide. It's a start.

He's a playmaker first and foremost. He's capable of decep-

tion and can make plays well under pressure and in open-ice.

"Patient to wait for lanes, good puck control, and adapts well with his passes to make sure they get to his target," Elite Prospects Russia regional scout Dylan Griffing wrote in a September game report. "Responsible enough defensively, but limited by his skating issues."

Ivantsov's game is still far from NHL calibre, especially along the boards, but 35 points in 41 VHL contests isn't anything to sneeze at - the VHL being Russia's second-tier men's professional league. He led SKA-Neva in point production, and it could augur a role in the KHL sooner than later.

## Game Reports

**Dylan Griffing:** September 15th, 2021

SKA-Neva St. Petersburg vs. Lada Togliatti - VHL

Ivantsov's game has translated extremely well to the VHL. His skating is still well below-average, but he has taken strides to improve on it. Using crossovers more, shifting his weight, and accessing his outer edges; however, his stride is still wonky and he looks like he's skating through quicksand often. He uses his passing to make up for his movement issues. Picked up two assists in this game and created a handful of chances for his team through his vision and execution. Ivantsov is a problem-solver, being able to escape pressure quickly and get the puck into space. Patient to wait for lanes, good puck control, and adapts well with his passes to make

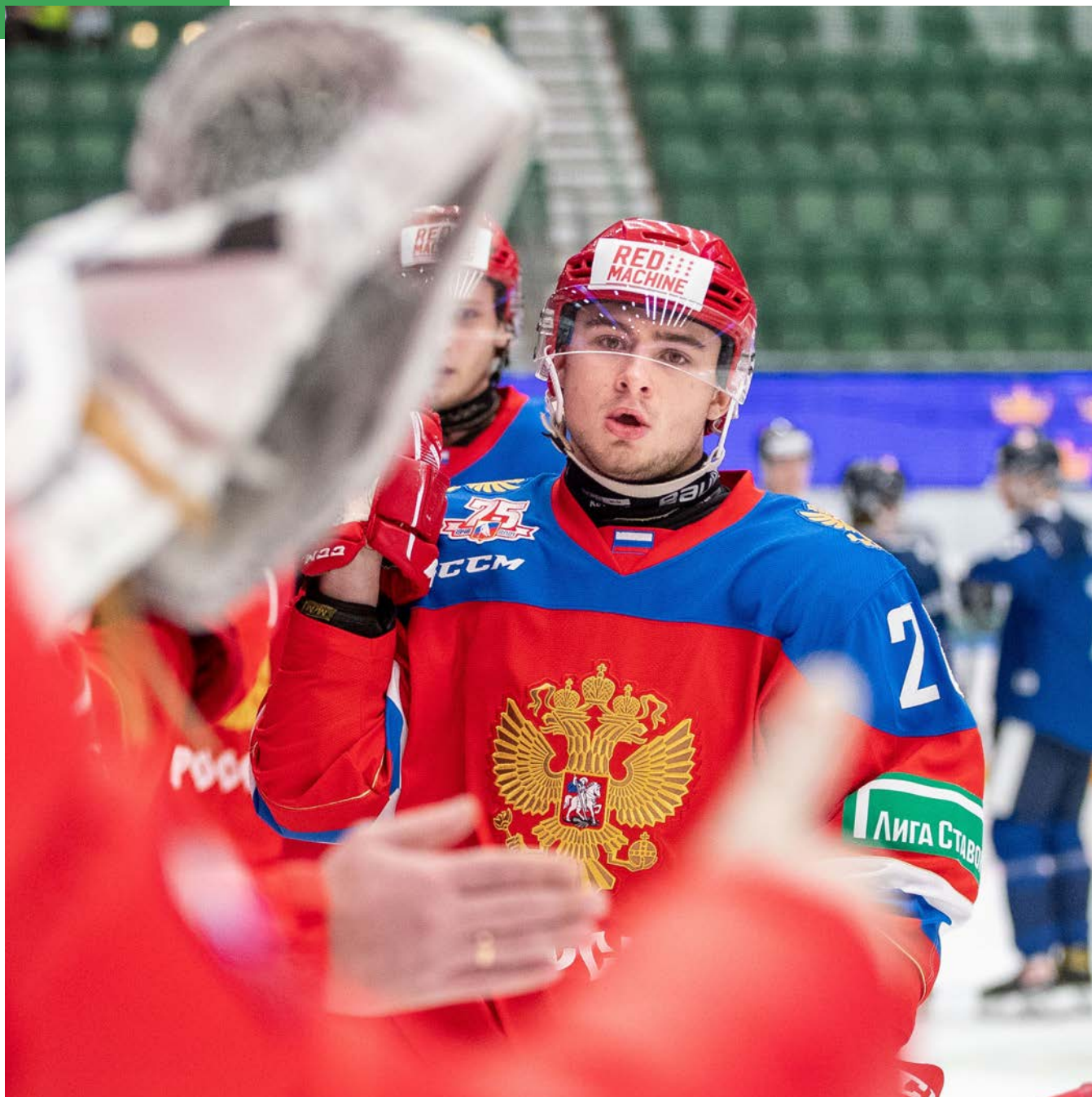
sure they get to his target. Responsible enough defensively, but limited by his skating issues.

**Dylan Griffing:** April 26th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. USA U18 - U18-WJC

As a complementary player, Ivantsov was fine, but I would like to see more out of him. His puck management was smart and effective, springing forward his linemates with lead passes and just never really giving the puck away, barring one terrible pass to nobody that led to play going the other way. Good defensive awareness to force plays out wide, but the US players were able to bounce off of him with ease.





**Dylan Griffing:** April 24th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Belarus U18 - U18-WJC Practice Game

Ivantsov was useful for retrieving pucks and moving them quickly, but not much else. He wasn't driving anything, had a bad turnover in the defensive zone, and was getting dominated physically. Just a really watered down performance from his usual play, still made some nice passes to spring his teammate (Poltapov) forward.

**David St-Louis:** September 5th, 2020

MHK Dynamo SPB vs. Ska-1946 - MHL

Not a memorable performance for Ivantsov. He had decent puck management (didn't turn it over and made progressive plays) and showed some defensive impact by supporting his defencemen low and taking the puck up ice. There were also some nice cutbacks to get away from pressure. P



# DOMINIC JAMES

LW/C | UNIV. OF MINNESOTA-DULUTH

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JUL. 3, 2002  
WEIGHT 165 SHOOTS LEFT

5%	5%	1%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
NCAA	39	6	12	18

## Scouting Report

It seems like there's at least one surprise player on Team USA's World Juniors roster. We're not talking about a darkhorse either; I mean a complete unknown to anyone other than the most engaged prospect heads. That player this year was Minnesota-Duluth forward Dominic James.

That surprise ascension to the American World Juniors roster wasn't enough to earn James a spot on Central Scouting's North American ranking, but it certainly piqued our interest.

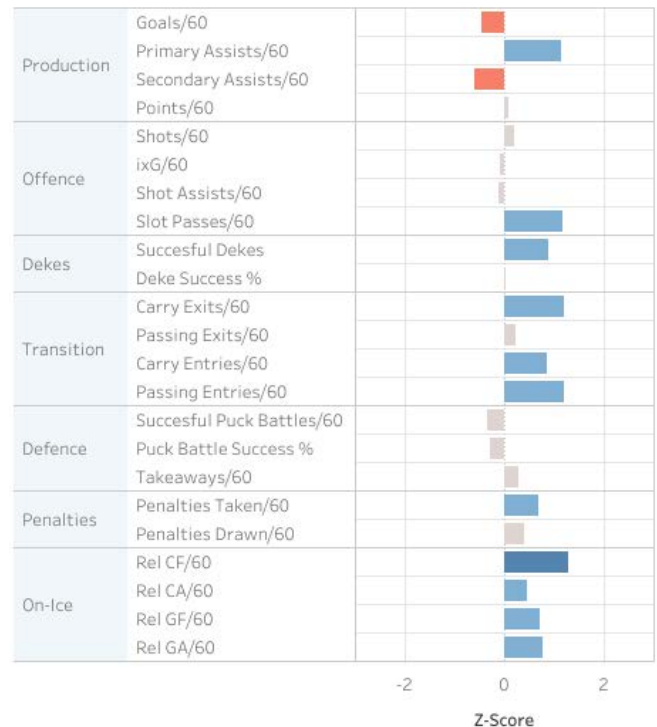
Further inquiry revealed some interesting qualities in James' game, the most appealing among them being his work in the defensive zone. A heady off-puck defender, the Bulldogs winger keeps his head on a swivel during defensive sequences and never loses his man. An advanced understanding of defensive rotations and switches also helps in this regard. Better still, he couples those defensive instincts with a high work rate and a knack for playing the body to round out his defensive profile.

Unfortunately, his work in the defensive zone is pretty much the only selling point in James' game. Lack of skill as a handler, low pace as a distributor, and a wholly unremarkable shot -- it's three strikes against any likelihood of being a productive NHLer.

To James' credit, he wouldn't be the first low-skill player to build a long career in the big leagues as a speedy checking line forward. There's hope yet, just not enough of it for us

Games Played: 32 | Average EV TOI: 12:34

Data via InStat Hockey | Viz by Lassi Alanen (@lassialanen) | EV only



to view him as anything more than a prospective NCAA free agent in another year or two rather than a pick.

**J.D. Burke:** March 12th, 2022

St. Cloud State vs. Minnesota-Duluth - NCAA

Not that it was James' fault or anything, but his line was absolutely caved-in at even strength by the Huskies' top-line – InStat gives James a net xG of -1.15 or so at evens in this game, and they controlled about 40 percent of the unblocked attempts. The upside here is that I got a lot of long looks at how James plays in the defensive zone, and the returns were almost all positive. He constantly scans off-puck for threats, communicates with his linemates, understands defensive rotations/switches, makes second and third efforts on pucks, etc. I didn't see anything too exciting from James offensively. A lot of straight line attacks, and I don't think he processes the game fast enough to be a point producer at the next level. His pace is a real concern. The skating is about above-average; it's a mostly mechanically sound stride save for its top-heavy nature. Picked up a power play goal in the third period at the net-front by deflecting a puck into an open net. Had one really advanced offensive display in overtime, turning a retrieval into a spinning, no-look backhand pass into the slot for a chance. Probably a decent bet as an NCAA FA, but I'm not sure there's enough there to spend a pick on James.

**J.D. Burke:** December 26th, 2021

Team USA vs. Slovakia - World Juniors

Didn't really catch anything that interesting from James in this performance. There was the usual stuff – the high work rate, the off-puck defensive reads, and some transition value

– but that's about it. James keeps the puck out in front of him as a handler and lacks the skill to avoid lost possessions when defenders take swipes at the puck. It doesn't help that he always attacks in a straight line, too. I don't know, maybe you can get a fourth-line winger or a 13th forward or organizational depth out of James with his defensive work and above-average skating, but that's probably about it.

**J.D. Burke:** October 15th, 2021

Minnesota-Duluth vs. Michigan - NCAA

I'm often reminded of Dave Tippett's quote on defending and puck possession during my James viewings. You know, that line about a player who he once thought was an excellent defender until he found out that their defensive quality was only evident because he spent entire games in his own zone. Something to that effect. Anyway, that's my long winded way of saying there just isn't any offence there. James lacks the off-puck instincts and spacing to create shooting opportunities for himself. He lacks the pace to be much of a playmaker. And his hands are probably below average, too. The defensive zone work is great. James is an excellent support player in that regard. He's physical, but a lack of strength limits his effectiveness in puck battles and he doesn't really cut opponents off at the hands – a lot of bouncing off of opponents in this one. To his credit, James wasn't on the ice for a single goal against in a 5-1 loss, but I should also note that I don't think he shared the ice with Michigan's top-six for a single shift. So make of that what you will.

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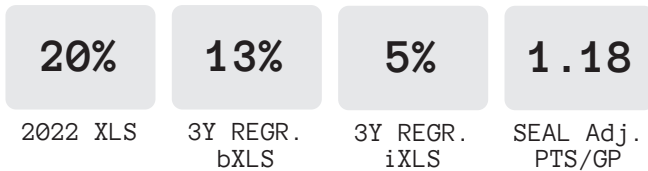


Physical

# DYLAN JAMES

LW | SIOUX CITY MUSKETEERS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. OCT. 12, 2003  
WEIGHT 183 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	62	28	33	61

> Committed to Univ. of North Dakota

## Scouting Report

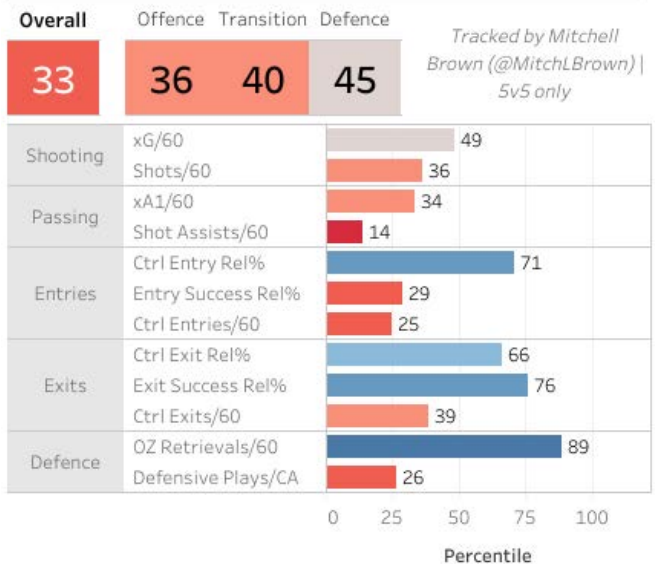
A steady riser throughout the season, it'd be no surprise if Dylan James heard his name called as early as the second round. The October '03-born prospect led all draft-eligible forwards in the USHL with 61 points and landed just inside the top-10 in points per game with 0.98.

Where many prospects shine with flashy skill, James takes a subtler approach. Along the boards, where he's most effective with the puck, he drives his leg in front of the defender, followed by his hips to establish body positioning. With the defender secured to his back, he looks to make a play to the middle, either with a pass or by attacking the net.

The physical game translates to the defensive end, too. Where many players reach, he takes the extra stride to come across the hips of the puck carrier. If he can't get the steal, his non-stop pressure guides attacks to the perimeter. Well-timed sprints to the point prevent shots and occasionally get a steal. If James isn't defending or winning battles, he's getting open in the slot or sprinting to push back defenders, creating space behind him. He shows some shooting skill, such as a quick catch-and-release wrister or hand-eye for deflections when his teammates find him in the slot.

James likely won't be a puck carrier or playmaker in the NHL. Already at the USHL, his handling and stride-heavy skating lead to turnovers and failed entries. He misses

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 123.6



opportunities to cut inside or start give-and-go sequences, which could help offset his individual skill. His best passes tend to be short-range plays off the boards, but a lack of consistent playmaking limits his upside.

If James makes the NHL, it will likely be as a fourth-liner. Fourth-liners come in many qualities. If he hones his skill level while taking more of a pass-first role in transition, he could become an effective one.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Nine viewings in, and I still don't see the upside here. James is a solid player at this level. Very reliant on his teammates to do stuff with the puck, but he backchecks, kills penalties, hits people hard, anticipates passes and gets interceptions, and supports the play in the defensive zone. But there's no foresight or nuance to his transition and offensive games. In transition, he throws the puck away with open teammates. In the neutral zone, he just tries to out-race defenders despite not having the skating to consistently do so at this level. He's not manipulating. He's not even trying to test the middle for a better option. When he's faced with a give-and-go opportunity, he shoots or skates into the corner. When his teammates are looking for a return pass, he takes a low-percentage shot. Maybe I'm just catching bad games, but I don't see how he makes our board, unless it's 175 names long.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

Another game without any offensive upside from James. There's some off-puck stuff, but not consistently. He never gets pucks in favourable positions, largely from his own doing. Doesn't turn his steals into offence consistently. A negative with the puck in transition from his skating and handling limitations. The motor and puck-winning ability are his best traits. He takes the extra stride to come across the hips. Pushes attackers to the outside. Always in the way on exits, coupling both a non-stop willingness to battle and sound supporting position. But he has skilled linemates on a skilled team and he's '03. He has to create something to make the NHL. Not a pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Back the usual stuff from James. The positives: work rate, physical game, off-puck movement and shooting, retrievals, and awareness of limitations. With the puck, his game falls apart. He scans, but doesn't seem aware of his options because he rarely makes the best play. In transition, he either defers or throws the puck away trying to make something happen. Even poorly gapped defenders force dump-ins from him. Despite primarily being a puck-getter along the boards, he doesn't make plays to the inside consistently. In OZP, he continues the cycle. In transition, he throws the puck away or skates straight into a defender along the boards. He's a low-probability fourth-liner.

The January 22nd game looks more like an outlier at this stage. Doubt he's a pick for me, unless something dramatic changes in the next couple of months.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Fargo Force - USHL

I'm starting to see the appeal of James from an NHL perspective. He's a bit more skilled than I gave him credit. He has a solid understanding of how to get open in three all zones. Wins battles with body positioning, then extends offensive zone time. Some playmaking ability to get plays to the inside, but he's not deceptive or diverse in his deliveries. Most of his best ideas connect on the second or third effort. The shooting side of his game likely becomes a bigger part of his game going forward, leveraging his ability to get open alongside his willingness to get inside. Relentless on the backcheck, but not a factor in transition. Let's his teammates do the work and uses his off-puck skating to push back defenders. A fourth-line projection but there's a chance he makes it.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

James plays to his strengths. He doesn't handling the puck in transition, preferring to pass early and get open for a return pass. Off-puck skating is a strength – he drives defenders back, gets inside positioning, and creates space behind him. Movement around the slot requires work, but he has some scoring upside at the next level. Turned a tricky pass in his feet into a high-danger chance under pressure. Won a puck race for another chance – his retrievals remain the most exciting part of his game. Physical performance, whether that was running over the opposition of making subtle bumps to establish early positioning. Stride mechanics require tweaking but he psuehs his knees past his toes and engages his hips for projectable posture. Looks like a potential fourth liner.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 28th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

I appreciate Dylan James' game, but I'm not sure how it results in a top-nine NHL forward. He's a energy player without a ton of skill. Generally a positive play at the right time, but rarely the best play. He's a disciplined forechecker with some playmaking ability in the immediate aftermath. Occupies the slot and supports well, but he's not making advanced reads. Tools are average projection. Upside will be determined by how much his off-puck routes, playmaking, and timing improve. He could be an interesting end-of-board-type.

**"Where many prospects shine with flashy skill, James takes a subtler approach. Along the boards, where he's most effective with the puck, he drives his leg in front of the defender, followed by his hips to establish body positioning. With the defender secured to his back, he looks to make a play to the middle, either with a pass or by attacking the net."**

**Mitchell Brown:** December 17th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

James is a checker. He wins battles, makes plays off retrievals, and tries to get the puck inside. He usually fails at the latter. Some off-puck instincts, mostly just outside the slot. Lacks the timing and movement to consistently get open inside the hash marks. Doesn't bother trying plays in transition – just moves the puck to his teammates, but he's not a strong off-puck skater. Little to suggest NHL upside in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 20th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Little tangible impact on the game from James. He has the right idea with possession, but couldn't execute because he enters a glide when figuring out the next play and executing. Cuts across the front of defenders and looks for teammates and delays at times (he could develop this more) to wait for support to arrive. I didn't see the mechanical proficiency to play this way at this level, lacking the stride, vision, and handling skill (everything in glides) to consistently beat well-gapped defenders to the middle. No notable shooting skill, forechecking, or defensive acumen. Didn't look like a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 16th, 2021


Sioux City Musketeers vs. Omaha Lancers - USHL

James has some nice qualities, but I don't see how it re-

sults in an NHL player. He works hard, he attacks the inside when given an obvious lane, and wins puck battles through one part energy and one part intelligent body positioning. In transition, he's a liability. He doesn't distribute, manipulate, or even change lanes – he can't gain the zone as a result. Didn't show the off-puck instincts or shooting skill to consistently get chances at the next level. And he's not a passer. He'll be a pro, but I'm not convinced there's much more upside.

**J.D. Burke:** September 25th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. USNTDP U18 - USHL

There were not-insignificant portions of this game where James was its best forward, and that's quite the feat considering the team that lined up opposite Sioux City. He was electric. Just a total presence out there every time he stepped onto the ice. The physicality is great. James was closing with force on Program defenders all night on puck retrievals. He was mixing it up behind the scenes and after whistles. He does all the stuff that makes our lizard brains happy. There's so much more there than just that stuff though. James showed some real skill in this contest. Picked up the trailer as the primary puck-carrier on an entry and got the puck through a pair of defenders to set up a chance with a nice little hook pass. Showed some problem-solving ability with the puck on his stick. Wants to drive the inside and has the puck protection mechanics to pull it off. Picked up a goal in this one on the rush. 



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# LUDVIG JANSSON

D | SÖDERTÄLJE SK

HEIGHT 6'0"

D.O.B. DEC. 27, 2003

WEIGHT 176

SHOOTS RIGHT

0%

2022 XLS

11%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

6%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.34

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	9	2	2	4
Allsv.	47	2	3	5

## Scouting Report

You always have to appreciate an above-average motor in a player. It's a better predictor of NHL success than many give credit. In a select few, rare cases, a motor churning too high can be to the player's detriment, though. That was the case for Ludvig Jansson this season.

His frenetic energy and his all-over-the-ice style of play cost him both offensive and defensive opportunities. Far too focused on outspeeding opponents and hounding the puck, Jansson missed both teammates and attackers behind him. Many of his passes went straight to the other team.

"He transported the puck a lot and wanted to take action and create but he did not plan his play at all," Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin wrote in a report

on January 15th. "He missed obvious passing options and none of his shots or offensive initiative created a dangerous scoring chance."

Jansson's NHL-calibre tools – his long skating stride and handling skills – coupled with his high pace still give him upside as a professional defenceman. To get there, though, he will have to add more control to his game in the form of measured decisions and pose with the puck.

If he can add that controlled element and improve the fluidity and explosiveness of his pivots then there may well be an NHL future in the cards for Jansson as a transitional defenceman on some team's bottom-pairing.

## Game Reports

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 15th 2022

Södertälje SK vs. Brynäs IF - J20 Nationell

A rare junior game for Jansson as he spends most of his time with the senior team in Allsvenskan. He played a lot in this game and in all situations and was very involved. His performance was an ugly one though and it changed my earlier perception of Jansson as a good middle round prospect. Now I am wondering if he will get drafted at all.

Jansson really stood out with his skating. He was flying all over the ice and was very active in trying to push the play. The problem was that he did it with no thought whatsoever. He was all over the place and continuously left his position

without coverage chasing plays that were not there. His defensive game lacked positioning, gap control and good instincts. He was chasing the play with poor decision making all game long. Even late in the game, when his team was defending a one goal lead he left his defensive position open and played a bad gap which almost cost his team the victory. This game by Jansson was the worst defensive awareness by a defenseman I have seen from a prospect all season.

If Jansson was dominant offensively you could live with some of his bad defensive decisions but that was not the case either. He transported the puck a lot and wanted to take action and create but he did not plan his play at all.



He missed obvious passing options and none of his shots or offensive initiative created a dangerous scoring chance. Even if he looked like a dangerous player with his flying skating I would say he was a negative player for his team. I would grade his skating as above average but not elite. He is quick and explosive but he skates kind of upright and the technique does not give his natural abilities the most optimal result. He skates kind of upright with his body and can look awkward in changing direction, especially backwards. His puck handling skills are good but he does not use those tools well. I like his mobility and will to get engaged offensively but he showed a poor understanding of the game and how to play it effectively.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 20th 2021

HV71 vs. Södertälje SK - Allsvenskan


Ludvig plays regularly on the second pair and on the point in the second power play unit.

Ludvig shows good speed and gains a lot of ice in his strides compared to his opponents. His technique is not perfect but the stride is long and powerful. He accelerates fast and pushes the pace from the outside of his skates. He overlaps with good control and explosiveness. He does not need a lot of energy or many strides to get up to speed. He can play aggressively in his own end and gets fast to the corners to win puck duels. His skating ability is above average but I would not grade it as elite.

Ludvig controls the puck well at high pace. He is a play-driving defenseman who either makes good first passes or can skate out of danger with the puck on his own. His passing skills are good but not elite and his stick handling is not particularly creative but the control helps him. He controls the puck better far from his body than close to it.

Ludvig is active both with and without the puck. He will always try to close the gap and does it well with his mobility. His positioning is solid in both offensive as defensive situations. He actively moves to be available for a pass and knows what to do with the puck as soon as he gets it. He has a strong stick in defensive situations. With the puck he does not hesitate to drive the play. He values the situation well but rarely shows high level creativity. His offensive game is to take action and drive the puck forward with poise rather than making mind blowing plays. He does not possess elite level hockey IQ but is consistent in his actions and competes well.

Physically he is not big but shows strong balance and does not hesitate to compete hard in all situations. He plays with aggression to win the puck.

All in all, Jansson is a solid puck-moving defenseman. He does not show elite skills and projects better as a number 4 or 5 defenseman in the future. I like how he likes to take action and drive the puck with speed and good passing. For the upcoming draft, he is a player for the 50-100 range. 

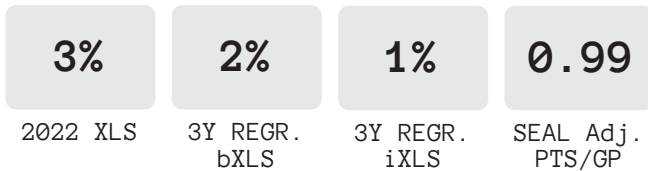




# ROENICK JODOIN

C | BARRIE COLTS

HEIGHT 5'7" D.O.B. SEP. 10, 2004  
WEIGHT 161 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	47	6	11	17

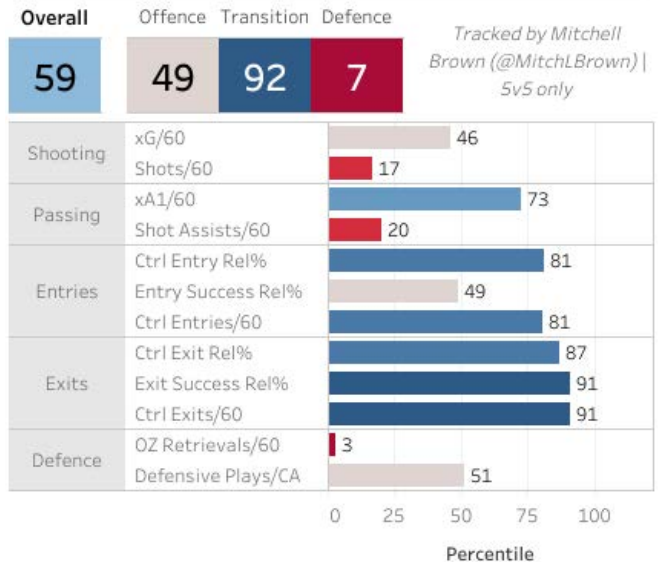
## Scouting Report

The odds are that Roenick Jodoin will go undrafted this time around, his 5-foot-7 stature and meagre point totals the cause. But he's unlikely to be a depth player in the OHL much longer. A close inspection of his game reveals a player who could work his way to the professional ranks in time.

Jodoin plays fast. He sprints for every loose puck, applies relentless pressure on the backcheck, and dashes ahead of the play for quick-strike offence. His puck skills shine at full speed, as his gamely threading-of-the-needle saucer pass attests. In moments, he shows shooting skill, too. And his game became increasingly nuanced down the stretch, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown attests, "Sometimes, he slows down, gets a defender to reach in, then passes. He also uses weight shifts to create more space for himself along the outside."

To become a big OHL scorer, Jodoin must continue to develop his change-of-pace game. It will decrease the turnovers along the boards and create more opportunities to attack the inside, where his speed becomes a great weapon. He should

Games Tracked: 5 | Minutes Tracked: 66.2



also rely less on the saucer pass, pulling pucks in towards his feet or pushing them out before passing to pass under or around sticks.

handler and shooter. Should become a big scorer next year.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

The same stuff as the last report, but minus the playmaking. Jodoin's a worker. Never gives up on plays off-puck. On puck, he's inefficient and gets pushed to the outside too easily. He's not adaptable and lacks a delay game. But he's clearly a skilled

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Jodoin is not a draft pick this year, but he could become something down the line. He goes. Always. He plays very

fast, skating straight at defenders. Although he's showing increasing amounts of nuance. Sometimes, he slows down, gets a defender to reach in, then passes. He also uses weight shifts to create more space for himself along the outside. Playmaking is potentially a strength if the pass selection improves. Connected with a wicked saucer pass, but he overuses it. Has to start pulling the puck in towards his feet before passing or reaching out – change the puck positioning to keep the pass on the ice. He's always bringing it defensively. Too much chasing and not enough proactive positioning. He'll score next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2022

London Knights vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Jodoin had a fun rush where he dangled under the stick of a defender twice before getting a shot off. He's an inside-focused attacker when given a tiny bit of space. If not, he defaults to outspeeding like many first-year OHLers. The issues are that doesn't know how to create space. He rushes passes and doesn't show much ability to delay or invest pressure. He's most effective off-puck, where he backs off defenders and creates space behind him. The energy's admirable, and there are puck skills. Not a pick this year, but he could get there.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Jodoin plays fast. Sometimes too fast. He gets ahead of the play and doesn't become an option, and forces passes before his teammates his teammate arrive. But he also flashes shooting skill, inside play, and some playmaking. He's never waiting around. He sprints for every puck and applies non-stop pressure. The stride mechanics and size probably mean he's not getting picked. Hardly plays, too. But he'll score a lot next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 6th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

All speed. Jodoin just goes. He disrupts tons of plays on the backcheck. Non-stop energy on the forecheck. Just sprints from one check to the next. Zero fear in his game. For sprints for every loose puck, even ones that don't seem winnable. Finishes off-puck routes, which has massive impacts for his team considering his speed – he backs off defenders without any issue. One off-puck skating sequence facilitated his assist, a backhand cross-slot pass just in front of the defender's stick. Better stride mechanics will help him get more out of his natural explosiveness. Crossovers lack a bit of consistency, but he occasionally gets full inside leg push-off. He'll definitely be a big scorer in the OHL next year, but I'm not sure if there's enough puck skill to warrant a pick.


**Lauren Kelly:** February 24th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Jodoin scored Barrie's third goal, burying a loose puck in the crease after battling his way to the net and beating a Steelheads skater to the puck. Took a penalty for tripping. Has lots of speed off the rush and backs defenders off, but most of his shots come from the outside. Got better looks to score playing on the top line with powerplay minutes, but I don't know if there's a draft pick here.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 3rd, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Jodoin's speed caught defenders off guard on more than one occasion in this game, as he drew two penalties. He didn't do much else with the puck aside from drive it up the ice and take it wide of the net, but he was far from the worst Colts player on the ice in this loss. 



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

## JOEL JONSSON

RW | MORA IK J20

HEIGHT 5'9"

D.O.B. MAR. 9, 2004

WEIGHT 152

SHOOTS LEFT

8%

2022 XLS

6%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

5%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J18 Reg.	18	14	21	35
J20 Nat.	30	8	26	34
Allsv.	5	1	1	2

### Scouting Report

Motor, not tools, catches the eye first when watching Joel Jonsson. The thing is when a prospect has this much inner fire, it also becomes a legitimate skill, one team needs to account for. A high drive, on and off the ice, can push a prospect past many of the more tooly and skilled players, especially when that drive is paired with an above-average hockey sense.

"He has a big motor and reads the game at a high level." Jimmy Hamrin wrote on January 7th, 2022. "He continuously works hard and positions himself well both offensively and

defensively. He gets involved in every shift and pushes the game ahead in his team's favour."

Jonsson pairs the motor with passing skills. He capitalizes on the tiniest of openings with deft passes over and under sticks. Where many use their physical tools to hang onto possession, he makes quick plays to teammates and starts give-and-gos.

We can see an organization picking Jonsson late in the draft, banking that he could become an effective bottom-six playmaker for them with more speed and strength.

### Game Reports

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 7th, 2022

Mora IK vs. AIK - J20 Nationell

Joel has been producing at a high level all season and it is obvious why he is so successful at this level. His competitiveness stands out as elite. He scored one goal in the game after getting slammed from behind in the boards. He got up, drove to the net and scored on a rebound just seconds after the hit. Being small in size he got pushed around but kept getting up and going through the tough areas.

He would be a more intriguing prospect for me if he got a bit faster. He is quick, agile and has good balance but he lacks separation speed. His skating stride is okay but could be more efficient. He has good skills with the puck. He has a decent

shot, is a good playmaker and can be creative, His puck control is good. He is not elite skill wise though. I would like to see him create more space for himself and others but he shows good awareness of options and dangers in all three zones. He is a driver of play for his line.

He has a big motor and reads the game at a high level. He continuously works hard and positions himself well both offensively and defensively. He gets involved in every shift and pushes the game ahead in his team's favour. For NHL prospecting he is more of a third/fourth line player than a top 6 player. He still is a long shot but I like him more now than in the beginning of the season. He would be a consideration in the later rounds.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** September 24th, 2021

Timrå IK vs. Mora IK - J20 Nationell

Joel is a small sized winger who moves well and gets himself engaged in the game. He played a big part on the teams power play and was one of the drivers on his line.

Joel showed a shifty, quick skating style and had good speed. His skating is all in all average for an NHL prospect. He is still small which limits his speed a bit but with some growth and more strength in him, he should be able to improve his skating ability well. Joel's puck handling does not stand out but he has good control of the puck and delivers good passes and can transport the puck over distance. He is not a dangerous shooter on the power which leads his line to search for other options.

Joel takes action and works smart, both with and without the puck. He understands the game and continuously makes smart decisions. Still, no more standout than an average grade for his hockey sense either. Even if he is small in size he has strong legs and covers the puck well. He needs to get bigger and stronger to compete at higher levels as some of his other traits are average.

Joel is not a player I would bet on at this point in the later rounds of the draft. Too much in his game is average and his size will be a problem in combination to that. P

**"We can see an organization picking Jonsson late in the draft, placing a bet on his ability to outwork any physical limitations en route to a bottom-six checking role at the NHL level."**





Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# PATRIK JUHOLA

C | ÄSSÄT U20

HEIGHT 6'2"

D.O.B. DEC. 16, 2003

WEIGHT 205

SHOOTS LEFT

4%

2022 XLS

3%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

3%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s	40	20	19	39
Mestis	3	2	1	3

## Scouting Report

Patrik Juhola's productive 18-year-old season in the U20 SM-Sarja was enough to earn him a long-term deal with Ässät in the Finnish Liiga, and it just may well be enough to get him drafted in Montréal this July.

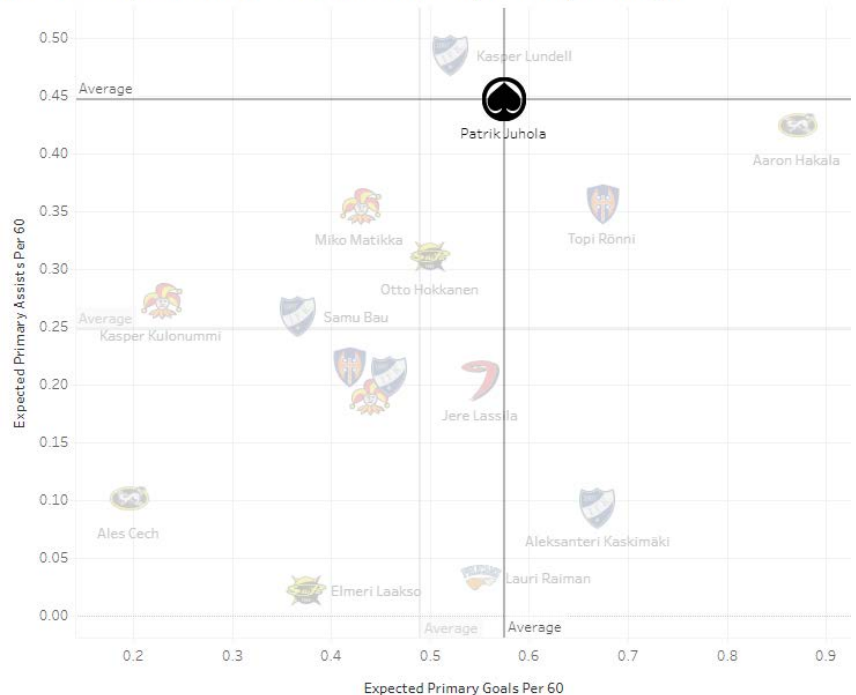
The foremost skill in this Finnish centre's game is his shot, one that he can send on net with power and precision from either skate and nearly any angle. His mastery of the curl-and-drag wrister – the shot that Auston Matthews has made famous in recent years – was enough to get him across the 20-goal line last season. It's a legitimately projectable skill.

Juhola couples that high-level shot with a playmaking component to make him a true dual-threat scorer. He's someone who can get pucks around defenders and then reposition as a new option himself; signs of an advanced give-and-go game.

"He's got a better eye for making passes than many of his draft-eligible peers," Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen wrote on February 5th. "He made some nifty slip passes in transition to create entries through outside lanes."

The forward's size and ability to connect plays up to the offensive zone projects well to Liiga play. He should become an effective part of Ässät's lineup for the next few years.

U20 SM-sarja 2021–2022: Expected Primary Points (5v5 only)



To establish himself as a legitimate candidate for NHL minutes, however, Juhola will have to improve his significantly below-average skating, a weakness that is a bigger long-term concern considering he is one of the older players in the draft. Juhola's development curve does seem to be trending in the right direction, though, so here's hoping.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 27th, 2022

KalPa vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

Juhola was centering Ässät's top unit in the U20 league playoffs. He didn't have any points, but had multiple scoring chances. Most of his looks came from finding quiet space in the slot area, timing his movement well. Showed some physicality on the forecheck. Couldn't quite convert a couple of takeaways into passes as they were intercepted. Played the bumper role on PP on some shifts and the right half wall on others. Solid small-area skill and playmaking ability. The problem with Juhola's projection as an older player is that he's not especially dynamic and his skating projects as slightly below-average. He does have some of the attributes to become a pro-level scorer, though.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 18th, 2022

Pelicans vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

Juhola was throwing his body around a bit more than in previous viewings, which was a positive sign. Initiated contact a few times before receiving the puck, which immediately gained him the advantage and the space to create. The problem was his passes just weren't connecting in this one, many of them were blind feeds. Skating limits transition ability as faster wingers are able to close in on him before he gets to the OZ blue line. Did score after receiving a bouncing puck in a prime location and the shot went in even when he slightly whiffed on it. There are concerns about his upside, but also some encouraging signs considering his Liiga prospects.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 5th, 2022

Ässät vs. Pelicans - U20 SM-sarja

Juhola remains a pretty interesting prospect in some ways, though I'm still not confident in his NHL odds being that high. He's going to become a decent pro at least, I think. The skating needs work, sure, but he's got a better eye for making passes than many of his draft-eligible peers, combined with a pretty good shooting ability, too. Made some nifty slip passes in transition to create entries through outside lanes. One very prominent backcheck hustle to stop a potential 2v1 – major props for that one, because he's still pretty green in terms of DZ play.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 2nd, 2022

Jokerit vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

Juhola's OZ playmaking continues to impress. Though he didn't get rewarded for it with assist, he made one really great behind the net pass to the slot after winning a puck battle. He clearly recognizes passing opportunities and opening lanes faster than the majority and is able to execute on them, too.

Shot looked pretty dangerous, too, even if the playmaking continues to be the most visible part of his game. Has some one-touch/give-and-go ability as well. If Juhola improves his skating, adds more details to his defensive game and learns to better utilize his frame, he could end up being a top-six player for a Liiga team eventually.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 30th, 2022

JYP vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

Juhola remains a prospect who could turn out to have a pretty successful pro career, but I'd still be wary of spending an NHL draft pick for him. He's got some nice playmaking touch in tight, being able to make small clever passes under pressure from either side of his body. He also has some timing around the dangerous areas. Not a defensive stalwart, but has shown enough awareness to think that he'll be able to develop it into a good enough spot for pro level. Skating, pace and lack of transition impact are issues. Needs to have skilled and fast wingers to get him the puck so he can make the final play.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 18th, 2022

Hermes vs. IPK - Mestis

Juhola was centering Hermes' second line in Mestis, playing on a loan with the U20 league on temporary hold. He found his way to the scoresheet twice. The first time was particularly nice, as he made a great small cross-ice feed after a rebound instead of just trying to slam the puck in himself, increasing the scoring chance quality from ok to a pretty much guaranteed goal. He also scored off the rush after trying to make backdoor pass but the puck deflected back to him, resulting in an easy goal to a pretty much open net. Juhola's offensive value comes from his timing and off-puck awareness combined with good skill level once he gets the puck in dangerous areas. He's not much of a play driver, though. Made some decent defensive plays, backchecking and taking an extra stride to initiate contact. On the other hand, he did misread some defensive assignments. Skating stride is a bit choppy and his speed or acceleration don't really stand out.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 20th, 2021

Tappara vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

This performance was pretty much in line with what I've seen from Juhola previously. He had some good moments when he got the puck in the OZ, being able to pass it quickly to a better location. There was one particularly noteworthy play where he had the vision to make a cross-ice feed to the backpost from close to below the goal line – a situation where



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

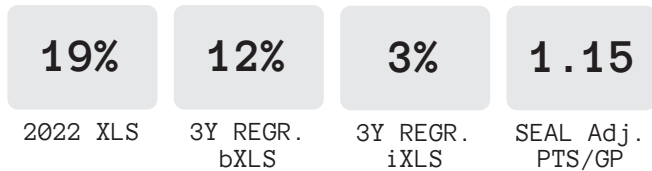


Physical

# JAKE KARABELA

C | GUELPH STORM

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAR. 7, 2004  
WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	12	33	45

## Scouting Report

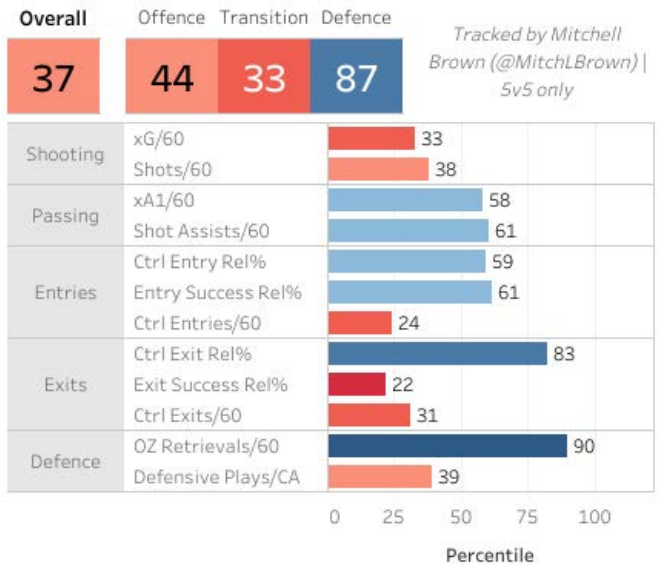
On a team with several high-profile draft-eligible prospects, it's easy to get lost in the mix. Just don't tell Jake Karabela that. He was occasionally the Guelph Storm's best player and regularly its most flashy one.

Puckhandling is Karabela's best skill. He beats defenders with a combination of hand speed, soft touch, and flashes of deception. Hand-eye coordination turns tricky passes and contested pucks into soft catches and quick dekes. Where many skilled handlers just deke, Karabela complements with handling with puck protection, as Elite Prospects Dir. of NA Scouting Mitch Brown explains: "He maintains his skating depth under pressure, uses his legs to cut off defenders and his free hand to keep pressure on his back, and he doesn't over-cycle."

The handling skill feeds into Karabela's shooting in the form of curl-and-drag wristers and passing in the form of backhand feeds under sticks. The coordination allows him to knock down opponents' saucer passes and fish pucks out of battles.

However, Karabela's impact on the game beyond the flash was often muted in our viewings. He prefers simple plays with the puck in transition, often avoiding the middle lane entirely. Favourable pucks touches elude him because he

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 108.1



tends to float away from the slot and plant his feet instead of actively getting open. And his best work starts and ends in a controlled, but slow glide – a habit that already leads to turnover issues.

There's no denying Karabela's puck skills and his defensive potential. If he makes the NHL, it'll likely be as a flashy but effective fourth-liner.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Didn't see much from Karabela. The handling skill didn't appear. He prefers simple plays that don't lead to much offence. A point-blank chance on the powerplay led to his goal, and another chance from Poitras. He doesn't get many prime touches outside of the slot, but he also doesn't position himself to maximize his odds of getting the puck. Frankly, there wasn't anything in this performance that suggested a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 10th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

Another quiet game from Karabela. An reactionary deke through a defender, then fought off two sticks to escape the boards. But nothing too interesting otherwise. He makes simple plays across the ice. In one shift, he just gained the zone and stepped into a slap shot instead of delaying for options of using his hands to get closer to the net. Didn't see any off-puck instincts, playmaking potential, or scoring upside. Didn't look like a pick in this game, but I'll concede he's fun to watch.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 16th, 2022

London Knight vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Didn't see the handling skill or manipulation potential in this game. Mostly an ineffective, forechecking performance. He offloaded the puck immediately on the breakout – throwing it away or making a poor pass. He didn't scan and didn't seem comfortable handling incoming pressure. On the forecheck, he forced some of the same plays. But that was it – no interesting skills, tools, or decisions in this outing.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. London Knights - OHL

Probably the most impressive draft-eligible in this game. Karabela showed advanced puck protection ability. He maintains his skating depth under pressure, uses his legs to cut off defenders and his free hand to keep pressure on his back, and he doesn't over-cycle. After moving, he steps to the inside and gets open. The highlight of the game: a reactionary deke through pressure, cutting off the recovery route of the next defender, then driving the net for a chance. Other moments including delaying to connect with a through pass to the middle lane driver and making a one-touch pass into the slot. There's the inception of manipulation in these sequences; he's clearly trying to move defenders and alter their patterns, but he just can't sell it quite well enough. The first step will be using look offs more regularly, then develop the outside edges (he enters a glide before doing anything).

He's involved on the defensive end, but his reads and timing need tightening. Looked like a mid-rounder with third-line skills but plenty of development required.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 21st, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Karabela had good moments, but those moments are probably not going to be what makes him a successful player at future levels. There were a couple of good pass pickoffs in the neutral zone, he pressures puck carriers in the OZ, and had a couple of high-danger shots stopped in the slot. I don't think he projects more than a checker at future levels of hockey and is likely a late-round pick at best based on this viewing.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

Saginaw Spirit vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

I didn't see any draftable qualities in this game. Karabela's a relatively low-even player, highlighted by his questionable primary assist where he didn't impact the play. Gets above the play on the backcheck and understands how to angle out attacks, but I don't see any notable defensive skill beyond that. Mostly a straight line attacker who looks for his teammates to do the work for him.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 5th, 2021

Soo Greyhounds vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

I have some concerns with Karabela's skating and pace after this viewing. While he was harassing puck carriers along the boards, he wasn't getting in on the forecheck much or even joining the play. He was far too stationary at both ends of the ice and often the last player entering both zones. That, along with his tendency to cheat out of the defensive zone raised some red flags for me, considering he wasn't doing much offensively either. He had one nice pass under pressure to spring Matthew Poitras on a breakaway, but he also took a penalty after hauling a player down with his stick trying to regain possession of the puck in the offensive zone. I wasn't overly impressed with him in this one.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 8th, 2021

Kitchener Rangers vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

Positive first impression of Karabela after this game. He got involved in the offense, showing off his hands on two nice assists and an absolute top shelf snipe on the 4-4 goal for Guelph. He carried the puck up the ice with confidence and he also showed a concerted effort to help out his defensemen by backchecking. Karabela was involved in puck battles but wasn't winning them much. There are some good aspects to his game, looking forward to watching him more.

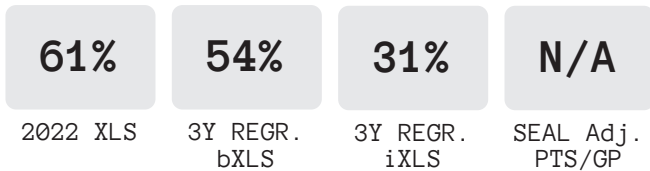




# BEN KING

C/RW | RED DEER REBELS

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. MAY 15, 2002  
 WEIGHT 201 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	68	52	53	105

## Scouting Report

Ben King's offensive breakout has been pending for years now. He had the skill, he just needed to improve his skating and receive more opportunities.

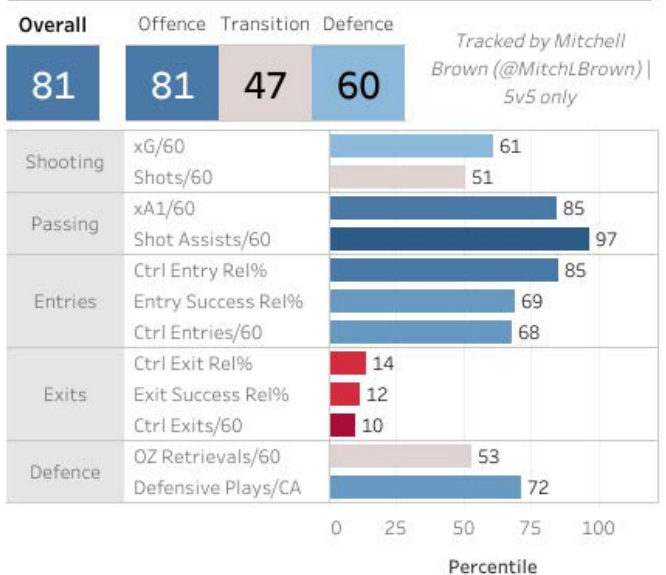
This year, that breakout came in the form of a 52-goal, 53-assist season. Now, the 20-year-old centre has everything in place to become one of the surprise Day 2 picks of the draft.

Despite his stature, King's game is not one of power; it's one of intelligence. "He makes quick plays off the boards, flips pucks to teammates building speed on the inside, and [he] knows how to build advantages," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown wrote. He's always pockets of space in the offensive zone, often by circling away defenders then sprinting to the slot.

"The extra space of the powerplay allows King's vision, shooting, and thoughtfulness to shine. He creates different looks from the same position (half wall): shot-pass for a deflection, cross-slot pass, and step-in wrister," Brown wrote in a February game report.

King's not a creator, however. Instead, he relies on the pre-existing advantages his teammates create for him and

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 105.9



the powerplay, where he scored 49 of his 105 points.

The lack of true creation combined with skating limitations could keep King out of the NHL entirely. Perhaps if he focuses more on the puck-winning, inside-driven style that he showed in previous years, he could become a depth player.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 13th, 2022

Red Deer Rebels vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

King's awesome. Is he an NHLer? I doubt it. The pace is low and requires significant amounts of space to create. He's not a manipulator or strong off-puck threat, as is required to

score in the NHL with skating as a disadvantage. However, he's an intelligent offensive player. He makes quick plays off the boards, flips pucks to teammates building speed on the inside, and his shot's a weapon despite unorthodox mechanics. Creative and knows how to build advantages.

He's probably more of an AHL scorer, but his development over the past few seasons has been fantastic.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 26th, 2022

Regina Pats vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

King's not much of a transition threat out there. His board play isn't notable for a draft-plus-two either. He's late and reactive, but shows small-area skills, patience, and creativity. Pressured into poor decisions. The extra space of the powerplay allows his vision, shooting, and thoughtfulness to shine. He creates different looks from the same position (half wall): shot-pass for a deflection, cross-slot pass, and step-in wrister. Some deceptive qualities, too. He looks more like a solid AHL scorer than an NHLer. Game is dependent on pre-existing advantages.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Saskatoon Blades vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

King almost achieves enough ankle flexion and he's certainly not slow in a straight line. Introduce changes of direction, and his lumberingness returns. His transition game lacks. He doesn't show much skill, instead preferring to dump the puck early and then arrive second with hopes of grinding out a puck in the corner. It rarely works. But he's clearly a cerebral attacker in the offensive end. He finds space across the ice, supports the play effectively, and makes tons of short-range passes to build the offence. Sometimes deceptive with his eyes, but he's not manipulative. A simple player, but one with enough ability that he's mastered WHL scoring. Could be worth a late rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 28th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

King requires time and space to do his best work. It's mostly visible on the powerplay. At 5-on-5, he requires pre-existing advantages or just passive defending to create meaningful offence with the puck on his stick. To be fair, when he gets that space, it's great. He feathers pucks through tiny openings, makes crafty backhand passes to the inside, and wind up powerful wristers. He's also a capable off-puck player, finding space by sneaking away from defenders and sprinting downhill in the perfect moments. Too dependent

on the one-timer on the powerplay. He's not a candidate for our board but he's a solid player at this level.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Ben King's offensive breakout isn't luck; he's legitimately great in the WHL. He's a precise passer, regularly threading the needle. He's not quick despite his mechanical improvements, but has the puck protection skill and adaptability to manage pressure along the boards. Cleaned up a deflected pass for his goal, but the read before was the best part: he stopped in space, presented his stick, and became a passing option. Cut inside with a heel-to-heel for a chance later in the game. He does his best work on the powerplay, where the extra space allows him to use his one-timer and take the time he needs to feather a pass through defencemen. Without the space, he doesn't create much offence. Doesn't look like a draft pick.


**Mitchell Brown:** March 19th, 2021

Red Deer Rebels vs. Edmonton Oil Kings - WHL

A fairly regular Ben King performance, lots of grinding with a bit of skill attached. He's probably not an NHL pick, but his skating's definitely improved. He finishes his strides with toe snap, and brings much better ankle flexion in open-ice. He's faster as a result, probably nearing NHL average at times. He's most effective when winning battles and pushing play to the inside. Right now, the added skating hasn't translated to his board play, which likely limits this style in the NHL. I see little in the way NHL skills otherwise. He's a low-upside, low-probability bet, but his mentality and stark improvement's worth following.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 5, 2020

Lethbridge Hurricanes vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

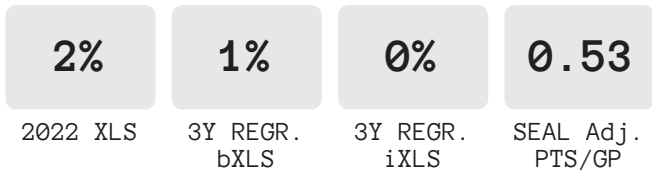
Best Ben King viewing of the season. King was hungry on the forecheck, and scored after ripped the puck off the goaltender's stick. He added another goal by stealing the puck from a terrible Alex Cotton pinch, then made the early 2-on-1 pass. Arshdeep Bains fed it back, and King had the tap-in. Not sure he's all that talented, but he certainly has good moments. A no-draft still for me because of his vanilla skill set, but I see the appeal finally. 



# JOZEF VILIAM KMEC

D | PRINCE GEORGE COUGARS

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. JAN. 2, 2004  
WEIGHT 198 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	62	2	12	14

## Scouting Report

With eight points in the first eight games, Viliam Kmec generated significant buzz early on. It didn't hurt that he's a 6'3" defender with mobility and flashes of puck skills. Ultimately, his play would falter in the second half, leading to a downtick in ice time and just a single point in the final 39 games.

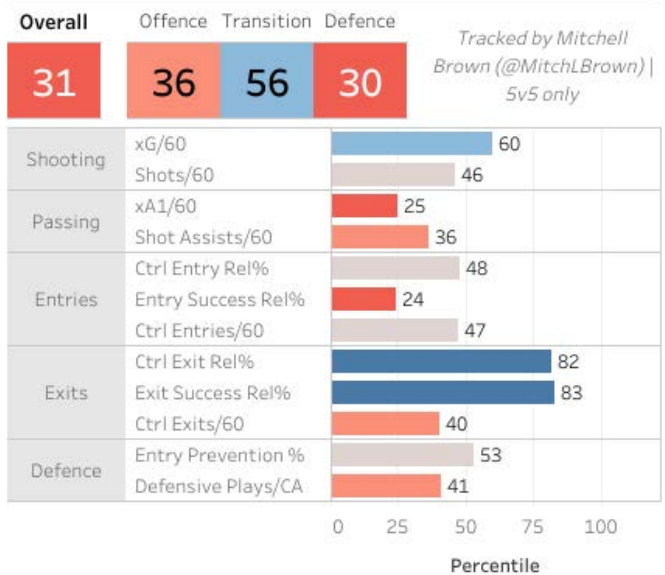
Kmec's best work comes through activation. Especially in the season, he joined the rush regularly, used the middle on breakouts, and even defenders on occasion.

Moments where Kmec plays an aggressive, proactive defence game also encourages optimism. However, Kmec lacks the scanning habits and proactive off-puck play that designates prospects as projectable defenders. He over-commits and chases the puck carrier.

Naturally, Kmec's path to the NHL is likely through his flashes of fluidity and activation. To get there, he'll have to start anticipating opportunities to join the rush, and then show more patience with the puck.

"Too often, he activates at the wrong moments, and he lacks the puckhandling and puck protection skills to make the most of successful activations," Elite Prospects Crossover

Games Tracked: 6 | Minutes Tracked: 89.3



Scout Daniel Gee wrote in an end-of-season report.

Kmec's a long-shot prospect, with his upside largely based on early season flashes of activation instincts, puck skills, and mobility. Perhaps in a better environment, his game looks far more refined.

## Game Reports

Marek Novotný: April 26th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Kmec played the game with a little ice time. He looked terrible defensively, was often out of position, didn't cover

his opponent enough and lacked focus and aggressiveness in battles. But it's true that he was physical, had one quality pokecheck and his passing game was pretty good. But he also caused a few turnovers.

**Marek Novotný:** March 27th, 2022

Prince George Cougars vs Vancouver Giants - WHL

Bad match for Kmec. He constantly struggled to be active offensively, but when he did enter deep into the offensive zone a few times to support the offense, though, that mostly led to odd-man rushes. In the defensive zone, on the other hand, he tried to cover every player that was in close radius, making poor passes and not being able to clear the zone. The one positive was physicality. Not a pick for me.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Kmec played a bunch but hardly made an impact. He's mostly a passive, reactionary defender without much offence or transition skills to offset it. When he gets the puck, he either shoots or makes the simple play. Doesn't use space, let alone manipulate pressure. Didn't show much activation ability. Didn't look like a draftable player in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 16th, 2022

Prince George Cougars vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Kmec activated into the play once and then turned the puck over. Grabbed a couple of stops in transition, but he's reactionary and late in the defensive zone. He doesn't scan enough, and even when he's aware, he's too slow to provide help defence or switch off his check. Highly turnover prone in transition, even when given space. Doesn't use space. Didn't look like a draftable prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 19th, 2021

Tri-City Americans vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

I appreciate how regularly Kmec activates into the rush, tries more complex plays in transition, and generally operates at a high pace. But his game's chaotic at the best of times. He activates when he shouldn't (and that's rare for me to say), he throws pucks away in the neutral zone because he doesn't have much foresight with the puck. Defensively, he's very passive through the neutral zone, and then becomes a lunging, over-committing defender in the DZ. I didn't see much offence in this game. Didn't look like a draft pick, although I see the potential to become one.

**Daniel Gee:** November 10th, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

While Kmec's frame and activation habits are interesting, he didn't look like a pick in this game, really succumbing to poor defending habits that snowballed as Vancouver laid on pressure.

Kmec's defending in transition was a mess of passiveness,

over-aggressiveness, and weird decision making. He too often conceded his lanes, failed to even activate his stick, and had no semblance of angling or guiding. In the first allowed an inside pass from his side, while in range and gapped, leading to a goal from the top of the right-hand circle. He let up on one of his only chances to finish a perimeter activating attacker. Failed a secondary threat on Sourdif who crashed the net on another transitional play. In sustained defending sequences he was equally as rough in this game.

His lack of scanning, shoulder-peaks, and mental mapping made him extremely reactive and overcommitting. In the first, he chased puck carriers around the left-hand circle, completely missing a slot activated opponent, leading to a high-danger chance against - he had no idea there was an opponent positioned there. Later in the third, tired after an offensive zone activation, Kmec failed to clear a loose puck down-low, leading to a goal against. He was better on a penalty kill in the third -- his mobility helps him create some resistance. He made a stick lift in the slot and rejected a goal-line pass, but still showed too much passiveness on a subsequent action, failing to provide any resistance with his stick leading to a high-danger shot off the post.

Limited offensive sequences in this game for Kmec. I liked one outlet he made, executing a stop-up to open up a new passing lane. On some sustained sequences he attempted some poorly leveraged shots -- not much manipulation here. Tries to activate but lacks individual puck skills to do anything with the puck in pressure. I don't think his sense is strong enough to translate successfully.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

There's chaos every time Kmec steps on the ice. Sometimes, he's tight on his check and prevents the entry. The next, he gives them half a rink of space and never engages. On retrievals, he deceives but doesn't wait for the reaction, leading to turnovers. He throws pucks away without much pressure, only to try to problem-solve his way through heavy pressure the next touch. He activates, often at the wrong times, but I appreciate how he wants to be involved. The positive stuff all screams NHL draft pick. The negatives are overwhelming and keep me skeptical.

**Daniel Gee:** October 27th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

Interesting game for Kmec, who was directly responsible for the creation of two Prince George goals, taking advantage of a favourable minute draw and power play time.

While Kmec's tools appear to be fairly basic, his offensive

zone habits were fairly conducive to maintaining and creating chances in sustained offensive scenarios. Whether it's an aggressive activation along the near boards to keep possession, a simple top of the point shot, or facilitating passes that allow Hudson Thornton attack downhill, it's safe to say Kmec is rounding into a niche in the Cougars lineup. At 6-foot-3, Kmec's size leveraging is fairly impressive -- in the WHL, opponents have a hard time working around his pivots, but it probably won't translate entirely higher.

In the first, he showed some great instincts on a perimeter attack, popping a puck skate to stick while holding off a Victoria defender -- can he facilitate a complex play out of this activation? Probably not in most cases. A glaring example was a powerplay activation down the near boards -- he ended up shooting directly into a blocking Victoria defender, telegraphing the attempt. Where Kmec found his most offensive value was in his rotations to the top of the point, specifically when Thornton activated lower in the offensive zone.

In the second, Kmec took his time shooting from the top of the point -- in general his release is slow, lacking manipulation, as he pushes as much downforce as possible through his stick. His placement was deft, creating a swimming goaltender, chaos and an eventual rebound goal that was credited unassisted. He had a very similar shift in the third, returning after missing a lot of the second. After a suffocating gap up play in his own zone and a Cougars transition, Kmec jumped on a loose puck at the middle of the point, firing another wrist shot, placed low -- this rebound by design play led to a rebound goal and a primary assist. Transitionally, while he defaulted to let Thornton run most of the transitional sequences, Kmec had a couple of controlled carries. One play in the second had Kmec carry the puck end-to-end, jamming the puck up into the Victoria goal line -- it was more awkward than anything, but it's another example of size and protection habits that are at least present at this level.

Locked almost exclusively to the net front, Kmec had a foray of containment plays when the puck was worked to the perimeter; Victoria in general had a rough time generating offense in this game with so many injuries and key players out. There were a few strong support sequences in this game-- was a pretty important feature on the penalty kill early in the game (had multiple clears off of play disruptions). Kmec also had a wonderful scan and interception late in the third, clogging a lane high in his zone and rejecting sustained pressure. Some of Kmec's transition habits could be better.

Instead of angling on the near boards, he opted to rub out attackers below the goalline, opening himself up to the risk of a slot pass as he tried to contain down the boards. His worst play in general was a poor read in the first, failing to recognize a break-in soon enough, pivoting the wrong way, requiring Thornton to shift to his side to support. Producing well, has the physical profile, some solid habits, he might be a pick at the end of our board.

**Daniel Gee:** October 18th, 2021

Victoria Royals vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

The Kmec and Thornton pair, while impactful, went nuclear on a couple of Victoria attacking sequences.

Kmec does a solid job leveraging his frame and above-average strength on perimeter actions in sustained defensive zone shifts. He was rather suffocating on one shift in the second period as Victoria tried to swing the puck across his strong side to beside the net. He chases at times, but protects the inside well. He is often facilitating support for Hudson Thornton who takes the majority of pressure on retrievals and net-front battles from his side (Royals right-wing). I like some of his habits on retrievals -- he shoulder peaks to identify pressure and scan for information. I think he lacks some small-area skill to escape in high-pressure situations, and because of that, he is forced to take a more uncontrolled actions. Kmec had a wonderful containment play on a rush against in the third -- he completely enveloped the attacker, creating a turnover and starting a counter attack. On another shift in the second, after an egregious turnover on a breakout by Thornton, Kmec collapsed too deep, unable to make an impact on the counter-attack, leading to a goal against.

Kmec has some large-ice maneuverability, in the first, he activated up the middle of the ice, executing a three-line carry, ultimately running into heavy pressure as he entered the offensive zone -- not sure there was anything left to give on his end. Facilitate multiple two-line near board passes to send Cougars in attacking off the right wing. Not sure there a tonne of transitable habits off the blue-line. On the rare occasion that Kmec was the puck carrier, he lacked manipulation, taking inefficient shots up the centre lane -- all blocked. His shooting mechanics are rushed and he heeled an open, no pressure one-timer due to timing issues. Kmec had some legitimately great activation plays off the right point. Collapsed Victoria's defenders on one shift. May need more time to activate further tools in the WHL-- deserves follow ups this season.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

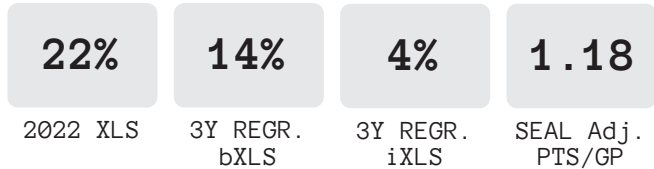


Physical

# COLE KNUBLE

RW | FARGO FORCE

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JUL. 1, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	62	20	29	49

> Committed to Univ. of Notre Dame ('23-24)

## Scouting Report

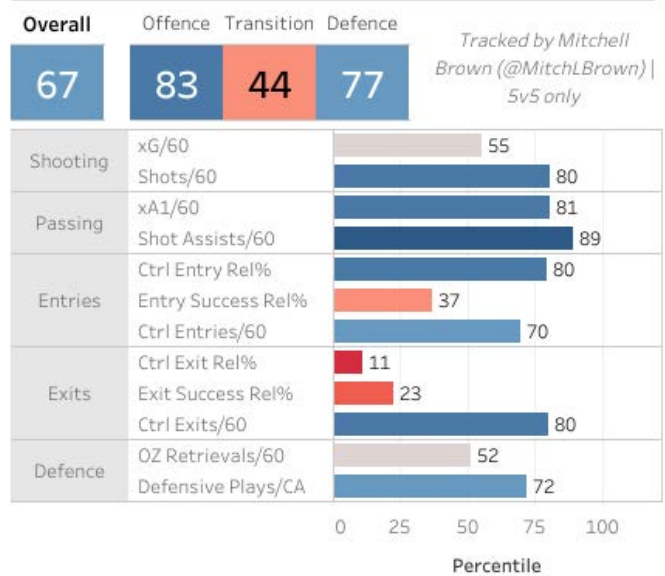
Being the driving force on a low-scoring team as a first-time draft-eligible is no easy task, but that's exactly what Cole Knuble achieved this year. He became the hub through which everything flowed on Fargo, from defence to offence.

The flashiest side of Knuble's game is in transition, where he widens his stance and starts a quick series of stick handles to fake out forecheckers before pushing off into space. The most projectable element of his game is defence. A proactive, intelligent support player, he's always eliminating threats and positioning himself to start the breakout. He's legitimately talented down-low and around the net. When not battling along the boards before cutting back and making a quick backhand pass inside, he's locked to the net-front battling for positioning, deflecting shots, and gathering rebounds.

There are some issues with this style. His glide-reliant, puck-in-front handling style will lead to more turnovers than successful plays in the NHL. Additionally, his board play will have difficulty translating to the NHL because he lacks leverage, despite his short stature providing an advantage in this area. That starts with skating, as Knuble attempts to offset his lack of ankle dorsiflexion by dropping his chest to the ice. Taller defenders drop their hips lower than his, preventing him from winning the body positioning battle.

Instead of beating defenders with passes, he over relies on his hands. "He uses his teammates mostly as a reaction,

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 108.2



rather than a proactive decision to shift the defence," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown in a game report. "If he made the early pass, his game would become a bit more projectable."

Knuble's path to the NHL likely sees his style shift away from the puck-dominant transition attacker to a more of that give-and-go, hard-nosed style. However, to make that second style work in the NHL, significant refinement will be required. He could become a skilled piece on a competitive team's fourth-line if he does it.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** April 2nd, 2022

Fargo Force vs. Omaha Lancers - USHL

Pretty uninspired performance from Knuble. Took a tumble into the boards early, so maybe he was nursing an injury during the game. Stayed on the perimeter in the offensive zone, firing the occasional low-danger shot on net. Not the most agile skater, he's got decent stride mechanics straightaway, but doesn't get a ton of depth through his tight turns and crossovers. Things went a little better for him when he started trying to get inside and use his size to his advantage. Got a goal from fighting through the slot to bang home a loose puck. Performed well in the faceoff circle. I'm not sure he's a pick, maybe last two rounds.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 20th, 2022

Fargo Force vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

I haven't noticed anything new in Knuble's game in my last few viewings. This game wasn't any different. Knuble's a gritty net-front player with the odd flashy play. The skating limits his lateral movement with the puck and not he's setting up dekes inside crossovers. Instead, he glides and angles his feet in the direction he's about to beat defenders. It resulted in a cool play for the USHL, but it won't work at the next level. Board play is a strength right now, but his lack of depth (and tendency to compensate by dropping his chest instead of engaging his hips) will likely make his physical game a weakness at the next level. Too reliant on individual skill. Even when he scans, he still forces plays up the boards or even just dumps the puck in with options. I've seen passing skill from him before, but it rarely features in transition unless given the entire neutral zone to work with. Engaged defender, highlighted by his down-low support and disruptiveness. His current method of creating offence (individual skill, winning down-low battles, and planting himself in front of the net) won't translate to the next level given his tools and lack of nuanced skills. His adaptation will have to be significant, and even then, he's probably a bottom-of-the-lineup-type. Development keys: developing a movement-based off-puck game around the slot, give-and-gos in transition, improved skating mechanics (ankle flexion, hip engagement, and maintaining depth through turns, crossovers, cutbacks), and adding a delay game with the puck. Should be a fun college player, but that's a lot of work for player likely to fill a bottom-of-the-lineup role.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Knuble scored twice in this game. The best was a curl-and-drag wrister, initiating the movement before even getting the

puck. The goaltender saw short side, he went far side. His game isn't nuanced, but there are interesting moments. He uses slip passes, pulls the puck into his feet before passing, and spins off pressure down low to gain the middle. Not a high-level off-puck attacker, but he's consistent about trailing the play and arriving into space behind defenders. The issues are mechanical and reading the play. For the latter, he rarely uses his teammates at the right time. He can pass, and even has passing skill, but he settles for low-percentage, play-ending shots over building the sequence. He passes at the wrong times in transition, always trying to beat defenders himself before distributing. For him, passing seems like the end, not a means to the end. He's not creating the best play, either. There's some upside here, but I doubt he makes our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 11th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Knuble is just running through the scripts out there. The odd impressive moment (such a cut to the inside and pass to the trailer) is offset by large amounts of straight-line rushes and a lack of vision. He fakes out weaker defenders, but his inability to fully shift his weight and engage his outside edges prevents him from beating strong ones. He uses his teammates mostly as a reaction, rather than a proactive decision to shift the defence. If he made the early pass, his game would become a bit more projectable. For now, he doesn't play a projectable style and doesn't have the tools to justify a pick in lieu of scalability.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Knuble does stuff – get entries, get chances, set up chances – in a way that's easy to see. It's not a surprise that he's getting hype. But I don't see him doing those things in a way that will work going forward. He's a limited skater (and even handler, if you get over the inside edge-only dekes), but instead of playing to his strengths, he tries to outrace defenders. Too often, he misses passing opportunities because he's so focused on beating a defender himself. There are flashes of projectable playmaking ideas and he's accurate on the backhand, but there are no greater flashes of manipulation, deception, or timing. Some off-puck movements, coupling retrievals with board play and off-puck movement with shooting. But the mechanical limitations make mostly a very simple player in these regards. I don't see an NHL pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 16th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Knuble has some NHL elements to his game. The work

rate stands out, especially in pursuit. He's a strong defensive support player, always coming back down low and picking the right side/distance to be from the battle. Once he gets the puck, he looks for teammates on the inside. In one sequence, he used a projectable cutback to escape down low before completing a backhand pass through a defender while being slammed to the boards.

It's that area where his game shines the most. In open-ice, his limitations appear. He missed an opportunity to create a 2-on-1 because he choose to skate at the defender and deke through them instead - just make the early pass. A few other similar plays suggested a lack of foresight in his puck game. Puck control aside, his in-a-glide, single-speed handling style won't beat defenders in the NCAA, let alone the NHL. Didn't see any notable scoring tools or off-puck offence. Didn't look like a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 26th, 2021

Tri-City Storm vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Knuble doesn't have an easily discernible NHL role. The mechanical issues are significant, even if he dekes someone on occasion. Everything comes from his inside edges, weight on his heels. Lacks depth and drops his torso to the ice. Handles the puck in front of his body, in rhythm with his strides, with little hip pocket use.

But dig deeper, and he's a strong support player with a projectable down-low game (provided the skating comes). Times his cutbacks well, preparing his preferred space by delaying and waiting for pressure to arrive. The game falls apart in transition. I don't see anything to warrant a spot on our board, but there's enough here to justify a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Fargo Force - USHL

The ideas underpinning Knuble's decisions were often sound. He attacked the inside. Looked for give-and-go options. Used a speed differential to beat defenders. The execution was poor. Mechanical ability came and went. At worst, he strode and handled the puck in rhythm, locking him into straight-line, single-speed attacks. At best, he beat defenders by faking one direction and going the other. Skating will be an issue. He lacks ankle dorsiflexion and doesn't engage his hips. Recovers a touch too wide with incomplete extensions. Some difficulty crossing over and shifting his weight, aside from one almost weight shift. Looks like a classic USHL prospect: flashes limited by both the supporting cast and his own mechanical limitations.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Fargo Force vs. Omaha Lancers - USHL

I appreciate Knuble's forechecking and net-front play. There's not much nuance to it, but he gets his chances, win battles, and gives himself a chance on every play. The mechanics only make the projection murkier. His strides are short and wide, with undeveloped outside edges hampering his in-tight ability. Lacks ankle flexion, for which he compensates by dropping his chest towards the ice. He can't shift his weight properly. When he tries to sell a move, he ends up dropping his chest even further, rather than widening his hips and stacking the push off leg. Clearly some advanced handling ideas, but the skating limits his execution. Didn't seem like a pick, but there's enough potential to keep me watching.

**J.D. Burke:** August 6th, 2021

USA U18 vs. Czech Republic U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

The eye-hand coordination on display from Knuble really was something. Picked off a hip-level pass high at the defensive blue line on the penalty kill to start a 2-on-1 early in the game, picked up a redirection chance not long after, batted a puck out of mid-air attempting to redirect it past the Czech goaltender and then snapped it home, and managed to corral several ankle-level passes throughout this contest. Really strong showing from Knuble as a dual-threat scorer in general. Showed strong habits on the rush, pulling defenders to his orbit before dispatching of the puck, attacking on arc to drag the defensive front, etc. Seemed to thrive in traffic. Did a great job of picking up a loose puck around the Czech goal, taking it wide for the wraparound, and then sending the puck top-corner for the goal through a mass of bodies at the net-front. Picked up the insurance marker in the third period by holding the defence on a 2-on-1 by looking pass until the very last moment, at which point he sniped his second of the game past the Czech goaltender. Loved the work rate and urgency from Knuble in this contest.

**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

USA U18 vs. Sweden U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup

Look, I get that he's the son of Mike Knuble, but I'm not sure the American coaching staff had to typecast him to this degree. It would've been nice for Knuble to get a little playing time away from the net-front is all I'm trying to say. Now, granted, Knuble picked a greasy goal by charging the crease after a weird bounce off the endboards placed the puck on his linemate's stick and then eventually his with a yawning cage. But that was about it for noteworthy moments from Knuble in this contest. Barely noticed him at all otherwise.





Rank



Grade



Skating



Transitions



Hands



Tracking



Post



Depth

# NIKLAS KOKKO

G | KÄRPÄT U20

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. MAR.15,2004  
WEIGHT 185 CATCHES

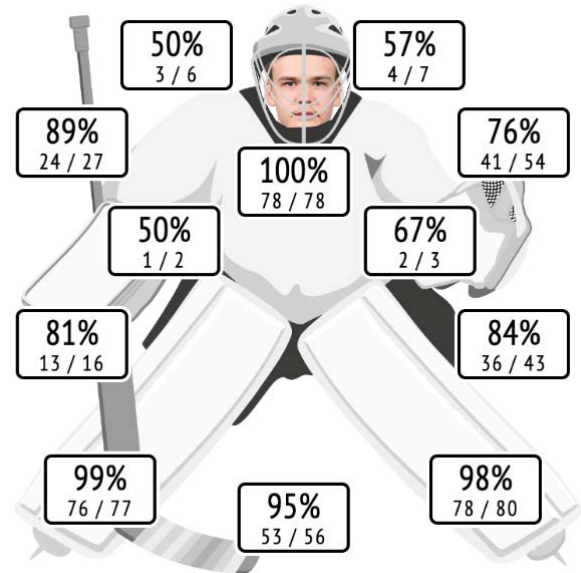
LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
U20 SM-sarja	29	2.06	.914	6

## Scouting Report

It's rare to watch a group of junior-level goaltenders who all play for the same coach in a way that makes it clear just how effectively that coach has taught them to master a style or technique - but for Niklas Kokko, it's fairly obvious that he's yet another promising product of the Ari Hilli Kärpät developmental system.

His game relies on consistency and standing primed for recovery, keeping as much of the top half of his net covered as possible even when he's maintaining his edges and staying on his feet. There's still a bit of a game-read lag that suggests Kokko's stellar numbers are yet another product of Kärpät's strong overall system, and he doesn't seem quite as comfortable with his hands as he should be at this point in the development process; he'll learn as he goes in this regard, but it's not likely that his hands will ever be the strongest part of his game.

Still, there's some great depth management to boast and plenty of North American-friendly technique that Kokko has clearly entrenched in his overall game. Like Joel Blomqvist, Justus Annunen, and Leevi Meriläinen before him, it's hard



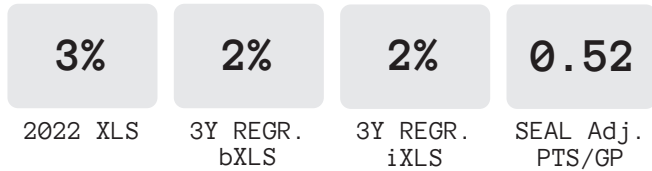
not to picture Kokko getting snagged by a general manager who's willing to be patient with him. He's signed with Kärpät through 2024-25, but should be ready to make the jump to North America after that point.



# VSEVOLOD KOMAROV

D | QUÉBEC REMPARTS

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. JAN. 11, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	60	2	17	19

## Scouting Report

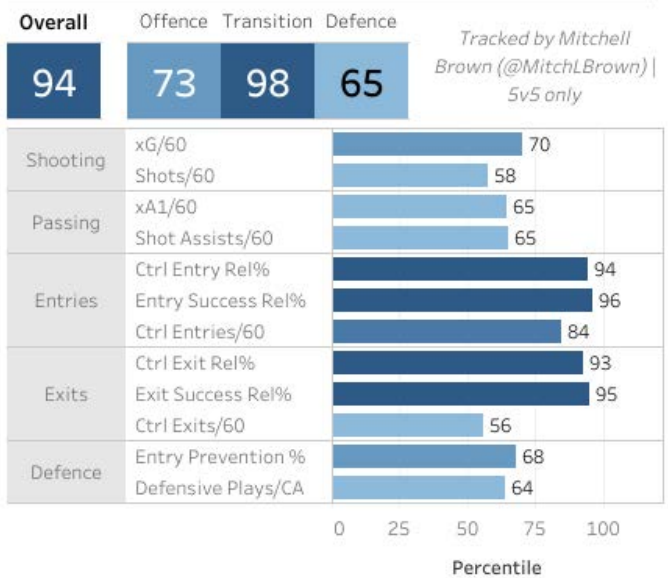
Some European imports work instantly for CHL teams. They propel the CHL organization they land with to new heights and make them instant contenders. Some others never really end up adapting to the league.

At first, Vsevolod Komarov looked like he was part of the second category of players. His first few games with the Québec Remparts were difficult, even if he was paired with their top defensive element. But then, as the season went on and he got adjusted to the pace of the game, the offensive flashes that were present in his game last year started to resurface: the blue line walks, the give-and-goes, the fakes and playmaking touch...

"Pace is low and feet are slow, but Komarov made many interesting plays in this game." wrote Mitch Brown, Elite Prospects Director of North American scouting, on February 4th, 2022. "Took a pass in motion, skated parallel to the boards, drew defensive attention, then turned the shot into a cross-slot pass for a chance."

Ultimately, the prospect's lack of mechanical ability, his below-average stride, occasionally imprecise handling abil-

Games Tracked: 6 | Minutes Tracked: 96.3



ity, and sweeping release raised too many doubts about the translatability of his game to consider him for our board. His low pace of play and production were also strong arguments for a wait-and-see approach with him.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Sherbrooke Phoenix vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Komarov has ideas, details, and even a bit of skill. In this game, he was looking activate and connected with a couple of passes. Manipulated the defence by stepping into space,

faking the shot, and passing to the middle. Mechanically, he's not there. The hands work, but he's a low-pace, no-speed player. Some of his reads suggest there's some runway here (like taking a pass in motion, then making the next play inside crossovers), and he's fairly consistent about deferring

**"As the season went on and [Komarov] got adjusted to the pace of the game, the offensive flashes that were present in his game last year started to resurface: the blue line walks, the give-and-goes, the fakes and playmaking touch."**

when pressured. That also limits his upside. And his skating hinders the rush defence, in-zone coverage, and ability to defend the cycle. He's not a pick for me at this stage, but there's enough to keep me watching.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Québec Remparts vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Pace is low and feet are slow, but Komarov made many interesting plays in this game. Took a pass in motion, skated parallel to the boards, drew defensive attention, then turned the shot into a cross-slot pass for a chance. Received on open-ice retrievals. Used a give-and-go to activate off the point. A couple of crafty plays on breakouts and he missed some opportunities when under pressure. First viewing and it was against a weak team.

**David St-Louis:** December 4th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Komarov is just not skilled enough and the game is too fast for him. He is also not scoring. He took two penalties in the first period because attackers beat him. I liked how he occasionally took space in the offensive zone to fire closer to the net, but not much else.

**David St-Louis:** November 4th, 2021

Saint John Sea Dogs vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Komarov lacks technical skills. His passes are slow, because he doesn't decide where to send the puck next before getting it, but also because he lacks the handling skills to one or two touches the puck. His shot mechanics are not completed (short-draw and short motions, little rotation in the shot, and he could weight them his slap-shots more). I'm not sure why he is the quarterback of the Remparts powerplay right now as he is not creating anything himself.

**David St-Louis:** October 28th, 2021

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Komarov's defensive gap was tight and aggressive in this game. He was paired with Savoie, Québec's top blue-line, probably to ease some of the pressure of coming in as a rookie and having to play this kind of competition. The QMJHL is large step up from the MHL. The play is much faster, but I think Komarov as the tools to keep up. Is he an NHL prospect? Probably not from the slow decisions I have seen this game and the lack of NHL offensive abilities, but it's early. **P**



# EVAN KONYEN

RW | SUDBURY WOLVES

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. FEB. 22, 2004  
WEIGHT 170 SHOOTS RIGHT

<b>27%</b> 2022 XLS	<b>17%</b> 3Y REGR. bXLS	<b>6%</b> 3Y REGR. iXLS	<b>1.24</b> SEAL Adj. PTS/GP
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LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	66	16	34	50

## Scouting Report

The defining characteristic of Evan Konyen's game is his handling skill. This aspect of his game grades highly not only because of his control of the puck when it's in his possession but because of his ability to blend first touches and pass receptions into his next move

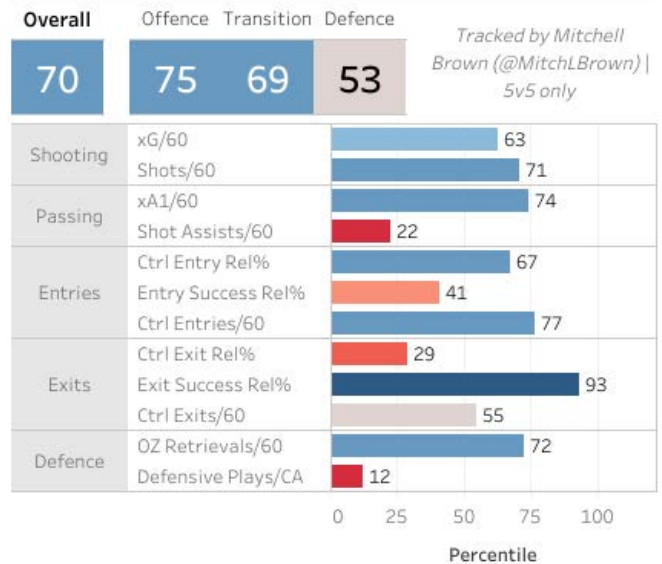
At the top of his game this season, Konyen could instantly chain pass receptions into 1-on-1 moves or passes to the slot for teammates.

But the large inconsistencies in his play made Konyen appear more like a junior scorer than an NHL projectable one. His tendency to overuse his hands, his lack of awareness, and his general passivity away from the puck brought him down on our ranking as the season went on.

"He's got good edgework and agility, but sometimes he looks a bit sluggish and I'd like to see him add a little more explosiveness and power to his stride that would help him get to pucks quicker," Elite Prospects OHL scout Lauren Kelly wrote in an October report.

The prospect has the skill to become a play-driver in the

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 114.2



OHL in the not-so-distant future. An increase in his motor and in his playmaking abilities could turn him into a legitimate third-line candidate at the NHL level in the next few years, too.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 13th, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Konyen was the most effective of Sudbury's draft eligibles in this game. He consistently found teammates on the inside, creating a high-danger chance in the process. He's hardly involved in the defensive end, but he was disruptive on the

forecheck by angling the puck carrier into the boards. Shot has a ton of mechanical flaws, ranging from a lack of lower body engagement to his hand placement (too close to his body). Shot lacks power.

Requires a step-in and drawback. I don't see any notable details to his game. He's skilled, but in a junior way - lacks

off-puck offence, deception, pace, and adaptability. I don't think he'll make our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Konyen should be most impactful at this stage. He's a skilled handler, a projectable shooter, and he's even added some defensive impact. But he fades into the background quickly. Some of that's because his touches are inefficient, the consequence of untranslatable rush patterns. But he also doesn't consistently get open in any zone. He just stands around and waits, only moving into lanes as his teammates try to force a pass through. He's not involved on Sudbury's breakouts because he's always behind the play or cheating for offence. When he gets the puck, he doesn't show much playmaking, awareness of options, or puck protection. He'll get picked, and justifiably so, but I don't see him as a candidate for our board.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 3rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Konyen was dropped off Sudbury's top line (unsurprising given how flat he's looked in recent viewings with Goyette and Delic), likely due to the number of regulars being out of the lineup and the Wolves needing to spread the wealth a bit. This was not an impressive viewing. He took an unnecessary and dangerous boarding penalty that could have been an ejection (given that four players were tossed in this game, I'm honestly surprised it wasn't). Had a good steal at his own blueline to rush the other way and set up a scoring chance. Picked up a secondary assist on Sudbury's second goal. Took another slashing penalty. The effort level was a lot better in this one, but I don't know that I'd draft him based on this viewing. He had good moments, but the poor plays vastly outnumbered them and he really didn't make much of an offensive impact at all.

**Lauren Kelly:** March 9th, 2022

Soo Greyhounds vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Konyen just felt like a passenger in this game as his linemates did all the work. Really not noticeable at all and his possession of the puck was minimal. Whether it was because he wasn't in the right spaces to make plays or his linemates were just dominating puck possession, I'm not sure, but there wasn't a lot to go off of in this one.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 6th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Alright, there's more to Konyen's game than just hands.

Sure, the handling skill remains his best attribute, but he's using that skill to set-up teammates and turn tricky passes into scoring chances. Pass receptions: takes puck across the body directly into shooting pocket while shifting his weight, then drops his weight and launches the puck. Shoots one-timers off the backfoot. Turned a couple of forechecking steals into offence by bringing the puck to the middle. Escapes battles with superior hand speed, looks for the next play. One assist showed planning, as he saw Goyette coming down the middle, then faked out a defender and worked away from the net to ensure the passing lane was clear. Looked like a late-second in this game.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Konyen picked up an assist on the second goal but this wasn't the strongest showing for him. His line didn't get a ton of extended offensive zone pressure to generate any scoring chances out of it. On the rare occasion that they did get set up, usually a pretty good quality chance was directed on goal, but I didn't think Konyen was too involved. Pretty much invisible at the other end of the ice, too. I wouldn't draft based on this game.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 21st, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Konyen scored the opening goal of this game, finding space and getting a shot off quickly. He also stole the puck and was stopped on a breakaway. But defensively, this wasn't the greatest showing for him - he had a couple of passes that were picked off and took two unnecessary penalties, one for checking from behind and another for hooking. I didn't see too much skill-wise from him. Not sure what to make of this viewing, honestly.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Best game I've seen from Konyen, showing more playmaking and shooting ability than I've seen before. While he still deked when he should pass, he showed awareness of options behind him. Then, he relocated for a chance or dropped the puck back to the trailer. Cuts across the front of defenders to create space behind him. Clearly an NHL-calibre puck handler. The mechanics are there, the touch is there, the creativity is there, and he makes his moves inside crossovers and under heavy pressure. Even some underhandling details when fighting backpressure. Turned a pass reception into two-touch deke off the backhand before a quick wrister off the blocker. Some activity on the defensive end, mostly through

energy rather than reads. But he grabbed a couple of steals and managed the puck well afterwards. He has third-line skills, but required significant work to get there. A mid-rounder.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 14th, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Playing on a line that generated five goals in this game, Konyen's play could only be described as pedestrian. He sat back and let his linemates take over and drive play. He showed some good checking abilities and had a few good reads in the neutral zone to force turnovers. There was another good steal in the offensive zone to continue the sustained pressure. Had the primary assist on the 2-0 goal, but it was more of a whiffed shot on goal that found its way to Goyette. I question what role he could potentially fill at the NHL level, because he has the skills and creativity to be a top-six producer, but the tools are inconsistent at this point. Definitely worth a pick, but debatable as to where. Maybe third round?

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Breakaway goal with a quick deke. That's pretty much Konyen's game, along with forechecking. As the F3, times his dips well and gets the odd interception. He's quite passive with the puck, but also doesn't look to pass to teammates in better positions than himself. He can deke, and likely will continue to do so at the next level because of his technical proficiency and set ups, but his poor off-puck movement, inefficient skating, and inconsistent playmaking limit his upside.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 14th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Konyen's all hands. Top hand moves freely across the body, he pulls pucks back, around, and reaches in across and in front when handling. Range of control is massive, and it allows him to smoothly work pucks around players and instantly set up his next play. Now, the next play. That's where it gets tricky. I didn't see any notable reads or plays in this game. All low-risk, low-reward decisions. I wonder if he doesn't see options or if he's risk averse. He didn't bring much defensively or off-puck. Didn't look like a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 31st, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Konyen has some slick hands -- that he overuses. I liked how he used the middle for both breakouts and entries, taking

pucks from the perimeter to the inside in the process. But there was nothing about the pace or level of difficulty of these plays that suggests he'll do it at the next level. I didn't see much defensive acumen or engagement. Stride lacks depth and power, along with a wide, weak acceleration pattern. Didn't look like a draft pick in this game.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 28th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Konyen showed off his puck skills early, stickhandling to keep the puck away from defenders while slipping past them and drawing their attention before feeding a pass to a wide-open teammate on Sudbury's first goal. He was strong on the puck and good at protecting it, but I liked that he would also hound opposing players when they were in possession of the puck to try and steal it back. Konyen anticipated a pass at the blueline well to steal the puck and create an odd-man rush, coming down the ice before passing off to a teammate in the slot. He's got good edgework and agility, but sometimes he looks a bit sluggish and I'd like to see him add a little more explosiveness and power to his stride that would help him get to pucks quicker. He got into a physical tussle near the end of the second period after coming back to help prevent an odd-man rush. I also saw he sometimes cheated out of his own end a bit early in anticipation of play going back the other way, and he was also a bit passive in his own end at times. I'd like to see a more concerted effort in his own end, but overall this was a solid showing for Konyen.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 28th, 2021

Sudbury Wolves vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

In this game featuring plenty of skill, Konyen's hands really stood out. That's impressive. He had one of the plays of the game. Geared down to become a passing option, sprinted past the first player, and then came in at the next defender on an angle. The defender crossed over and Konyen cut inside and passed under a stick for a tap-in. No extra movements inside that move, either. The rest of the game was a lot messier. He skates at defenders with the sole purpose of dangling them (lacks adaptability) and that set-up on his assist didn't feature at any other point of the game. He just went straight at them in a glide instead. He's not much of a defensive player beyond charging at players, or even a particularly effective puck carrier in the NZ at this stage. The hands are NHL-calibre, but his game lacked planning and purpose in this one.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# ARSENI KOROMYSLOV

D | SKA-1946 ST. PETERSBURG

HEIGHT 6'3"

D.O.B. APR. 28, 2004

WEIGHT 181

SHOOTS RIGHT

1%

2022 XLS

1%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

1%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.4

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
KHL	6	0	0	0
MHL	42	4	15	19

## Scouting Report

When a defensive prospect possesses both size and skating ability, he becomes a strong candidate for our board, especially if he also played minutes in a professional league and showed he could hold his own.

Arseni Koromyslov, a defenceman for SKA St. Petersburg, has those qualities. He has the range to get his stick on opposing passes and the mobility to evade forecheckers and carry the play up ice. Our concerns with his game were in his execution and reads.

“Defensively, Koromyslov is a pure height player,” Elite Prospects Russia regional scout Dylan Griffing wrote in a September 12th, 2021 game report. “He really only uses his

reach and sheer size to make plays, but lacks the thought process to not get burned.”

These issues never really improved over the course of the season. They appeared in other facets of his game, too, like on breakouts where his plays continued to be predictable to the opposition and mostly uncontrolled, and at the offensive blue line, where he consistently overlooked better plays for lower-percentage ones.

The tools will interest NHL teams — Koromyslov could be a mid-round pick — but the lack of foresight in his game ultimately had him fall from our list.

## Game Reports

**Dylan Griffing:** November 30th, 2021

MHK Dynamo Moskva vs. SKA-1946 St. Petersburg - MHL

This has been a rough season for Koromyslov, definitely not looking like he was deserving of the WJC call-up. No creativity at all in his game, it's all so uniform and predictable. A mix of uncontrolled bank passes and straight-up-the-gut, easily interceptable passes. Passing up wide open skating lanes to, instead, come to a complete stop, slowly back towards the blueline, and go hunting for some ankles with his shot. No gap control, weak pinches, overpowered physically despite his size. Just weak.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 14th, 2021

Czech Republic vs. Russia - Karjala Cup

“A guy” is the best way to describe Koromyslov. He didn't do too much and was just fine. He struggled with breaking the puck out because of how little space he was giving to his partner. Not a lot of synergy between the two defenders and Koromyslov was struggling quite a bit against pressure, so a lot of sloppiness in the back end. He made some nice defensive plays with his stick and picked his spots well. On the rush, he struggled to make a quick choice between taking the shot or the pass away, or even to see if there was a passing option to

cover, which led to a scoring chance for the Czechs. Really shot happy in the offensive zone when other options were available.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 21st, 2021

SKA St. Petersburg vs. Kunlun Red Star - KHL

Koromyslov is finding his footing a bit in the K, but he still just isn't at the level he needs to be to be there. Some positives to take from this one were his lack of giveaways and a few defensive zone breakups. He pre-scanned really well to plan out his play with possession before receiving the puck so he could quickly get it off of his stick. He never held onto the puck for an extended period of time, just enough time to let whoever gave it to him find a bit more real estate to work with and then passed it right back. He had one retrieval that he followed with a spin (for no reason) and then tossed it right to three Kunlun players, which was really the only slip-up he had with possession. Defensively, he was mostly a step or two behind the whole game. Not great at anticipating or reading plays. Relied on his forwards to drop back and help him. Threw one hit, but the timing was off and he ended up at the blue line while the puck was in the slot.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 17th, 2021

SKA St. Petersburg vs. Barys Nur-Sultan - KHL

Just under six minutes of ice time in his third career KHL game and it went pretty poorly. He spent most of the game just getting bodied by Barys players, his frame advantage that he has playing in junior just doesn't translate against men because of his real lack of weight and strength. Not much good happening off the puck, getting caught on his back foot, weak gap control, and an inability to close down the boards gave the puck carrier plenty of options to get around him. He had a cold start to his game with the puck, but it picked up as the game progressed and he created two zone entries for his team. Overall, it's pretty safe to say he isn't ready to be in the KHL yet.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 17th, 2021


Krasnaya Armiya Moskva vs. SKA-1946 - MHL

This was an awful viewing. Koromyslov was tunnel visioned on moving the puck forward at all times and to not think twice about it. No pre-scanning on his retrievals, no scanning in general, it seemed, because basically all he was doing with the

puck in the defensive zone was aimlessly flinging bank passes that did not work -- at all. Even when he tried more "controlled" passes, they were anything but. One play in particular, he attempted a pass to his partner before going for a change, but instead of just dropping it back to his target who was basically directly behind him, he sent a pass parallel with the blue line all the way to the boards. He just makes his team do unnecessary work for little payoff. He was really reliant on the classic "chip the puck ahead and then jump around the defender and get to the puck first" move a lot this game, but he isn't strong enough or fast enough to actually get around the defender. Took a lot of low percentage shots under zero pressure just to get the puck off of his stick. Defensive routes were bad and he was constantly out of position and just scrambling around to try to get the puck so he could dump it up ice to nobody again.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 12th, 2021

SKA-1946 vs. Loko Yaroslavl - MHL

Defensively, Koromyslov is a pure height player. He really only uses his reach and sheer size to make plays, but lacks the thought process to not get burned. Losing every puck battle, dangled on most 1v1s, and being unable to keep track of the puck were his biggest weaknesses. His crease clearing attempts were futile, because he lacks strength and can't establish the leverage needed to make an impact. He even took a high sticking penalty because he was trying with all his might to push the Loko player out of the crease and he threw his stick to the sky. On a positive note, he was not bad in transition, which cannot be said for most of his teammates. There was a real lack of coordination on breakouts, so he was willing to take it into his own hands and go end-to-end a few times just to get the puck moving in the right direction. He's an above average skater with deceptive enough stickhandling to win one on ones. Entering the zone, he finds himself suffering from Kirill Kirsanov Syndrome and dumping the puck around the boards because he doesn't know what to do past the blue line. That said, his passing in the o-zone with possession established was good and pushed the puck into dangerous areas; however, he has a knack of slowly leaving the zone while his team has the puck and just removing himself entirely from the play. Size and skating combination is a solid base to work with, but the defense is a real work in progress. 

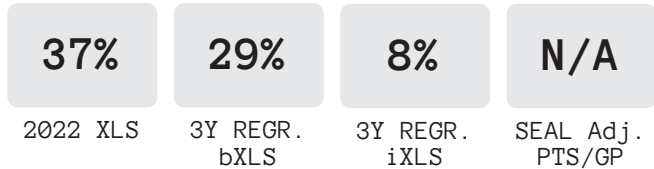




# CONNOR KURTH

F | DUBUQUE FIGHTING SAINTS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JUL. 30, 2003  
WEIGHT 214 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	62	35	46	81

## Scouting Report

Improved conditioning has Connor Kurth led to a 35-goal, 81-point season in the USHL. Now, he's poised to become a draft pick in his second try.

Kurth's a skilled shooter, slicing through defenders before firing a quick-release wrister. He masks his shots by shooting out of a quick series of stickhandles or changing the angle. Well-timed dashes to the net-front and sneaking away from defenders on the weak side complement his off-the-pass shooting skill.

The improvements in Kurth's game are numerous. "Where he used to (try to) deke through everyone, he's using give-and-gos," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown wrote. "He shows a better understanding of his weaknesses, now trying to find space behind defenders rather than racing them to the net."

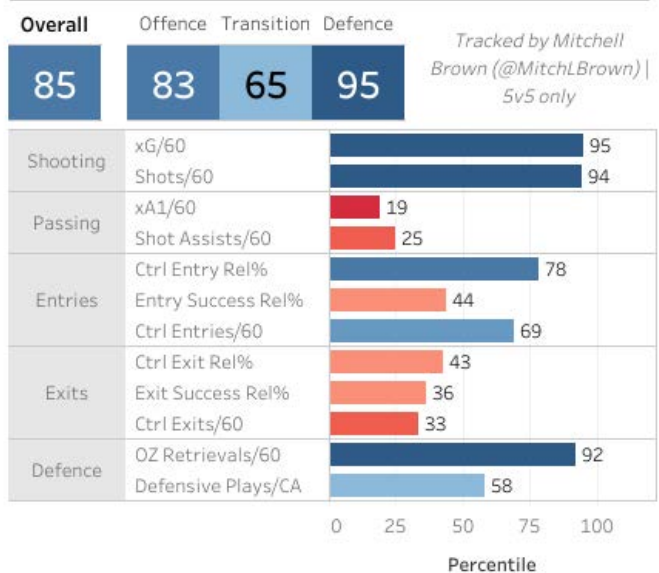
While Kurth always had passing skill, he required the space and structure of the power play to do his best work. That's no longer the case, as now, he's "using his handling skill to pull in defenders before passing around them," according to Brown.

With the skill level comes an extra level of physical play, throwing hits and using body positioning to create a bit of space along the boards.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2022  
Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL  
Not much from Kurth in this game. The skating's very

Games Tracked: 5 | Minutes Tracked: 71.1



There's no doubt that Kurth's skating has improved, his stance remains upright with short, choppy strides and cross-overs. He's far from quick by USHL standards, which makes his skating a significantly below-average projection.

Without improvement, the skating will likely keep Kurth's from the NHL. But the track record of improvement is already lengthy; he could surprise.

limiting, but I appreciate his intelligence. He constantly getting open, supporting the play, and looking to get the puck inside. Moves the puck in transition instead of beating

defenders himself. Along the boards, he shows handling skill and craftiness to escape and gain the middle lane. NHL odds will be defined by skating growth. I'd pick him this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Kurth's skating is still a problem. He's a bit deeper in his stance with slightly better mechanics, but he's slow. He can't separate from anyone, even when he has a head start. But he can absolutely rip the puck. And when his skating improves, that shot will improve with it. Hat trick in three different ways. Understands how to get open around the net front, then establishing positioning to keep his stick free. Doesn't take bad shots, instead looking for teammates instead of always playing the sniper. He could be a pick this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Kurth's still sluggish. He recognizes space, but he's often late to it because his feet just don't keep up. He's improved his stride for sure. But most his improvements comes from better decision-making. Where he used to (try to) deke through everyone, he's using give-and-gos. He shows better understanding of his weakness, now trying to find space behind defenders rather than racing them to the net. The shot's a rocket. Some advanced passes, too. He's getting picked this year. Lots of work required, but his puck skills project as above-average across the board.

**Russ Cohen:** January 17, 2022

BioSteel All-American Game - USHL

After watching Kurth at the Fall Classic I was eager to see him again. He was playing third line right wing. He made Stephen Halliday look good with a great backhand pass to set up a goal. Kurth knows he can beat guys along the way in this league and is fearless. His skating has improved as well as his overall fitness, something he started concentrating on this past summer.

**J.D. Burke:** September 22nd, 2021

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Russ Cohen spoke to Kurth after the game, at which point he confirmed that he'd been working on his skating over the off-season. Getting passed over in the draft was probably pretty humbling, and that would be the reason why. He's still not even close to even a USHL skater. His stride comes and goes in stutters, and his mechanics deteriorate over the course of a shift. He's starting to get a little lower, maybe getting a little more depth, but he's got a long ass way to go. Plays

with a high work rate, and is a little shit disturber. He goes way out of his way to seek out contact, try to get under the opponents skin, etc. His hands are still great, but he didn't get much of a chance to show them off today.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 14th, 2021

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Kurth's definitely one of the better danglers in the draft. Even with significant skating issues, he sets up moves with deception and fakes, then squeaks right around his man. Really good at using lane deception, waiting for the pivot, then cutting through. Lacks more traditional shooting mechanics, not getting much depth or even much elbow elevation, but the puck still explodes off his stick. Doesn't need time or space to fire, either. Has some difficulty getting into pockets of space, often a bit too late. Passing was all over the place, mostly negative, but with some couple of really impressive reads into HD areas that didn't click. Lacks a bit of deception, and way too confident on the backhand on the breakout. He had four turnovers on exit attempts, primarily because he took the puck flat-footed without identify his play before touching the puck. Lacking quickness in the USHL, his skating's going to be a massive hurdle. He only gets his knees to his toes, doesn't get any hip depth, and his torso collapses towards the ice. Wide recoveries with short strides really limit his efficiency, and the mechanics fall apart very quickly. Very little push off power and he's too stride dependent. Lack of depth hinders his crossover power/extension, too. Limited on entries because he's not a give-and-go player, looks for the dangle to set-up his shot. NHL-calibre handler and shooter, but the lack's probably too limiting.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 12th, 2021

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Kurth's shot is fascinating. He only shoots off his inside edges, pushes his hands forward but not exceptionally so, and elevates his elbow, but again, not enough to meet the mechanical standards. Yet, it doesn't seem to matter all that much -- the puck absolutely explodes off his stick. And his skills around it are equally effective, as he deftly taps tricky passes straight into his hip pocket and transfers his weight with the pass. On the PP, he outright manipulates PKers with frequent shot fakes, even on mundane touches that are going right back to the point. He knows how to play like a dual threat, that's for sure. At even-strength, he's not particularly deceptive as a passer and misses teammates in better positioning than himself. Part of that comes from his non-existent transition game. He's only effective in transition if he has a runway of space and a defender that's willing to commit to

his fakes. Lots of defensive value in this game: won pucks on second efforts, high pressure on the backcheck, and won battles. Some work to do on his body positioning, missing opportunities to seal off back pressure in-tight. Skating's awful from the posture issues, but he thinks ahead of the play for the most part. Maybe a pick, maybe not. He's on the fringe because of the skating, but I'm confident he'll get a deal as a NCAA FA in a few years time if it comes along.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 13th, 2021

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

A bit of a quiet game from Kurth, but good stuff on display regardless. His shot's the biggest selling point, or the hands and shot combination. He always takes the puck into his shooting position and builds his game around it. It's shot's comically low effort at first glance, but he quickly shifts his weight and generates considerable push-pull. Only shoots off his inside edges, however. He's slow, there's no way around it. Barely gets his knees to his toes, and his extensions are short with a very wide recovery. He knows it and plays within the limitation, trying to think ahead of the play and get the jump on players on the backcheck. He doesn't bother with trying to beat players when there's a shot available, but he could use his teammates more. Showed a bit of showing instincts by playing between checks, although his supporting reads aren't tight or consistent. He's average-ish defensive through effort, but his reads need work, especially given the skating limitations.

**J.D. Burke:** January 9th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

It's obvious what Kurth's most dangerous weapon is offensively -- it's his hands, and there can be no doubt of that. He just swashbuckles his way through defenders, cutting through them like a hot knife through butter, with quick twitch hands, upper-body deception, and a just plain gifted touch. He picked up one such goal in the third period, grabbing a puck in the neutral zone, going inside-out on a defender, and then undressing the netminder. His most substantial barrier to any sort of professional success is also obvious -- his skating.

There is just not depth whatsoever in that stride. He doesn't get knee or ankle flexion whatsoever, and just recovers his stride so, so damn wide. Those are about the only two takeaways I got from this hockey game. Kurth missed the entire first period, and only ended up playing about 10 minutes total.


**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2020

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Kurth wasn't too dangerous in this game, but I came away with a positive impression. He lumbers around in-tight, but achieves an average top-end gear that maximizes with a bit of deception. He's too reliant on beating defenders 1-on-1, but shows some interesting off-puck elements. He's more movement based than timing, but the base is there to become a strong play supporter or even off-puck threat. He set-up a tap-in goal with a cross-slot set-up with a look-off and fake shot. It wasn't high-end manipulation, but he waited long enough to freeze the goaltender to the post. I came away with little feel for his defensive game, noting a few intriguing instances of down low support but also failing to scan for threats. I think he's worth a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2020

Chicago Steel vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

What a first impression. Kurth lumbers around the ice, but he's intelligent enough to overcome speed limitations -- and then some. He found pockets of space for scoring chances, won races on reaction time alone, and set-up several chances with crafty backhand feeds. Some really advanced scanning habits around the puck, scanning as he entered the battle to identify his options, before taking one quick peek just as he touched the puck, before setting up a teammate. He was pretty involved in transition, despite his upright right stemming from a major lack of ankle flexion. He didn't show any quickness by USHL standards, but always found himself in perfect position. Lack of depth hurts his wrist shot mechanics, as he tends to keep his leg straight -- but he's solid upper-body-wise, pushing out his top-hand before violently pulling back. Dubuque did most of the damage with Kurth on the ice, limiting his DZ time. Needs a closer look. 



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# ELMERI LAAKSO

D | SAIPA

HEIGHT 6'1"

D.O.B. JUL. 19, 2004

WEIGHT 185

SHOOTS LEFT

47%

2022 XLS

39%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

39%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s	25	7	11	18
Liiga	17	2	3	5
Mestis	5	2	1	3
WJC-18	6	1	2	3

## Scouting Report

Elmeri Laakso's reads offensively and defensively worried us this season, enough so that he failed to make our final board.

Part of the issue comes from a lack of scanning. As Laakso doesn't identify options before he gets the puck, he takes too long to pick between them and gets surprised by pressuring forecheckers and defenders. This slower processing was exposed even more because Laakso lacked the mobility, specifically the explosiveness to separate from the opposition and create more time and space for himself to make plays.

"Offensive upside seems limited, transition game is very

hit-and-miss since he doesn't have the skating chops to beat forecheckers properly, defensive side is not a strength either," Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen wrote in a March 22nd game report.

Laakso has to work to improve his mental map of the ice with more frequent shoulder checks. As he's young for this draft, he probably has more development runway than other prospects. His strengths, his shot and passing techniques, can serve as a foundation for future improvements.

## Game Reports

**Lassi Alanen:** April 30th, 2022

Finland vs. Sweden - U18s

Laakso's OZ game has been very one-dimensional in this tournament. It's basically a quick wrister or one-timer every time he gets the puck near the point, very little variety. He used to be known for his shooting ability, but the point shots weren't even that dangerous most of the time. Laakso can move the puck somewhat well when there's not too much pressure, but when pressured, his decision-making has been subpar to put it lightly. Just can't seem to connect a pass and will just cycle the puck blindly to no one. Usually starts to glide before making a pass, too. Did lay some hits defensively, but lacks the mobility to make stops regularly. Reaches instead of taking the extra stride, etc..

**Lassi Alanen:** March 22nd, 2022

TPS vs. SaiPa - Liiga

Laakso got decent minutes at 5-on-5 and even on the power play on the point. I just haven't been impressed with his play this season. At the start of the second period, he tried to make a move at the OZ point that he just doesn't have the mobility or explosiveness to pull off, turned the puck over, resulting in a breakaway and goal against. Earlier he had to defend a 2-on-1 on PK, started with his stick in the middle, then moved it away from the passing lane as the forward was setting up his pass, followed by a cross-ice feed and a goal. Sometimes pauses to watch the play develop instead of improving his own location, so when a turnover happens, he's in a hurry to get in formation. Offensive upside seems limited, transition game is very hit-and-miss since he doesn't

have the skating chops to beat forecheckers properly, defensive side is not a strength either.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 12th, 2021


U18 Five Nations, Switzerland

Laakso played on the top defensive pairing with Kasper Kulonummi, logging the second-most ice time out of any Finnish player in total. Despite his usage and role on the second power play, I wasn't that impressed with Laakso's performance. He had some moments with the puck where he was able to carry it out under pressure, but too often he was pressured into making sub-optimal decisions. Defensively, Laakso is very much a work-in-progress. He doesn't scan enough and takes huge risks with his neutral zone defending and pinching. He's probably a below-average skater, too, which doesn't help in recovering once he's out of position. There

were some OZ moments, but he's mostly got a decent shot from the point. I'm not very fond of his game at this point.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 9th, 2021

SaiPa vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

Laakso's pairing got caved in hard in this one at 5-on-5. That meant a lot of time in the DZ for Laakso, and I thought he did ok. He had some solid box-outs and positional moments, but wasn't really able to make stops, either, which led to long cycles. Breakouts were an issue, too, as he was pressured into making uncontrolled dump-outs or failed pass attempts. Skating looked below-average projection-wise. Didn't have many offensive contributions either. Laakso is going to be a hard player to project because I don't think any of his tools are particularly high-end. 

**"Laakso has to work to improve his mental map of the ice with more frequent shoulder checks. As he's young for this draft, he probably has more development runway than other prospects. His strengths, his shot and passing techniques, can serve as a foundation for future improvements."**

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Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# JÉRÉMY LANGLOIS

D | CAPE BRETON EAGLES

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. SEP. 19, 2003  
WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS LEFT

5%

2022 XLS

6%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

2%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.68

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	60	13	34	47

## Scouting Report

Full marks to Jérémy Langlois for his production last season. He scored close to a point a game for large stretches of the season, finishing with 47 points in 60 games for a rebuilding Cape Breton Eagles team, good for second on the team.

The problem here is that the tape doesn't quite match the production with Langlois, otherwise there might be room for him on our board.

There is no part of Langlois's game that screams "NHLer" at this point. He's one of the oldest players in the draft, and

mostly a jack-of-all-trades defenceman at the QMJHL level that doesn't have a defined role or clear upside.

He can match attackers off the rush with controlled backward skating, engage them physically in the zone, look for the right option on breakouts, and fire from the point with precise wrist-shots, but there is a lack of pace and explosiveness in his game.

For Langlois to play professional hockey at some point, he'll need to fix his skating and pace combo.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 21st, 2022

Cape Breton Eagles vs Baie-Comeau Drakkar - QMJHL

Langlois hasn't progressed much over the course of the season. He's all-around effective Junior defenceman who likes NHL elements. He's capable of defending the rush, of establishing body positioning on retrievals, and of making intelligent controlled plays, but at a lower pace than you would want and with less than ideal mechanics. The hockey sense grade is average at best, too. The skating still projects as below-average for me. He scored in this game with a wrist-shot from the point.

**David St-Louis:** February 19th, 2022

Val D'Or Foreurs vs. Cap Breton Eagles - QMJHL

Langlois's defence needs a lot of work. He got beat by opponents so many times this season because: he didn't judge the speed of the rush well enough, he couldn't

match it, he didn't see his partner out of position, lacked urgency or made bad decisions with the puck. He's a good Junior defenceman and he will probably score even more next year, but his skill-level isn't high enough offensively to make him worthy of a pick considering his late status and his decision-making problems.

**David St-Louis:** November 20th, 2021

Cape Breton Eagles vs Chicoutimi Saguenéens - QMJHL

Langlois is very puck focused. He doesn't register space or threats behind him. He plays a ton of minutes for Cape Breton and that might explain the high numbers. What I liked the most from him is his underhanding. Langlois keeps the puck on his forehand and scans a lot more with the puck. He finds the right options. He lacks dynamic qualities and precision in his puck-moving, however. The upside seems limited.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# JERE LASSILA

C | JYP U20

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. MAR. 8, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT

20%

2022 XLS

19%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

5%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s.	17	8	7	15
WJC-18	6	4	4	8

## Scouting Report

This probably isn't the draft year Jere Lassila envisioned for himself, one limited to only 17 games in the U20 SM-Sarja in Finland by injuries. The silver lining is that he managed to produce at a decent clip in that sample, putting up 15 points.

Fortunately, his best work came at the end of the year. Lassila scored at over a point a game clip for Finland at the U18 World Hockey Championship, helping his team secure bronze in the process.

"A good ending to a rather forgettable and injury-ridden season," Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen wrote of his tournament. "He added four goals and eight points in six games, including a four-point effort in

the bronze medal game, and topped the team in both expected goal and expected primary point output at 5-on-5. He displayed chemistry with Kemell, his former linemate from previous years in JYP's system."

Still, the tournament wasn't enough for Lassila to earn a spot on our board. He's an efficient player; someone who anticipates play well and makes sound decisions with the puck. There's a clear understanding of defensive and offensive rotations there, too.

The main problem is that Lassila lacks NHL-level tools. His below-average size (Lassila stands at 5-foot-10) and skating are likely to keep him from attaining a regular role in the NHL.

## Game Reports

**Lassi Alanen:** April 23th

May 1st, 2022 - U18s

Lassila wore the C and centering the top unit for the entire tournament, also playing on both special teams. A good ending to a rather forgettable and injury-ridden season. Added four goals and eight points in six games, including a four-point effort in the bronze medal game. Also topped the team in both expected goal and expected primary point output at 5-on-5. Displayed chemistry with Kemell, his former linemate from previous years in JYP's system. Lassila doesn't have any high-end tools, which hurts his draft stock as an undersized center, but he's smart, decent facilitator and has a knack for scoring from net-front. Multiple breakaways

throughout the tournament by the way of well-timed pass receptions, splitting the defence. Probably not enough to make our board, but he could be a late-round pick by some team after this tournament.

**Lassi Alanen:** January 15th, 2022

JYP vs. Kärpät - U20 SM-sarja

Kärpät absolutely destroyed JYP 7-0, but Lassila only was on the ice for one of the 5v5 goals, I guess that's something at least. He was making his usual nice plays in transitions, making well-timed outlet passes to his wingers and using technically sound crossovers to create a few exits and entries of his own. Flashed some handling skill, too, although he's

more of a underhandler than overhandler. Seems to understand the game at a rather high level by his positioning and anticipation. He could probably have way more points if he was playing with better wingers this season, to be honest. I'm still rather wary of his NHL odds, but I'm confident he'll have a strong pro career somewhere in Europe, at least.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 10th, 2021

JYP vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Top line duties for Lassila once again. He ended up scoring from out of nothing in the second period, intercepting a very poor pass near the faceoff dot and did a good job at elevating the puck without any handling past the goalie far side. Lassila also logged a secondary assist as JYP looked to score without a goalie at the end of the game. It was hard to look good in this one as Tappara pressured hard for the majority of the game and JYP had big issues as a team at breaking out the puck with control or generating meaningful 5v5 offence. Lassila did flash his vision on a few occasions with clever feeds. He's got good patience with the puck and defends pretty well. The problem is that he's not really someone who's going to create individually and instead thrives when he gets to play with good linemates, which hasn't been the case this season during league play. His skating posture is fine, but he's not particularly quick or explosive. He's got decent skill, but he's not going to dangle multiple opponents regularly.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 3rd, 2021

Kiekko-Espoo - JYP - U20 SM-sarja

Lassila played a decent game here. Nothing too fancy, but pretty effective play in all zones. He made some nice passes in transition and had some carries to the OZ, too. He's a pretty good skater for this level, even if he doesn't have the explosiveness or second gear you'd hope for from a center his size. Instead of playing a particularly skill-focused game, Lassila created his looks with methodical play. He had a high-end look off the rush after getting into a 3v1 situation right as his teammate came off the penalty box, but couldn't finish. I have also respect for Lassila's defensive side of the game. He's not sacrificing defence for offence and is often picking up loose pucks in the NZ and supporting his defencemen defending the rush. He already plays a pro-style game that is going to serve him well at the next level. Not sure about the NHL upside, though.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 27th, 2021

Jokerit vs. JYP - U20 SM-sarja

Lassila centered JYP's top line and was playing right half

wall on the top power play unit in their OT loss to Jokerit. To be honest, Lassila's performance was very forgettable. He had trouble generating offence, either off the rush or cycle. He wasn't making quick enough decisions with the puck. He doesn't have the separation speed you'd want to see from a player his size, which makes him easier to contain. Didn't show much in the way of puck skills or playmaking. His defensive effort was probably the best part of his game. Lassila is going to score and put up points when he plays with good players, but he's not a high-end individual creator.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 26th, 2021

JYP vs. Pelicans - U20 SM-sarja

Lassila scored a highlight reel goal off the rush, surprising the defender in the NZ and taking the puck between his legs, creating a 2v1 and patiently waited, cut to the middle and let the goalie make the first move before shooting. Aside from that, though, it was a very uneventful performance from Lassila's line and they only mustered four total shot attempts at 5-on-5. His defensive sense was probably the most notable attribute. Made some well-timed stickchecks, covered a lot for his defencemen at the OZ point while they were up in the play. Interestingly he did play on the left wing while JYP was using a passive NZ trap while he's a center. The tools aren't that great for a forward his size when projecting him to the NHL.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 12th, 2021

U18 Five Nations, Switzerland

Lassila centered Finland's top line for the entirety of the tournament, also playing on the top power play unit as the bumper player and contributing regularly on the penalty kill. Lassila was also Finland's leading scorer at the event, adding six points in four games. With two shooting-focused wingers, Lassila's role on the line was to try to feed his linemates, and he had moderate success doing so. Lassila's skating looked fine, but I'm not sure it's good enough given his size for him to be considered a legit NHL prospect. He's not dynamic, but can hold on to the puck well, evade pressure decently well and he's also smart around the net, scoring both of his goals from the net-front with good timing. Lassila isn't much of a shooter and it's a pretty clear weakness in his tool box, but it wasn't really an issue given his linemates. Size is a limiting factor in battles, but he positions pretty well defensively and kills penalties well.







# CHARLIE LEDDY

D | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. JAN. 11, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS RIGHT

7%	11%	5%	0.66
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	55	0	17	17
USHL	26	0	7	7
WJC-18	6	0	2	2

> Committed to Boston College

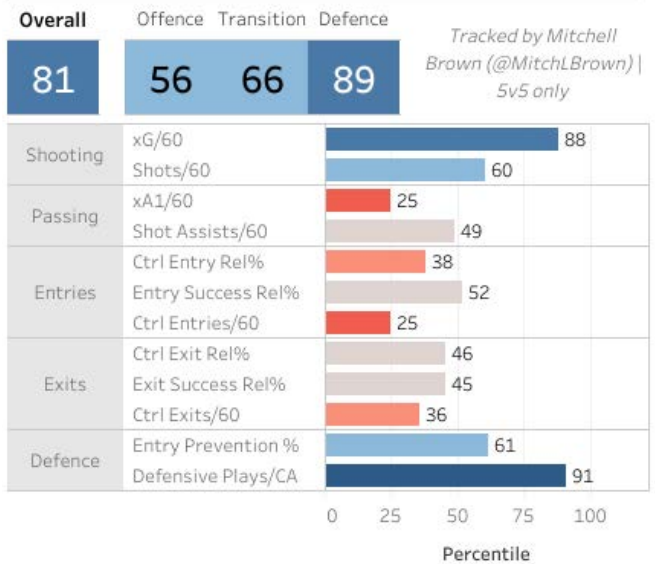
## Scouting Report

Although he can activate up ice with his teammates, distribute the puck at the point in the offensive zone, and make breakout passes to the middle, Charlie Leddy's offensive upside is limited. The American defenceman is much stronger away from the puck. He recorded one of the better defensive plays per attempted shot against in Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown's tracked manually data set. This mark along with his ability to successfully move loose pucks off the walls to teammates earned him a solid overall defensive grade.

"The skating requires work, but he's establishing his gap early, angling plays to the perimeter, and getting some stops in the neutral zone," Brown wrote in a February 4th 2022 report.

To play a shutdown role in the NHL, Leddy will have to add more overall skill to his game, both in the skating department, where his footwork can be too committing, and with his physical play. Leddy sometimes has trouble con-

Games Tracked: 13 | Minutes Tracked: 195.0



taining attackers due to the speed he loses in his pivot and his inability, at times, to establish body positioning on them.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

There's always an NTDP player who doesn't get quite enough hype for what they bring. Leddy was a solid bet to become that player early in the year, but he's become too passive with the puck. This was a return to form, however. He used the middle, attacked the F1, made plays through defenders, and moved off the point (for a scoring chance).

He did most of those in one shift late in the game. He set up a goal by activating, testing for an opening, seeing it wasn't there, and then working play back to the point. It's in there, waiting to be unlocked.

Mechanically, he's bland and doesn't have any notable skills, such as a delay game or manipulation ability. His rush defence is tighter, more confident, but his defensive skating requires better posture, c-cuts, and pivots. Maybe

a late-rounder, but I think he could become something in a couple of years.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Leddy's becoming quite the rush defender. The skating requires work, but he's establishing his gap early, angling plays to the perimeter, and getting some stops in the NZ. The DZC isn't quite on the same level, but this game wasn't a good defensive showcase for anyone. There was none of the slick transition and retrieval passing I've seen previously, and no offence to speak of. He's probably not a pick, but I think he could become a prospect down the line.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 8th, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Mixed performance, but I appreciate a lot of Leddy's details. He outwaits forecheckers, steps to the inside, and then makes the pass. When not possible, he skates away from his passing target to encourage the forechecker to chase, then passes cross-ice. He's beatable off the rush because of his skating, but he's closing space sooner, angling (sometimes), and getting the odd stop in the neutral zone. In the offensive zone, there isn't much to go on. It's also not his role. Maybe an interesting late-rounder for the exit flashes. Could be a breakout candidate next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Leddy's really tightened his defensive game up, especially off the rush. Could've been on some of the checks earlier, but managed to close distance quickly without committing his feet. Guided plays to the perimeter before forcing the dump-in, then pivoting and beating the forechecker to the puck. Semi-regular activation, usually stepping into space before firing. In transition, he peels pucks off the boards and throws them to the inside, often times blindly or lacking in foresight. Many of his passes either fail to connect or comprise his teammates' position. Still, rush defence and some breakout skill is usually worth a draft pick. Really depends on how much they continue to improve this season.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

This was an impressive game sheerly for the minutes-to-things-done ratio. He played a lot and did almost nothing. He threw the puck away in transition once or twice. Deferred a lot, even in situations where he was the best option. A reasonably aware defender with some play-killing ability, but lacks recovery ability and a consistently tight gap. I don't think he's a draft pick; not much upside.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Leddy led this game in even-strength ice time for reasons that are mostly lost on me. He wasn't bad, but he wasn't exactly dynamic. Whatever. He's a moderately solid defender who kills plays around his blue line without committing footwork. I wouldn't call defensive skating a strength, but he seems to have some play-killing potential. In transition, he did little except activating a couple of times. The shot looks average at best, although he connected with a clean one-timer late in the game. He recognizes space if given heaps of it, but generally won't activate if it's not coach-screaming-at-you-worthy. I could see him becoming a draft pick, but I don't see the upside at this moment.

**David St-Louis:** October 29th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I only saw defensive glimpses from Leddy in this game. I liked his footwork to match opponents in-zone and his stick that protected the middle and also his one-on-one engages. He also surfed to his partner's side of the ice to close on rushes, showing some aggressiveness there that might translate to pro hockey. His breakouts were difficult for the most part, slow passes, even though he tried to find options most of the time.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

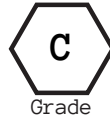
Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I was hoping to see a bit more improvement from Leddy. He's still a skilled transition passer and not much more. To be fair, some of the reads were advanced, turning a break up into a quick pass through a forechecker for the exit, consistently passing off the boards to the middle, cross-ice passes, etc. Limited offensive and defensively. He stands around, waits, and gets caught doing nothing for lengthy stretches. Doesn't identify opportunities to activate or even join the play, and defensively, he struggles to close gaps. Doesn't look like an NHL prospect, but I'm still interested because of the breakout ability.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2021 -

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

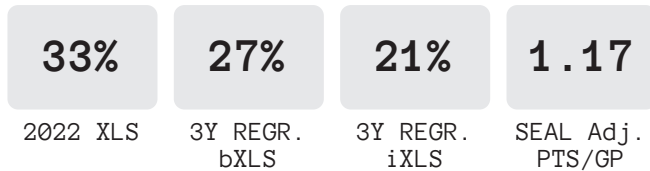
Leddy shows playmaking skills nearly comparable to the top prospect on the blueline in this group. He looks for cross-ice opportunities in all three zones, has a bit of deception to his setups, and tries to hit teammates as they move into space. The rest of his game is extremely limited. He's a passive rush defender without the skating or instincts to offset it. His pivots are clumsy, and even when he's first to the puck, he has no ability to escape. Doesn't establish body positioning or deceive before touching the puck. Long way to go, of course, but the passing's interesting enough.



# BRANDON LISOWSKY

F | SASKATOON BLADES

HEIGHT 5'9" D.O.B. APR. 13, 2004  
WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	68	33	25	58

## Scouting Report

In a WHL forward crop defined by details-oriented forwards, the inside-driven shooting game of Brandon Lisowsky stands out. Don't be fooled by the stat-line; he's an NHL shooter.

"Near-optimal upper body shooting form: hands in front, elbow up, chest square and powering through his shot," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote early-season in the season. "Shoots with body and feet in awkward positions and still manages to generate power."

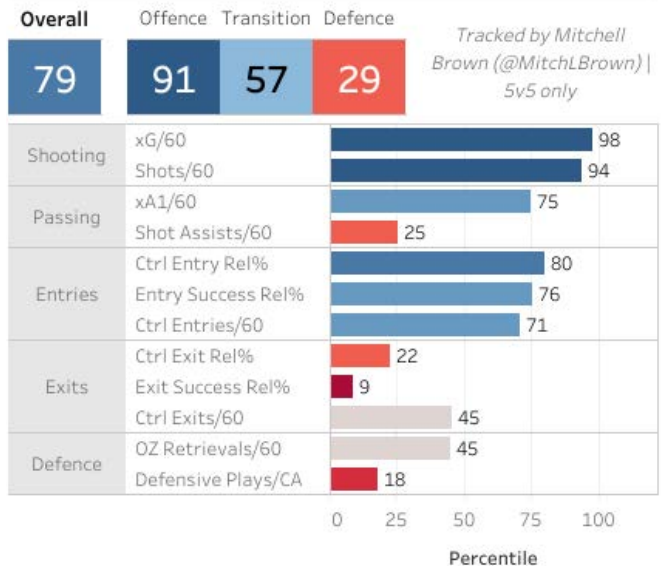
Those mechanics set the stage for Lisowsky's numerous NHL shooting skills. He blends his cuts to the inside with the weight transfer for the shot, seamlessly shoots off the pass, and changes the angle during the release. The puck explodes off his stick, even when given little space.

Lisowsky primarily creates through solo efforts. His standard rush goes like this: Sprint straight down the boards, lean on the inside edge of his outside leg to cut inside, then shoot after clearing the defender's feet.

It's flashy and courageous, but also unlikely to translate to the NHL. First, NHL skaters make that move off the outside edge of their inside leg, making the cut sharper and more explosive.

More importantly, NHL shooters don't try to do everything alone. Lisowsky does, at the expense of a give-and-go style that would emphasize his scoring instincts and off-the-pass

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 139.5



shooting. He even shows passing skills, limited by an unwillingness to pass and poor pass selection.

The NHL isn't kind to small, non-playmaking, straight-line attackers. If they make the NHL, they're often filtered out quickly. As a result, Lisowsky's NHL odds seem slim, unless his rush patterns diversify, a give-and-go game appears, and his off-puck instincts feature more regularly. He has the skill to check off those three boxes. If he does, he could become a 20-plus goal-scorer.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Lisowsky scored with a two-touch wrister and showed off his shooting skill several other times. Hardly a notable performance, however. Struggles to get separation in the neutral zone. Over-reliant on his hands. Flings away possession if he doesn't see a teammate up the boards. That doesn't bode well for projecting him to the NHL because he's still not much of a passer. He recognizes the obvious plays, even connecting with a bit of skill. But he won't initiate give-and-go sequences. Skating requires major work. Maybe an end-of-board type.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Lisowsky set up three chances in this game, finally showing that he has some playmaking ability. However, they weren't very good passes. Inaccurate, too hard, and poorly set up – but they worked. I guess that's why they don't normally impact the game. Mostly came across the line and shot, except for one time where he tried to pass through an entire team and turned the puck over. He's not one to beat defenders or even get them moving in the direction. But he can shoot. The puck explodes off his stick; shifts his weight quickly, elbow and chest up, and drives through his release. As the skating improves, he'll be able to get on his outside edge faster. Hit a pair of posts. Crafty placement, going against the grain or shooting over the goaltender's shoulder. He's definitely a draft pick because of the shot and off-puck offence. Skating posture (lacks hip engagement, crossovers lack depth), passing, and defence require major work. Could be a fine early-third.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 27th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Lisowsky remains a tough one. He's already an NHL shooter, and has several skills to make his game work at the next level. Curl-and-drag wrister is mechanically sound with the proper set up. Narrow profile and explodes through his shot. Combines catch-and-release shooting with off-puck awareness. Doesn't just plant his feet in front of the net; he moves, pushes off defenders, times dashes across the slot with the play around him. Energetic on the forecheck and tries to work play to the inside. Mostly plays an off-puck role in transition or a give-and-go game at most. Flashes more individual skill, like weight shift into a cut across the top of the zone, but he's unable to load his weight over his outside edges. Not a playmaker; he doesn't even seem to look for teammates unless he's behind the net. I don't see a ton of transition upside either. He's worth a pick, but I'm unsure if he's a top-50 prospect or more top-100.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 20th, 2022

Saskatoon Blades vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Lisowsky did the Lisowsky things: shoot off the pass on the powerplay, get a couple of transition scoring chances, and quickly cut inside to turn a low-danger look into a medium-danger one. A more structured performance than usual, effectively working on the forecheck and distributing more than usual. In transition, he's not effective. He doesn't manipulate or delay; better defenders force him into dump-ins and turnovers. Rarely even changes pace or directions. When he does beat the defender, everything revolves around cutting inside and setting up his shot. He flashes off-puck scoring, but advanced ideas are uncommon. Quick but often weak on his edges – it's fair to wonder how he'll play his game in the NHL. Might be an end-of-board candidate because he's clearly an NHL shooter with puck skills, but there's a ton of work required.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Saskatoon Blades vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Lisowsky had a quiet game apart from two goals: a one-timer on the powerplay and a slot cut into a wrister far side. Blends the cut inside with his release – crafty. Two-touch wrister off the pass. Overall, a projectable shooter. The rest of his game leaves a lot to be desired. He doesn't create much offence individually, and he's not exactly a proactive space hunter. In transition, he sprints towards defenders instead of using crossovers and passes to increase his odds. Defensively, he makes the odd play at the point, but he disengages when the play isn't immediately available. Looks like an end-of-board-type. He can shoot at an NHL level, but his rush patterns, decision-making, and off-puck instincts might prevent him from getting those opportunities in the NHL.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Saskatoon Blades vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Lisowsky has some NHL skills, mostly centred around shooting. He cuts inside to create his shots, and can adapt his release to the positioning of defender in front of him. There's some off-puck awareness and timing, but his line wasn't clicking this game. Everything else is a bit concerning. While more than capable of getting open, he doesn't look to pass or even distribute in transition. Most of his transition attacks get snuffed out along the boards, even when they start in the middle. The development of a give-and-go mindset will be integral to his success. I didn't see a draft pick in this game.

"Lisowsky's NHL odds seem slim, unless his rush patterns diversify, a give-and-go game appears, and his off-puck instincts feature more regularly. He has the skill to check off those three boxes. If he does, he could become a 20-plus goal-scorer."

**Mitchell Brown:** November 6th, 2021

Prince Albert Raiders vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Lisowsky had a few scoring chances by getting open wide. His timing remains strong; he's rarely moving into space too early, and he's more than comfortable shooting while pressure. Cuts inside with the puck and tries to better his shooting position. He's not a playmaker, not under any definition. Everything flows through his shot, and rarely shows any creativity beyond getting it. In transition, he was turn-over-prone but showed some ideas that I haven't seen from him before, like passing to teammates building speed on the inside or hitting the weak side option. Still, he needs to use his teammates more regularly. He'd have more finishing success. He's probably a draft pick, likely towards the lower end of our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 13th, 2021

Brandon Wheat Kings vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Impressive game from Lisowsky, especially as a shooter. Strong off-puck offence to find space around the slot in a number of ways. Timed movements. Near-optimal upper body shooting form: Hands in front, elbow up, chest square, and powering through his shot. Shoots with body and feet in awkward positions and still manages to generate power. In-stride wristers clean and he jumps on that inside leg to generate the downforce force. Shooting threat complement by inside-driven attacks, cutting across the front of defenders and firing. He's a straight-line attacker through the DZ and

NZ, trying to outrace defenders instead of manipulating. In one sequence, he entered a glide, handled the puck in front, and promptly got stripped. I don't think he's going to be an effective puck-carrier at the next level, especially if he doesn't achieve better depth through his strides. Wide stance in acceleration, too -- pretty limited off the hop. Even then, he still manages to pull away from pressure on occasion. Physical and aware on the forecheck. Very limited as passer, failing to identify options altogether. When he does see them, he lacks the timing and patience to connect. I think he'll surely be a draft pick: Shooting, off-puck offence, and inside play are clear NHL skills.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 2nd, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Simple, straight-line game doesn't exactly suggest NHL upside, but Lisowsky created plenty of counter-attack offence. Most of his attacks were along the outside, but he found teammates or stepped inside before firing. Some off-puck instincts to get high-quality chances. Arrives into space with perfect timing. Off-the-pass mechanics needs cleaning up (pass receptions and weight shifts), but his wrist is impressive: Elbow up, hands in front, chest square, and builds power through his lower body (even if a bit atypical). Adequate depth in stride but kicks his feet and doesn't maintain depth through crossovers. Fake shot into a saucer pass to set-up a 2-on-1 chance. Looks like a well-rounded skill player lacking some details.



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# DANS LOCMELIS

F | LULEÅ HF J20

5%

2022 XLS

4%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

2%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

HEIGHT 6'0"

WEIGHT 170

D.O.B. MAR. 21, 2004

SHOOTS LEFT

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J18 Nat.	5	2	4	6
J20 Nat.	44	18	16	34
WJC-18	4	1	2	3

## Scouting Report

Good habits can take you quite far in hockey. Dans Locmelis is an example of that. He isn't the most skilled -- most of his tools received about average grades from our staff -- but he has integrated many effective patterns into his game. Those translated to success with Luleå in the J20 Nationell.

The forward uses crossovers on the rush to keep his approach deceptive. He uses the width of the ice, scans for teammates, and passes to them early in transition sequences. He protects pucks in the offensive zone, attacks gaps in coverage, and reloads above the puck when his team loses it. He also keeps his stick in passing lanes to intercept opposing passes.

His off-puck game improved over the season to the point where he was an effective play-disruptor at the U18 World Hockey Championship, even against some of the tournament's better formations.

"The skills, smarts (in all areas), and his motor makes him an interesting bet in the late rounds of the draft," Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin wrote in a January game report.

Locmelis's game could take off with a bit more speed. An increased output would allow him to break more defences off the rush and steal more pucks away from the opposition.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

Switzerland vs Latvia - WJ18

Locmelis has some interesting elements, good habits, like scanning before retrievals, stick work away from the puck to intercept pucks, rush patterns, east-west movements in the neutral-zone and crossover usage...But the skill is quite limited. The skating might reach an above-average grade but the lack of flexion right now, especially in the ankles, is limiting. He sees gaps in coverage and exploits them. I like the defensive engagement, to an extent. A good all-around player, but I'm not sure he's an NHL prospect.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 21st 2022

Luleå HF vs. AIK - J20 Nationell

Luleå dominated AIK and Dans scored three of the goals in an 8-2 win. His line dominated almost every shift and produced most of the goals and created chances all game long. Dans was the centre for that line.

Dans is trending well and has played well over last month. He still is thin and small for a centre but he is quick and agile. I like his game away from the puck more now than earlier in the season. His spacing is good and he moves to open spots. He can manipulate defenders with the puck. He



is a good playmaker and a driver of play. His puck skills in tight spaces are excellent. He is strong one-on-one with the puck. His shot is okay. I like how he thinks and acts in the game. His skating is all-in-all average. His balance and top speed could benefit from more strength and muscle. The quickness and a good motor with fairly good skating technique gives him room to improve in that area.

The skills, smarts (in all areas) and his motor makes him an interesting bet in a late round. He needs to get stronger and faster but there could be a middle six centre player if he pans out.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 6th 2021

Luleå HF vs. Skellefteå - J20 Nationell

Dans plays as the top line center for Luleå, both at even strength as on the power play.

Dans is a quick skater with good balance. He has natural explosiveness and good lower body balance which makes it hard to knock him off the puck. His skating is good in all directions and is quite agile in his own end.

Locmelis uses his wrist shot well in motion but he is not particularly dangerous from range with his shot.

Locmelis is a good stick handler and has good hand-eye

coordination. He plays well in front of the net and in the slot on power play. He has good control on both his backhand as his forehand and will try to make creative plays. His passing has good precision.

Locmelis plays a 200 foot game and works hard on both ends of the ice. He reads the forecheck quite well and wins pucks all over the ice. I would like to see him get open for plays in a better way and also playmake the puck with better consistency. He sees plays and tries to make them but often also tries plays that are not there.

Dans is a stand out competitor on the ice. He is not the biggest player but he battles hard for the puck and is strong in physical battles for the puck. He rarely gives up on plays and can win back the puck if he loses it. He covers the puck well using his balance and agility. He is also good at stealing pucks with hard work and physical strength.

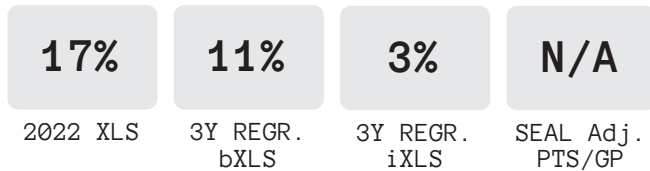
All in all, Dans Locmelis looks like an interesting prospect for the upcoming draft. I do not see an elite or even top-six ceiling as his hockey sense looks to be average at best. But as a middle six or bottom six player there could be something. He competes hard and plays a responsible game and can add some nice puck skills to that.



# AMADEUS LOMBARDI

C | FLINT FIREBIRDS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JUN. 5, 2003  
WEIGHT 165 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	67	18	41	59

## Scouting Report

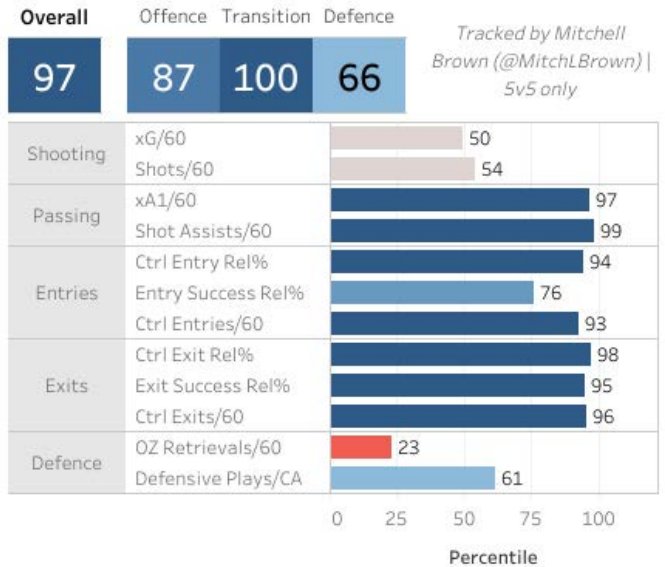
A 13th-round pick into the OHL in 2019, Amadeus Lombardi hardly registered on the prospect radar until this season. Now, he's NHL Central Scouting's 94th-ranked North American skater as a re-entry.

Lombardi's game is one of speed and skill. As he races defenders along the perimeter, he looks for teammates on the inside. He connects with backhand and forehand passes under or over defenders' sticks without much windup. If a pass isn't an option, he beats defenders with a combination of handling skill and well-conceived setups. He puts the puck into a defender's space, waits for the poke, then chips the puck under their stick or pulls it around - and he's confident making these plays off the backhand and under heavy pressure.

Off-puck abilities help bind those skills together. Lombardi's always moving with purpose. He passes, stays in motion, and gets open for a return pass. He takes the ensuing pass in motion and immediately looks for the next play. If his team doesn't have possession, he's applying pressure to force turnovers. Even though he ends up chasing too often, he always gives himself a chance through effort.

The limitations in Lombardi's game are mechanical, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown explains in one of his game reports, "Lombardi's feet flail and he lacks ankle flexion. The crossovers are barely crossovers. He doesn't get any push off inside them as a result of the high stance. And he tends to keep the puck in front of his body

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 124.6



with a high grip. He doesn't use his edges when he's moving at full speed." As a result of the mechanical limitations, Lombardi gets locked into outracing defenders along the outside lane rather than using more translatable plays like a cutback to delay or a cut to the inside.

Listed at just 165 pounds, Lombardi's mechanics will surely improve as he gets stronger. And he's clearly a highly skilled player within his limitations, capable of beating defenders himself while showing passing skill and an off-puck game. He has third-line upside, but his projection comes with significant uncertainty.



**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Lombardi's feet flail and he lacks ankle flexion. The crossovers are barely crossovers. He doesn't get any push off inside them as a result of the high stance. And he tends to keep the puck in front of his body with a high grip. Those mechanics won't get him to the NHL. He doesn't use his edges when he's moving at full speed. He'll slow down, then make a backhand pass instead of cutting back to make the better, easier play. He gets locked into taking defenders wide and trying to outrace them to the net (often fails). I wonder how much that's a response to his upright stance and handling style. Still, Lombardi has a ton of interesting elements that should still get him drafted. He's a skilled handler, even when moving with all sorts of creative ideas to beat defenders. He looks for teammates on the inside and has the skill to connect. Where many players force a puck through, he prefers to build the play. When he doesn't have the puck, he does just about everything to get it back. He sprints at the puck carrier, angles them out along the boards, and stays in motion to get open for passes. He might make an interesting end-of-board candidate, but he's a re-entry with a longer-than-normal development curve ahead.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

Lombardi has a ton of skill. He was deking around players, attacking the middle, and creating chances. Uses head fakes and weight shifts to manipulate defenders in transition. Sets up passing lanes by skating towards the nearest defender, then looking off his eventual target. Takes pucks in motion and instantly recognizes his preferred space. Looks to get off the boards in offensive zone play, but he's a bit too dependent on outside speed in transition. While he changes pace to set up his dekes and uses give-and-gos, he doesn't have a true delay game – he skates himself into pressure instead cutting back to find the trailer. The high grip handling also presents a projection concern because he doesn't put weight over his stick. But he's high-pace, skilled, inside-driven, and has off-puck skills. He could make our board. Hard to believe he was a 13th-round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 12th, 2022

Guelph Storm vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Didn't see anything from Lombardi in this game. Mostly

just pace. No nuance to his game. Some off-puck movement, but he was late to most pockets. Teammates didn't exactly do him any favours, however. Set-up a chance and had some moments on the powerplay where he showed vision and deception. Not a game that I'd put much weight into.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

A bit of a quieter game from Lombardi but he looked more projectable in a few ways. For one, he was using his bottom hand to fend off back pressure. Consistently established body positioning along the boards and after beating players. Unlike most junior players, he passes to where his teammate is headed. He also leads them into space. Many creative solutions to pressure as both a handler and passer. He dekes around it, fakes one play and does anything, and spins to turn his back to the defender. He could be worth a late-rounder

**Mitchell Brown:** January 30th, 2022

Saginaw Spirit vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Another game where Lombardi was everywhere. He's disruptive in all three zones through non-stop pressure. He's a shooting threat and skilled playmaker. He passes, relocates, and gets open. Always in motion. Finds space in the slot, just outside it, and supports battles. Identifies give-and-go opportunities. Passes off the backhand, and on the forehand he slips pucks under sticks and pulls pucks towards his body before passing to access the lane. The hands have some limitations (overzealous, high grip, lack of body positioning after beating a player), but he tries to manipulate incoming defenders with puck positioning. Adaptable because he moves that top hand across his body, too. Skating lacks consistency and flexion. Feet flail at times. He could be something.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 5th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Dynamic. Lombardi scored a goal after beating pressure in the defensive end, gaining the zone, then spinning off the boards to attack the middle. Once he passes, he moves immediately to the next position. He's never stationary, but his movement usually has a purpose. A high grip handling style and a lack of consistent body positioning gave him some issues fighting off defenders in this game. But he also showed slip and hook passes, a give-and-go game, and foresight on his passes (leads teammates into space). Very interesting re-entry.



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# YOAN LOSHING

C | MONCTON WILDCATS

21%

2022 XLS

17%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

8%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

1.07

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

HEIGHT 5'9"

D.O.B. FEB. 29, 2004

WEIGHT 161

SHOOTS LEFT

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	50	19	23	42

## Scouting Report

A shorter stick and a high pace of play make it hard for opponents to take the puck away from Yoan Loshing. He runs around the offensive zone, evading poke-checks and changing directions on defenders until he finds a play. He's patient and confident in his mobility, confident that it will open up the right play for him.

His top-end skating also allows him to absorb, resist, and bounce away from contact and to catch opponents on the backcheck.

"He strides into and out of passes," Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis wrote on April 15th. "He's dynamic, trying to make every play at high speed. His passes are deceptive, too, and he uses teammates to create space for himself."

Loshing doesn't only attack in straight lines. He moves laterally and back; he attacks space and he tries to enlarge his gap with defenders, but in the offensive zone, there isn't

a clear plan behind his moves. This is evident especially on the powerplay, where every puck he receives ends up directly on net.

"There aren't many players who look like Loshing in the NHL," St-Louis added in another report. "He's fast, elusive, and pacey, a fervent user of crossovers off the rush. Everything he does, is at way too much speed, however. It's his competitive advantage and I wonder what will happen to his game in the pros, where he won't have the same massive speed difference."

The doubts about his lower numbers, his processing of the play, his below-average size, and underdeveloped defensive game had Loshing fall from our list. He's a player to keep an eye on as he matures, however, as his upside is greater than for other players that will likely be drafted around him.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

Halifax Mooseheads vs Moncton Wildcats - QMJHL

Loshing is showing he can protect pucks. His skating is a weapon to separate from opponents, but also to resist contact, to slip in front of them, steal the puck, and bounce away. Loshing's puck protection mechanics are refined: outside edge use, counter-lean on the opponents, keeps feet moving, attacks inside after bouncing away from opponents. This gives me hope that he's going to figure out the NHL game

-- to an extent. He's not an efficient player. He throws too many pucks at the net, hoping one of his shot gets in, and he's not a creator, although he can show some deception.

**David St-Louis:** April 24th, 2022

Acadie Bathurst vs Moncton Wildcats - QMJHL

There aren't many players who look like Loshing in the NHL. He's fast, elusive, and pacey, a fervent user of crossovers off the rush. Everything he does, is at way too much speed. It's

his competitive advantage and I wonder what will happen to his game in the pros, where he won't have the same massive speed difference. I don't like his choices of play most of the time, but he also flashes a processing speed and a speed of decision in difficult situations that matches the rate of his feet at times, too. He's probably a pick, due to the significantly above-average skating and the ability to make plays at that speed, but the uncertainty associated with his game -- the size and the overreliance on open ice speed differential -- might keep him lower on our board.

**David St-Louis:** April 16th, 2022

Rimouski Oceanic vs Moncton Wildcats - QMJHL

Rough game from Loshing. His decisions with the puck weren't great, lots of missed opportunities. He doesn't have a clear plan in mind...and forces a lot of suboptimal ones. He's all speed and not much else at this point and I don't have a lot of confidence in his NHL future, especially because he's so far behind the curve defensively, too.

**David St-Louis:** April 15th, 2022

Québec Remparts vs Moncton Wildcats - QMJHL

Loshing still plays with a lot of pace. He strides into and out of passes. He's dynamic, trying to make every play at high speed. His passes are deceptive, too, and he uses teammates to create space for himself. I didn't like his powerplay patterns, however, as he tried the same drag shot over and over again during the game.

**David St-Louis:** February 15th, 2022

Moncton Wildcats vs Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Loshing plays with a ton of pace and speed. His short stick allows him to keep a tight control over the puck even under

pressure and his processing and handling skills to hit tiny seams through defenders. He stripped a lot of pucks from opponents in this game, but I wouldn't call him a committed defender, as he's mostly ahead of the game. I like the second efforts to get the puck back after his team loses it, however. He's poisy, confident, skilled (maybe above-average even), and he uses teammates. He also has an understanding of rush mechanics, of false gaps....A lot of interesting elements.


**David St-Louis:** February 11th, 2022

Sherbrooke Pheonix vs Moncton Wildcats - QMJHL

Loshing is a pretty light forward. He loses most shoulder to shoulder engages, but his passing game makes up for it (underhandling, fast ID of targets, anticipation); he uses teammates well to create scoring chances and his speed and elusiveness allows him to avoid close quarter battles as much as possible. I'm not sure if his game is that projectable to the NHL, but the skating, the handling, the passing, and even his sniping ability on the powerplay definitely makes him a pick. He also has decent defensive positioning and just needs the awareness to go along with it.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2021

Moncton Wildcats vs Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Loshing is all about speed and executing fast. Some of his skills project well to the NHL (skating and handling) and I like his ability to steal pucks and support plays in all three zones. He understands rush mechanics (how to enlarge gaps) and can make plays through defenders. All of this is probably enough for him to become a draft pick, but he lacks finishing ability. He has no ability to adapt to pass or fire off of them because he doesn't scan for the goalie's position and aims too high. He has some deception. 

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Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

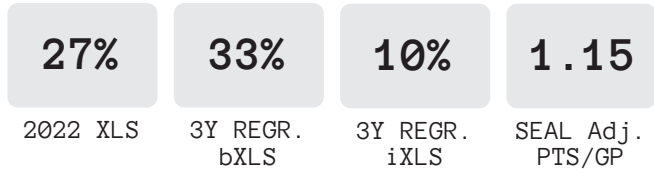


Physical

# CRUZ LUCIUS

RW | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. APR. 5, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	23	9	9	18
USHL	10	5	2	7
WJC-18	6	2	6	8

> Committed to Boston College

## Scouting Report

We never really got many opportunities to see Crus Lucius play at his best or really even at all for huge chunks of the season. It wasn't until the 2022 U18 World Hockey Championships that we really got to see his quality as a playmaker shine.

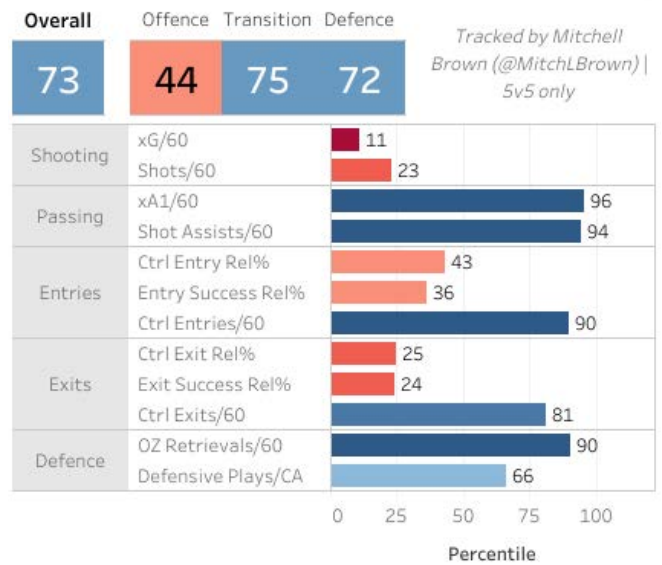
Lucius's production pales in comparison to some of his teammates, but Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown's data set still paints him as one of the better high-danger generators in the draft. With his combination of deception and passing skills, Lucius managed to send a staggering amount of pucks to open teammates in the slot. When he gets the space to prepare his plays, he can manipulate defenders and connect highly difficult plays.

His future as an NHL player hinges on the development of one element above all else. "For Lucius, it's about skating improvement," Brown wrote in a March game report. "He bends at the hip because he doesn't bend his ankles enough. His feet kick. Stability and speed are issues."

His skating issues and his lack of efficiency this season had us move him down our board this season.

Lucius has top-nine upside, but to get there, he will have to learn to balance his creativity, his desire to make high-

Games Tracked: 3 | Minutes Tracked: 33.6



light-reel plays, with the risk of those plays. Learning to scan more to find out which lanes are actually open, which ones he can open, and which ones are impossible to reach, will be to the detriment of his development. Earning ice-time will be tough for him if his turnover rate remains as high as it was this season.

## Game Reports

J.D. Burke: April 26th, 2022

Germany vs. Team USA - U18s

We may need to circle back on Lucius if his start to the

U18s is any indication. He's probably been one of the better forwards on Team USA through the preliminary round, with three assists in his team's commanding win over Germany.

The first one was just brilliant. Lucius took the puck wide, managed to evade several German defenders, went heel-to-heel in spots, and just patiently skated into a passing lane that would allow him to find his teammate in the slot with a perfectly placed pass for the goal. The seconds assist was equal parts will and skill; Lucius forced the puck loose from under the goalie's glove, took the inside lane on a defender to be the first man on it, and feathered the puck to Rutger McGroarty in the slot for the goal. The skating is ugly. No doubt about it. But his vision and his ability to get the puck to his teammates through traffic stood out in a big way in this contest.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

Lucius was playing in slow motion. He took forever to do anything, whether that was shooting, attacking space, or gaining the zone. His skating remains the most pressing issue in his game. Lack of speed stands out at this level. And the lack of flexion limits his ability to absorb contact. The playmaking ideas are often sound, but he's always behind the play. It's same thing on the defensive end. Not much to go off in this one.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Lucius is back, playing with Howard and Nazar. He had a chance set up by Nazar and made a tricky pass off the boards with perfect timing later. Arrives late to battles, but gets steals with a well-timed check or interception. For Lucius, it's about skating improvement. He bends at the hip because he doesn't have his ankles enough. His feet kick. Stability and speed issues. Not a ton to go off with this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Lucius is perplexing. He tries advanced plays, and fails most of them. In one shift, he had two turnovers from blind backhand passes -- maybe scan first? He also had one of the best plays of the game, deking around a defender before dropping the puck to an open teammate in one motion. He doesn't have much in the way of scoring instincts, and his lack of ankle flexion limits his skating. He's somewhat involved defensively, but his physicality and puck protection are extremely inconsistent. Clearly has NHL hands and creativity, but the rest of the skill set's so far behind that I'm not sure he's a pick.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** September 26th, 2021

Fargo Force vs. NTDP U18s - USHL

Cruz is a pass first player. Now that said, he's a really

excellent facilitator. He has a level of coordination between his hands and the rest of his upper-body that he can effectively fake a shot into a high-level pass. He's constantly looking off options to manipulate defenders sticks and seems to have a high-end spatial awareness of where his teammates are. That said, he requires a lot of space to be effective; he doesn't have the separation ability or edgework to give himself more time to survey the field. He also doesn't take shots where he should, not sure he has the finishing ability of his older brother.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 17th, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Some moments from Lucius in this game, especially as a passer. Didn't connect with his best ideas, but he looked for inside options, even under pressure. Perhaps it's just a one-off, but I think he sees high-value targets. Skating posture's highly inconsistent with a lack of depth. Struggled to get inside with the puck on his stick. Perimeter shots after running out of space in transition, but also showed transition distribution to pass after changing lanes, giving his teammates a runway of space. Enough moments to think he has NHL skill.


**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2021

USNTDP U17s vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

I don't understand Lucius' game yet, but there were some awesome moments. For his goal, he cut to the inside while flicking the puck around the defender, then curled the puck around the defender's stick. Crafty placement with the best release I've seen from him. Still, he sweeps the puck, drawing it back while keeping his top hand locked to his hip. He can't pull the trigger fast and his shot likely lacks some power as a result. There were moments are real pace to his game. Others, where he was gliding around doing nothing. He panics when pressured upon receiving the puck, throwing pucks away in all three zones. Lacks any sort of ankle dorsiflexion.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 2nd, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U17s - USHL

Very low pace. Lots of gliding around, sometimes intentionally so and other times falling behind the play. His lack of pace makes him turnover-prone in transition, and he seems fixated on the puck defensively. There were some off-puck offensive sequences, but he mostly looks to play short support. His identity in this game was a perimeter playmaker with some handling skills. Hands looked like a 6-grade at times, freezing the opposition with his eyes for shifting from one inside edge to the inside and cutting around their stick. Lots of crafty short-range passes to get the offence going. 

# KASPER LUNDELL

F | HIFK U20

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAR. 11, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

<b>11%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>N/A</b>
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-S.	31	8	18	26
WJC-18	4	0	0	0

## Scouting Report

The problem with Kasper Lundell's game is pretty straightforward. As Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen put it, his "skating remains a big weakness and prevents him from being a legitimate NHL prospect in my eyes."

And as such, we kept Lundell from our board. He just can't move well enough to ever project to even a bottom-six role at the NHL level. Not without significant improvements as a skater. Some of this is bad luck. Lundell's suffered more than his fair share of lower-body injuries over the year, all of which have doubtless hindered his stride. But it's not like he was ever a burner to begin with. The lack of agility, speed,

and balance limited his pressure game and prevented him from creating plays.

There are positives in Lundell's game, many of which compensated for his lack of mobility this season. He positioned himself well both offensively and defensively and showed an ability to both anticipate the rotations of the play and to support them. He also made many crafty passes in the opposing end to create scoring chances.

Unfortunately, those strengths won't matter at the next levels if Lundell can't improve the mechanics of his stride.

## Game Reports

**Lassi Alanen:** April 23th - May 1st, 2022 - U18s

Lundell's role was very miniscule throughout the tournament, which was pretty surprising to see given his prior usage with the national team this season. Not that it was the wrong call, given how a player like Tuomas Uronen clearly deserved his spot on the third line. Lundell was not in the lineup for the last two games, and only got proper minutes in one the games due to a suspension. Not a whole lot write about. Skating is a huge issue needing to be worked on in the future. Didn't show much in the way of on-puck skill, but the amount of shifts was so small you couldn't have really expected much.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 8th, 2022

Jokerit vs. HIFK - U20 SM-sarja

Over 13 minutes of ice time for Lundell in this one, a lot of it on special teams. Managed to snag a secondary assist in the process. Lundell was diligent on the defensive side of the puck, tracking his man actively in the DZ and having good scanning habits without the puck. Some decent stops in the process, creating turnovers with well-timed pinches. Skating remains a big, big weakness and prevents him from being a legit prospect in my eyes. He has some off-puck

timing around the slot, but on-puck skills are limited, too.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 5th, 2022

HIFK vs. KalPa - U20 SM-sarja

Lundell actually had some offensive moments in this one, both as a shooter and a playmaker. He was able to make one nice setup from below the goal line for a HD chance, though he didn't receive much pressure and was freely able to make the pass. Still, at least he recognized the passing lane and executed on it. He also showed some off-puck movement and timing ability in the OZ. The skating hasn't improved at all, though, and it's hindering his handling, too. Work rate is high, but it pretty much has to be in order for him to play at this level.

**Lassi Alanen:** December 10th, 2021

HIFK vs. HPK - U20 SM-sarja

Another good game from Lundell's line, but also another game where he was clearly overshadowed by his wingers Aleksanteri Kaskimäki and Tuomas Uronen who were creating almost all of the chances in the OZ. Lundell's only shot contributions came from faceoffs, where he was - to his credit - rather strong in this one. Lundell's skating isn't

looking any better compared to the start of the season. It's going to need a ton of work before he can play effectively at a pro level, even in Liiga or Mestis. Apparently he's had notable lower-body injury struggles in past years, which clearly shows in his stride. The question is whether it can be fixed to a sufficient point given enough time. I'm not comfortable declaring it one way or another, but even as a little bit better skater, I don't see him as an NHL pick.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 26th, 2021

HIFK vs. Kiekko-Espoo - U20 SM-sarja

Lundell's line was just all over their counterparts in this one, generating a ton of scoring chances at 5-on-5. Lundell himself managed to add one goal, scoring from a rebound in front of the net after a longish OZ cycle. He did have another chance off the rush after a nice drop pass play, but aside from that, he was clearly the third wheel of his line in terms of generating offence or making carries or passes in transition. He did center the line and do most of the work in the defensive end, but he lacks the skating ability to get up the ice quickly enough to be involved in rushes if he's deep in the DZ when the rush starts.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 12th, 2021

U18 Five Nations, Switzerland

Lundell skated on the third line for Finland's U18 team for the entire tournament and also saw ice time regularly on the penalty kill. Lundell didn't impress in any of the games. His skating is a big turn-off and the higher the level of play, the more it's going to limit him. Sure, he was solid on the PK and had some good OZ sequences with cycling the puck with his linemate and fellow HIFK teammate Samu Bau, but that's about it. Not many of those cycles turned into scoring chances either.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 16th, 2021

HIFK vs. Kärpät - U20 SM-sarja

Lundell's skating ability remains a big issue. It not only

hurts his projectability going forwards, but also limits his effectiveness at this level.

The same things are notable compared to my previous viewing: limited mobility in pretty much every way, lack of effective separation and very weak pivots. I do have respect for Lundell's work ethic, though. He's hustling a lot both ways, often driving to the net as F2 down the middle and once coming from way back off the rush was rewarded with a rebound chance. Lundell's individual skill level is not that high, though. He fumbles pass receptions and lacks higher-end handling skill.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 25th, 2021

HIFK vs. KOOVEE - U20 SM-sarja

Lundell was centering HIFK's top line, playing on the left flank on the second power play unit and contributing on the penalty kill as well. Lundell's skating form is not very pretty, to put it mildly. His hips are high, the ankle flexion is very limited, the knee bend is almost non-existent and the back very hunched over. Those things limit his speed but especially his turns and mobility.

He was grinding and hustling for pucks, but the skating limited the effectiveness quite a bit. Lundell's puck play was pretty mediocre, too. He wasn't driving much play in transition and I didn't count any impressive OZ plays, either, though he has been on fire to start the season when you look at his production. Really hard to consider picking him with his current skating ability.

**J.D. Burke:** August 3rd, 2021

Finland U18 vs. Czech Rep. U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

It's pretty simple: You can't spend a draft pick on a player that skates like Kasper Lundell. Barring significant improvement, he's a no-draft. He's clumsy, lacks depth, and flares at the hips. It's ugly. An awful lot of lunging around the ice. Some smarts off-the-puck in the offensive zone to get in prime shooting positions, but that's not going to carry him to the NHL.

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# BEN MACDONALD

C | NOBLE & GREENOUGH SCHOOL

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. FEB. 24, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHS-Prep	22	14	15	29
> Committed to Harvard Univ. ('23-24)				

## Scouting Report

Rather quietly, the Massachusetts Prep circuit has become quite the hotbed for NHL talent. Noble & Greenough School alone has produced three full-time NHLers and several draft picks in the last decade, including Kevin Hayes, Miles Wood, and Colin White. Ben MacDonald's looking to become the next.

Defence and physicality define MacDonald's game. He's a pressure machine, overwhelming puck carriers and eliminating off-puck threats. After closing space, he knocks the puck and then slams players into the boards.

Much of MacDonald's offence comes from his physical game, too. He leans on defenders, waits for their response, then spins back in the opposite direction. When he's not winning battles along the boards, he planted in front of the

net for rebounds and deflections. He's also a powerful shooter and an occasionally deceptive playmaker.

To use these skills in the NHL, MacDonald's skating must improve.

"He never achieves proper ankle dorsiflexion, failing to push his knees past his toes," according to Elite Prospects crossover scout Daniel Gee. That limited ankle flexion prevents him from generating speed in open-ice, limits his ability to access his edges, and allows attackers to gain body positioning and knock him off balance.

If MacDonald's skating improves significantly, he could become a bottom-line centre with a physical game. That's a valuable asset. If not, he's probably just a depth piece.

## Game Reports

**Daniel Gee:** March 2nd, 2022

North Mount Hermon vs Noble & Greenough - USHS-Prep  
MacDonald had a strong game against North Mount Hermon, especially on the offensive end of the puck.

In transition, MacDonald was better than I have seen in the past. Elbow-free handles, saucer passes off the backhand, the splitting of defenders, all positive habits. There's still scary aspects of his game, however. He holds the puck in front of his body -- an easy target for better defenders. The skating is still a major issue too -- stiff upper body, collapses at his hips, bad shin angles, and

straight legged push-offs highlight his issues. Nevertheless, MacDonald saw production in this ne. In the first he activated off-puck into the open slot, took a pass off the wall, and in one motion he backhanded a shot from the right-hand circle top shelf. He drives the middle well off-puck, tending to drop off possession so he can crash the middle lane. Tried a bunch of power moves off the wing, dropped shoulder to protect the puck, but at the end, he just wasn't able to turn the gapped defenders. MacDonald does have some ability to generate speed through his crossovers -- on a late second period powerplay he blended



weight shifts and crossovers to handle inside on a defender -- ended up bobbling the puck (another issue).

In sustained pressure, MacDonald does his best to combat his immobility. Spin-offs from checkers, simple dump-and-crash plays, and plants in high-danger areas were all habits he pushed in this viewing. He would score more if he could catch-and-release pucks better. In the second he was planted backdoor, but had his shot attempt blocked as he took a second too long on the pass reception. Some touch-pass ability into the slot later, no-looked a slip pass on another shift -- some skill there, but he is still very simple. Definitely more interesting than before; I think if a team thinks that they can help his forward stride mechanics, he has a shot at being a bottom-six centerman. Probably a later-round pick rather than the CSS ranking he has been given.

**Daniel Gee:** February 17th, 2022

Belmont Hill vs Noble and Greenough - USHS- Prep

This was probably the best viewing of MacDonald so far; he was impactful on the defensive side of the puck, created chances in transition, but squandered looks on the powerplay.

Some interesting elements of MacDonald's game popped up in this game. First, the presence of an in-stride wrister. In the first, he executed a stick lift, burst up the far-boards and released a shot against some resistance -- a tonne of downforce was generated. I question how able he is to string actions together. In one scenario MacDonald used weight-shifts, hip-pocket protection, but was still angled off to the side boards, unable to change gears to create a pivot, or beat the defender one-on-one. He's really at his best, exploiting space off of defensive actions. In the second he intercepted a bad neutral zone pass, walked into the OZ, and unleashed a distanced shot with contention from the high slot -- beat the goaltender clean glove side. Other than that, many perimeter rush-patterns and seemingly poor recognition of available space and opponents. MacDonald featured heavily on Noble's countless power plays in this game. He typically works off the right-hand circle as a shooting threat. Showed off some interesting eye-line manipulation passes and moved to crash the net when opportunities arise. Struggled to reign in his shot -- missed high multiple times; precision and high-placements being the issue. There's definitely some interesting things offensively, but I doubt that much of this will translate for him to be a scorer at a higher level; missing a mechanically consistent stride, limited handling element, and some questionable sense elements (decision-making on-puck).

I do think there is a real two-way element to his game

-- good enough to allow him to push into a bottom-six role ceiling-wise. He constantly pushed pressure on the points and is extremely good at predicting subsequent plays. This allows him to jump into lanes early. He may not scan enough, but there is some evidence of it throughout the game. In transition he helps drive puck carriers to the outside with back pressure support. MacDonald nullified a couple of shots by disrupting opponents' releases -- especially in the third. Great stuff. Slaughtered opponents in the faceoff circle for what that's worth. I think MacDonald is about as clear as a D-prospect can get for our board, but I wouldn't be shocked if he was a mid-round pick for a team that likes his scalability and Harvard development-pathing.

**Daniel Gee:** February 12th, 2022

Milton Academy vs Noble and Greenough - USHS-Prep

MacDonald is undoubtedly physically dominant at this level, a top offensive option at the USHS-Prep level, but the advancement of his individual skill from my last viewing to now might not be enough to allow for production at higher levels.

MacDonald still presents as a very simple forward who struggles with making each puck touch efficient. While there are some interesting developments with his handling -- on one shift he popped the puck into his hip-pocket, shifted his rush pattern to the slot, and powered around pressure, he still is fairly turnover prone. Weird decision making also hurts his game; for instance, on a clear odd-man break, he decided to look off dangerous options, pivot and failed a pass to a covered trailing teammate. There's a clear two-way element to his game -- MacDonald is great at picking off slow moving defenders, crashing, hitting, and pressuring them in open ice. On one shift, he forechecked hard, stripped a defender wheeling around their net, and made a perfect centering pass (leading to a HDC). He scored a goal in this game; MacDonald planted in the slot, fired a centering pass on net, grabbed the rebound and finished on the backhand. His ability to play within pressure is excellent, but in general he struggles to get clean looks due to lack of proactive movement to soft-areas of coverage. Seems to hunt for flyby tips, hope passes off the perimeter, and focuses efforts to win retrievals.

MacDonald was a super aggressive defender in this game; probably one of the most pressure pushing performances I have seen this draft year. Constant jumping into lanes, pressuring passes, and locking down secondary threats. On a penalty kill in the first he nullified a cross crease, jumped up to the right-point to pressure a pass, and then rotated to slash a player shooting on the right-hand circle.

# "Defence and physicality define MacDonald's game. He's a pressure machine, overwhelming puck carriers and eliminating off-puck threats. After closing space, he knocks the puck and then slams players into the boards."

Not wholly translatable but the effort was remarkable.


The skating limitation still exists. Recoveries barely land under his body creating subsequent short push-offs, his knee-bend isn't there yet. He wants to initiate power moves transitionally but he just does not have the mechanical base to pull it off. Seems like a long-term project who could turn into a useful utility bottom-six player -- will need a great development team. Maybe a D-grade prospect for our board if you can get over how simplistic his game is.

**Daniel Gee:** June 27th, 2021

USA Royal Blue 04 vs USA White 04 - BioSteel Camp

This was a weird viewing — two longer periods of action in this USA vs USA camp game. First time seeing MacDonald; he looks big out there, stronger than most of his cohorts. Tonnes of back checking pressure and harassment. On one shift he faced back 2-on-2, directed traffic and then drilled the puck carrier as they received the pass. On another shift he laid out a puck carrier on an attempted entry — if you don't get it already, he's overly physical. MacDonald's tools don't seem overly impressive. His stride is a major issue. Much of the time, his knees are disengaged and straight too often. He never really achieves proper ankle flex and

knee bend when he activates. MacDonald's recoveries are pretty wide as well, barely landing under his torso. Pace can be an issue, obviously.

In terms of his transition game, he often worked out of perimeter break-outs, many times out of instant counter attacks from turnovers. Very basic playmaker who didn't really implement much skill based passes, but pulled off multiple hook passes. MacDonald actually struggled to connect on a couple of odd-man breaks. He turned up on a couple of sequences to end the game; first he started a breakout with a controlled carry, made a small handle to the inside, and took a dangerous short side shot in-stride. On a subsequent shift, MacDonald broke free from pressure on the left-wing and sniped a shot over the shoulder of the opposing goalie. Not much sustained play in the offensive zone. He lived at the net front, though. MacDonald had one stand out play where he revered a puck against the grain to an open man in the crease, but they flubbed the pass reception. Overall, he seems too simple as a player right now; a forechecker who might be ineffective due to his skating at higher levels. The base is okay, but we will see some of his tools develop over his draft year. 



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

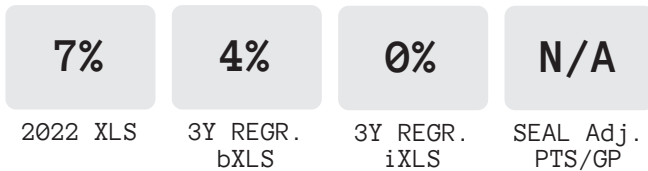


Physical

# MITCHELL MARTIN

LW | KITCHENER RANGERS

HEIGHT 6'4" D.O.B. JAN. 6, 2003  
WEIGHT 209 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	65	17	23	40

## Scouting Report

It's rare that a mid-scoring re-entry demands attention, but Mitchell Martin's production greatly understates his skill level.

Martin's an NHL shooter, firing quick-release outside leg wristers and textbook inside leg wristers masked inside his stride. He chains together pass receptions, dekes, and shots under pressure.

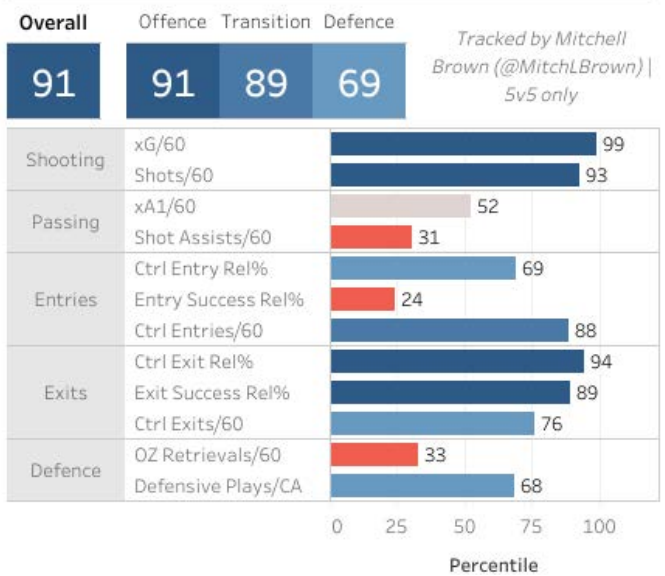
That shot comes bundled with off-puck instincts. "He's always open, whether that's by finding space between checks, controlling his speed to stay in the passing lane, or pushing off defenders into space just as the puck comes into the slot," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in May.

Never content to cycle the puck, Martin immediately looks to the inside for a lane. If one isn't available, he waits for pressure, then cuts back and drives the middle. In both cases, he's consistently making NHL reads.

With time and space, Martin identifies the trailer, slips pucks through defenders, and even deceives a bit to set up teammates. If not, he defaults to shooting or makes a simple play.

Martin's NHL success largely hinges on his skating. Ankle flexion provides a projectable base, but underdeveloped outside edges reduce his stability and power through cuts,

Games Tracked: 4 | Minutes Tracked: 53.0



punch turns, and crossovers. While he delays and cuts inside in transition, a lack of in-motion handling skill prevents him from completing his ideas.

Improving the skating while upping the physical play should help Martin beat the odds and make the NHL. While he's unlikely to become a play-creator, there's a chance that his intelligence could make him more than just a depth player.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 7th, 2022

Kitchener Rangers vs. Windsor Spitfires - OHL

I don't know if I'm becoming too much of a hockey man, getting excited about a tall player with hands and no points and all, but Martin has legitimate potential. He's always open, whether that's by finding space between checks, controlling his speed to stay in the passing lane, or pushing off defenders into space just as the puck comes into the slot. Has an NHL shot off either leg: a sudden outside leg wrister and an in-stride inside leg shot with textbook form. Chains together receptions, dekes, and shots. While he requires favourable situations as a playmaker (i.e., space, time, and a glide), he finds the trailer, deceives a bit, and times his passes to maximize his recipient's options. He's smart. He's also throwing people to the ice, crushing them into the boards, and intercepting passes and preventing shots. Everything hinges on skating. He pushes his knees past his toes (inconsistently), and shows inside edge skating skills like the heel-to-heel. On his outside edges, he's more upright and lacks any separation ability. Even well-timed punch times leave him stationary.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Kitchener Rangers vs. Guelph Storm - OHL

A bit of a quieter game by Martin's standards. Passed away his best chance of the game, but he also showed some board skills by waiting for pressure to arrive, cutting back, then driving to the middle. His outside edges underdevelopment, lacking power and stability through cuts, turns, and crossovers. But his stride has plenty of ankle flexion, especially early in his shifts, only held back by short extensions. Some impact on the defensive end – he tries and scans regularly, that's half of the battle. Could've better positioned himself to receive pucks by presenting his stick and turning to face the play. Failed a couple of in-motion plays, but it's positive that he's deviating from the glide-only creation method. There's upside here. Don't care about the points.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Erie Otters vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

So, Martin might actually have some NHL upside. He's a credible off-puck threat, especially in transition. Legitimate shooting skill on the pass, thanks to a consistently sound first-touch and an adaptable one-timer. Doesn't just sprint his routes; he adapts his speed and route to become a passing option. Lumbering, but he tries to create advantages with the puck through delays, inside cuts, and dekes. Along the boards, he avoids the cycle, preferring to make a quick play to the middle – that's an NHL mindset, and he has some passing skill to make it happen. Physical and establishes body

positioning. He's also tall, which only helps his case in the eyes of many teams. He could be more aggressive at using his frame and the skating will prove to be limiter at the next level (it's already an issue here). But off-puck smarts, shooting skill, and board play is a pretty intriguing combination.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 12th, 2022

Kitchener Rangers vs. Soo Greyhounds - OHL

Martin has an NHL shot. He creates downforce by creating distance between his feet (outside leg) and ankle flexion (inside leg). Keeps his chest up, his shoulders straight, pushes both hands in front of his body, then elevates the elbow. At this stage, he's a basic shooter but that form means adding new skills – angle changes, blade deception, shooting inside crossovers, and altering the timing within his release – should be relatively easy. He has some off-puck instincts, mostly in transition. And he looks to get pucks off the wall quickly. Skating presents some issues, but he's quite creative with the puck. He tries to make plays and even manipulate defenders with crossovers and directional changes. There's potential here.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 2nd, 2022

Kitchener Rangers vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Martin has some finesse but also understands how to play with a skating disadvantage. There's no straight-line, single-speed rushes up the boards. He delays, cuts inside, or passes. The shot looks projectable. He shows a bit of vision and playmaking in the offensive end. Applied lots of pressure defensively. Didn't see any board skills or notable in-tight ability in this game. Not sure he's a pick this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 5th, 2022

Kitchener Rangers vs. London Knights - OHL

Martin's an intelligent player. He's not just planting himself in front of the net. He moves constantly, altering route and speed to maximize the passing window. He anticipates plays across the ice, whether he's getting open or forechecking. Doesn't waste time with the cycle; he immediately completes plays off the boards to the middle. Used a give-and-go for a scoring chance, started with a slip pass. The crossovers are speed killing and lack depth, but he pushes his knees past his toes – should become an NHLer and he doesn't need to be an NHL average skater to play. Overbackchecked and conceded a chance against, but generally anticipated plays and didn't overextend. He's not dynamic. He relies on favourable touches to distribute. But he plays an NHL game. Could become something.



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

## MICHAEL MASTRODOMENICO

D | LINCOLN STARS

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. APR. 19, 2004  
WEIGHT 196 SHOOTS RIGHT

13%

2022 XLS

14%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

7%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.7

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	53	4	14	18
WJC-18	4	0	0	0

> Committed to Univ. of Notre Dame

### Scouting Report

One of several high-profile '04-born Québec prospects to head to the USHL, Michael Mastrodomenico has the skills to become the best of the bunch. Chaos defines his game. Every time he steps on the ice, stuff happens. Not always good stuff, but the good stuff is especially exciting.

Mastrodomenico activates with every possible opportunity. He sprints up the ice to join the rush, uses every inch of space before shooting, and creeps down the weak side to become a shooting threat. He fakes shots before passing and tries complex feeds through multiple defenders after activating. Simply put, he doesn't have time for positional norms; he's getting involved in every situation.

Breakouts also highlight Mastrodomenico's strong ideas, where he draws the first forechecker towards himself before accelerating. If there's no space, he cuts back to reset. He uses the inside, looks for cross-ice options, and tries to create advantages up the ice.

On the defensive end, Mastrodomenico keeps a tight gap, often closing the distance before even crossing the red line. And he's always looking to make contact, even in the smallest ways.

Now, with all those elements, it's fair to wonder why Mastrodomenico didn't make our board – or even why he's not universally considered a top-64 pick. Skating is the culprit, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown explains: "Ankle flexion is lacking in his standard skating posture. He's always on his heels. Cutbacks lead to him stopping dead. Strides see his feet kick wildly. Crossovers are flailing at their best. Sometimes, his skating fails and he leans on his inside edges, putting his weight so far over his toes he has to use his stick to keep balance. Defensively, he's a gambler because of the lack of mobility. He's forced to engage when better skates can angle. If he's beat, he's cooked."

Prospects with such significant mechanical flaws but advanced ideas are rare. If Mastrodomenico improves his skating substantially, each of his tool grades will receive a bump. He could become a solid NHLer, even if his skating never reaches NHL average. But it must get close enough that he can properly defend, activate, and exit the zone.

**J.D. Burke:** April 28th, 2022

Finland vs. Canada - U18s

Probably Mastrodomenico's best performance at the tournament, whether that's damning him with faint praise or otherwise. Regularly activated off of the offensive blue line, and did a great job of getting pucks inside. Mastrodomenico was really engaged physically in this contest, and threw a couple of massive hits. I thought he did a great job defending along the wall, winning most of his puck battles handily. I'm not going to bang the table for Mastrodomenico at our next meeting, but I could hear someone out on an argument for the end of our board.

**J.D. Burke:** April 26th, 2022

Canada vs. Czechia - U18s

You want to cut Mastrodomenico a little slack in this tournament because he's so clearly not suited to the top pairing role that Canada needs him to play, but it's also not a great sign that he can't play that role at this stage of his career, so... make of that what you will. Mastrodomenico just makes everything look so difficult. He's a reactive defender who is constantly chasing the play. His breakout attempts often missed their intended targets. Play selection in transition and in the offensive zone have consistently been a problem in this tournament. He just makes the most ill-conceived decisions sometimes, and his discipline has been a problem here. Could've easily finished with four or six penalty minutes rather than the two he amassed. He doesn't look like a pick to me.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Lincoln Stars vs. Fargo Force - USHL

More chaos. Mastrodomenico's always fun. He activates with every opportunity. He uses space before shooting. He's

somewhat deceptive. Gears down to draw pressure, then speeds up once they bite. Some of his activation is quite instinctual, and he always finishes his routes. Tight off-puck gap, coupling that with his activation game to extend offensive zone time. There's some upside here. But it will all depend on the mechanics. Limited ankle flexion. Never fully extends his crossovers. Crossovers sloppy and flailing. Moves through pass receptions and passes, and uses the heel-to-heel along with high cutback use. It's clear he's had coaching. But they forgot about the base. The skating impacts every part of his game, from his shooting mechanics to his ability to dispossess opponents and pivot. It's going to require a lot of work.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Lincoln Stars vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

What chaos. Mastrodomenico activates non-stop, usually in the good ways: weak side, trailer up the middle, and stepping into space before shooting. Faked the shot and passed to the inside. Tries advanced transition plays when given a bit of space - fake pass up the boards before using the middle, cutback into an escape around the net, and faking out incoming pressure. But in doing so, he pushes his mechanics to their brink. Ankle flexion is lacking in his standard skating posture. He's always on his heels. Cutbacks lead to him stopping dead. Strides see his feet kick wildly. Crossovers are flailing at their best. Sometimes, his skating fails and he leans on his inside edges, putting his weight so far over his toes he has to use his stick to keep balance. His hands and feet are locked in rhythm. And when he tries his advanced ideas, the hands fall apart. Defensively, he's all hitting. The skating prevents him from running through most players. Instead, he leans on his toes and jumps into them with so little force that he never gets penalized. Scans regularly, and has some

**"Mastrodomenico activates with every possible opportunity. He sprints up the ice to join the rush, uses every inch of space before shooting, and creeps down the weak side to become a shooting threat."**

proactivity. Doesn't engage with his stick when backpedalling, likely as a consequence of his skating. Mechanically, he's extremely weak. It limited every part of his game. But the ideas are awesome.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Sioux Falls Stampede vs. Lincoln Stars - USHL

A much tamer game than I'm used to seeing from Mastrodomenico. He still did the cutbacks, activation, and hitting, just far less frequently. His game suffered as a result. Now, he just looks like a mechanically compromised prospect without enough redeeming qualities to make it a worthwhile gamble. Limited ankle flexion as a skater; cutbacks lack any quickness. He scans, but assumes his teammates will be in an area if he doesn't see them. That led to a turnover. I've seen better from him.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 14th, 2022

Lincoln Stars vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Mastrodomenico went off in this game. He was joining the rush, jumping off the point, pinching non-stop. From the point, he's equal parts shooter and passer. Builds offence around the threat of the shot to draw in defenders before finding a teammate on the inside. Physical defender with some creative plays on breakouts. But the skating's bleak. He struggles to execute on his ideas because his feet flail – and subsequently, his body. Defensively, he's a gambler because of

the lack of mobility. He's forced to engage when better skates can angle. If he's beat, he's cooked. That he's so involved and clearly understands advantage creation could make him an end-of-board type, but the mechanical base is bleak.


**J.D. Burke:** September 24th, 2021

Lincoln Stars vs. Cedar Rapids Roughriders - USHL

Seems pretty clear at this point that Mastrodomenico is an offensive defenceman through and through. Loves to join the rush, even if his wonky, undisciplined stride limits his ability to pick up speed -- swinging his torso and arms wildly, tilting at the hips, etc. Made some good pinches to retain offensive zone possession. Has a decent shot. I wonder if the feet and the defensive zone work are good enough to be worth a draft pick though. Something to monitor.

**J.D. Burke:** September 23rd, 2021

Lincoln Stars vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

This was a pretty unspectacular-to-bad performance from Mastrodomenico. He picked up a goal in the second period by walking in from the blue line and letting a shot rip from the half-wall, but otherwise, mostly negatives to glean from this outing. His feet are a problem. He's flat-footed in space, easy to beat outside, and can't really recover. He lost his man in the neutral zone on two separate occasions, one of which resulted in a goal against. Was stationary, puck-watching in the defensive zone. Ugly stuff. 

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Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# JACOB MATHIEU

C | RIMOUSKI OCÉANIC

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAY 5, 2004  
WEIGHT 170 SHOOTS LEFT

8%

2022 XLS

10%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

5%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.94

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	64	26	30	56

## Scouting Report

We came into the season with high hopes for Jacob Mathieu, but they were mostly dashed. There were so many promising elements from his first season in the QMJHL, but the follow up in his draft year wasn't there.

"Some impressive moments from Mathieu, especially the playmaking," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in an April report from last season. "He knows his options, prepares his passes with deception, and pulls them off with good timing, waiting for lanes to open, moving his feet to find those lanes, and the puck rapidly before they close."

The flashes of playmaking ability are still there from time to time; he can still launch pucks through defensive layers,

right onto the stick of his teammates. His passes are quick and deceptive and he has the off-puck game, the ability to get open, to become an effective play-connector in junior.

Unfortunately, Mathieu barely managed to translate his talents to production this season, partly because of his lack of offensive support, but mostly because he lacked the tools and the engagement necessary to drive his own offence.

While his handling and skating settled at an average grade, in terms of projection, his lack of physicality or abilities to protect and win pucks from opponents will continue to limit his offensive output if they don't improve.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** February 8th, 2022

Rimouski Oceanic vs Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Mathieu is very hard to evaluate. He simply don't get that many pucks and even less in favourable spots or with good options open. It's hard for him to do anything 1 v 2, but it constantly happens. There are things he could add to his game, like more scanning (even if his vision is a strength of his game). The skill isn't a problem, but also not high enough to get him out of odd-man situations. He had a really nice pass through defensive layers to set up a goal. I wonder how he would fare in a different setting, but the low production and projection uncertainty has cooled my enthusiasm for his game a bit.

**David St-Louis:** October 1st, 2021

Drummondville V vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

Skating is more of a 5. He skates in very wide tracks, which makes for short, inefficient strides. Mathieu scored near the net in this game, from a fortunate bounce, but he was at the right place, at a 45 degree angle, right in front of the open cage. He played net-front for most of the game, in fact, seemingly enjoying the traffic. I like his off-puck reads in general. The puck doesn't stay on his stick all that long and he foresees rotations on the powerplay. I'm really looking to see how high his hockey sense grades this season as this will determine his draft status considering his average skills.



**David St-Louis** - September 27th, 2021

Shawinigan Caractes vs Rimouski Oceanic - QMJHL

I overrated Mathieu's skating significantly in my viewings last year. I projected his torso angle would improve with maturity, but he is the same skater. That skill project closer to average, I think, but he is explosive off stops to get to loose pucks and on opponents. I still like his playmaking; he's adaptable, can switch from one play to the next based on what is most open and best to progress the offence, and he is deceptive in how he passes. He attacks high-danger areas (despite size) and was even used net-front on the powerplay. He provides defensive value, too; he can recognize and repair breakdowns.

**David St-Louis:** April 2nd, 2021

Baie-Comeau Drakkar vs Rimouski Oceanic - QMJHL

Mathieu is on the smaller side, but he is speedy. His skating form is a bit rounded, but he likely project as an above-average skater. The issue is that is too speed focused; he tries to beat everyone wide and ends up in the corner. He doesn't use his best asset productively all that match. That said, he processes the game quite quickly, too. Recognizing pockets of

space as they form and what the best play to make is when he does get inside. He had a nice passing exchange with Xavier Cormier, still the main driver on this line. He played the penalty kill and seemed to care about defence. High pace of play and skating, combined with some skills in other area will keep him on the watch list for 2022.

**David St-Louis:** April 1st, 2021

Québec Remparts vs Rimouski Oceanic - QMJHL

Some impressive moments from Mathieu, especially the playmaking. He knows his options, prepares his passes with deception, and pulls them off with good timing, waiting for lanes to open, moving his feet to find those lanes, and the puck rapidly before they close. He has a good sense for positioning, for where the play is heading next, and how to support that play. His skating is at least a 5 considering his age and the pace at which he plays and his relatively strong mechanics (from up close). He tries to protect the puck, but lacks technique and strength. Still, the desire to play inside contact is projectable. Good routes defensively. Lots to like even at his size.



**"While his handling and skating settled at an average grade, in terms of projection, his lack of physicality or abilities to protect and win pucks from opponents will continue to limit his offensive output if they don't improve."**

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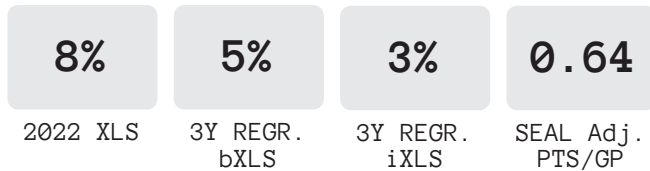
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# TNIAS MATHURIN

D | NORTH BAY BATTALION

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. JAN. 15, 2004  
WEIGHT 201 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	44	3	12	15

## Scouting Report

As activation becomes the standard, more defencemen whose stature would've pigeonholed them into a shutdown role are developing modern-day offensive skills. At 6-foot-3, Tnias Mathurin is a prime example. While he's not short on defensive ability, it's the flashes of impact everywhere else that give him upside.

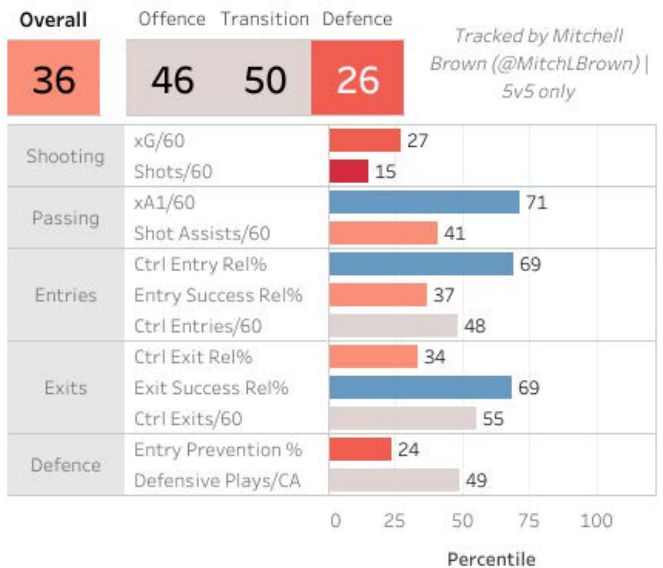
In the offensive zone, Mathurin pinches to extend possession zone time and sneaks down the weak side to become a passing option. From there, he flashes passing skill and vision, even off the backhand and in-tight. If shooting is the best play, he uses space or steps to the middle before shooting.

When given a bit of space on breakouts, Mathurin uses the middle and occasionally deceives forecheckers. Without space, he becomes dump-out and turnover-prone.

To make these abilities work in the NHL, Mathurin must create more favourable situations for himself. The simplest? Moving through pass receptions, allowing him to access the space that he identifies sooner. More complex additions to the skill set include cutting back to outwait pressure, anticipating more opportunities to sprint up the ice, and deepening his skating posture to enhance quickness and stability.

The good news for Mathurin is that his defensive ability

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 124.1



should give him time to develop the rest of his game. “[He] keeps players to the outsides, boxes out players effectively in front of his own net,” OHL scout Lauren Kelly wrote in an April game report. While his pivots are exposable, he tends to manage his limitations by establishing his gap early without over-extending. If Mathurin makes the NHL, he could be a bottom-pairing defenceman. First, the flashes will have to become consistent in the OHL.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 25th, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Didn't see much skill from Mathurin in this game. Mostly simple plays and some poor rush defence. He backed off too early and conceded the zone. Couldn't make up space on turnovers. The mechanics and skills likely project below NHL average, but not significantly below it. His feet are fluid with consistent depth. The hands are rigid but he has quick reactions to recover possession. Not a candidate for our board.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 17th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

Mathurin led the rush early in this game, but was mostly your typical stay-at-home defender in this one. Didn't really do too much to impact possession offensively aside from keeping the puck in at the points, but was solid in his own end. Keeps players to the outsides, boxes out players effectively in front of his own net. Pressures players while defending the cycle. Maybe he'll blossom into a more effective puck handler and carrier in his next few OHL seasons (he's shown those capabilities in flashes), but right now his offensive game is limited. Probably not going to be a big producer at the junior level, let alone in the NHL. Still, I think there's enough positives to his overall game that will probably lead to him being selected this summer.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

When Mathurin's activated and in the play, he's effective. After whiffing on a pass reception, he passed back into the slot for a tap-in goal. Uses the middle in the neutral zone. Makes some crafty off-puck activation reads. But he has major difficulty getting into those positions. It's partly skating, partly decision-making. He's rarely ready to activate on the breakout. Takes many pucks flatfooted in all three zones. Easily pressured into dump-ins because he can't escape or manage pressure. Mathurins are becoming more common: big guy with solid ideas but mechanical limitations. There's an argument for ranking him, but I don't see the upside. Not a candidate for our board, but he could still become something down the line.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Mathurin doesn't really dictate space defensively, but he's a strong reactionary defender. He closes space sooner than most players, doesn't over-extend, and keeps his stick in the way of the attacker. By sprinting to the middle sooner on the

backpedal, he'd eliminate most of the rush defence issues he has, but his lack of ankle flexion and weak pivots likely prevent that for now. DZC is mostly pressure and aggression. Wanders when he should grab a check in NZ turnovers. He disrupts but doesn't always kill plays, and sometimes his chasing leads to him getting passed through. With the puck, he's inconsistent and quite robotic. There are moments where he uses the middle, attacks the F1, and even starts a give-and-go. But too often he throws away possession. I wonder how much of these decisions are the result of mechanical inconsistencies (skating and handling) rather than poor decision-making. Either way, I don't see a draft pick here, but he might be worth a late-rounder for a team invested in development.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 31st, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Mathurin's not exactly the most coordinated or fluid player out there. It impacts his ability to defend, where he prefers to concede space over engaging. Reactionary at the best of times. In the offensive zone, he activates, fills space, and looks to set up teammates. I like he how the length of the ice, activating down the boards or stepping into space before making decisions. That should make him effective on an OHL PP. Uses lateral movement to set up shots, leaning hard on that inside edge of his outside leg to generate force -- some power but he lacks control over his shot. At this point, he's mostly a good ideas player without much execution. If he becomes execution, he's a draft pick. If not, we'll see again next season.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 7th, 2021

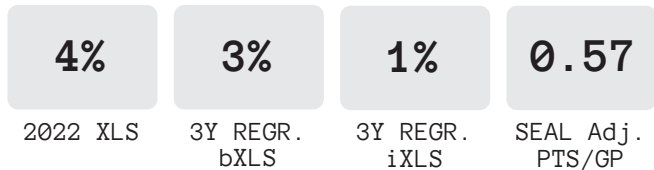
North Bay Battalion vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

Mathurin had an up-and-down game, and his skating was a bit confusing. He's got good edges and has the ability to be agile and keep up with players on the rush, and other times he looked like he was skating through sludge, or was getting walked by players on their way to the net. It feels like his lack of acceleration is going to be a long-term issue, especially as he continues to play against faster, better players. His gap control for the most part looked okay. His shots from the point weren't all that dangerous, and rarely did they ever make it to the net. They lack velocity, and considering his size, they should be a lot heavier - compared to someone like Ty Nelson, who's shots are like darts, despite being several inches shorter. Mathurin's positioning was adequate for most of the game, he was able to keep up with puck carriers if they were deep in the zone and pin them to the boards, but if they were coming in with speed he was lost.

# HUNTER MAYO

D | RED DEER REBELS

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. MAY 7, 2004  
WEIGHT 201 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	65	3	14	17

## Scouting Report

While Hunter Mayo's offence has yet to translate to the WHL, his refined defensive game and flashes of transition skill could make him a late-round pick.

A physical, alert defender, Mayo eliminates off-puck threats, kills the cycle before it starts, and piles up the stops at the blue line. He takes the middle lane away early to funnel the attacker to the outside, where a punishing hit awaits. While his aggression sometimes gets the best of him in-zone, he kills complex plays like half-ice 2-on-1s and anticipates switches of coverage.

Mayo's breakouts are basic, but effective for the level. He prefers quick, short-range plays, avoiding dump-outs when possible. Flashes of best-play breakout - stepping inside, faking out incoming pressure, cutting back and resetting, and passing cross-ice - suggests there's more upside waiting to be unlocked.

To make the NHL, Mayo must improve his skill level. Choppy handling makes him vulnerable to pressure, especially on the point. Pucks roll off his stick, many passes compromise his target, and he misses play-building opportunities to fling

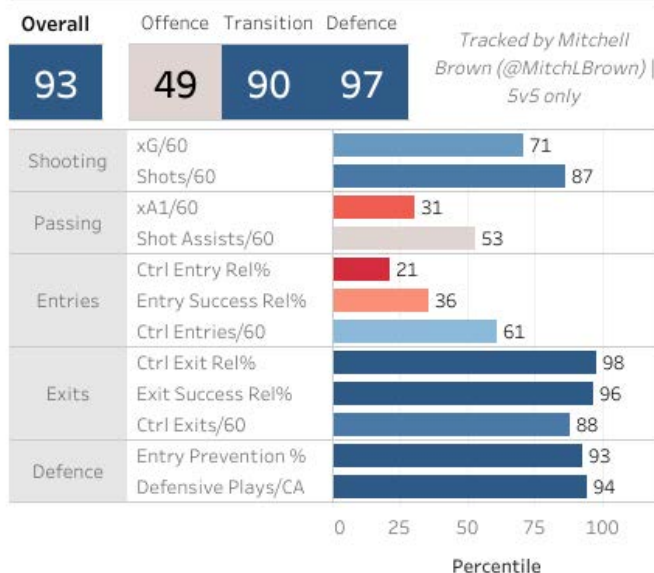
## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 13th, 2022

Red Deer Rebels vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

A much more aggressive game on breakouts from Mayo than normal. He connected with cross-ice passes, used the middle, and tried to stretch the ice - and while under pressure. Not sure how instinctual this stuff is: he still missed opportunities to create advantages and threw pucks to teammates with more pressure than himself. He's very physical, especially when defending the rush. But he never takes himself out of position to chase the hit. He fights the puck a lot, especially when moving. Handling movements are choppy. Skill level's probably average overall but he's an intelligent player with enough pro qualities to justify a draft pick.

Games Tracked: 6 | Minutes Tracked: 86.4



no-chance shots on net.

If Mayo's puck skills come along, perhaps he becomes a depth player with a bit of value on both sides of the puck in the defensive end.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Saskatoon Blades vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Mayo stood out more than Weir in this game. His tools aren't as notable, but he's a much more aggressive rush defender with a clear identity in the professional ranks. He takes the middle early, then looks for the big hit. On breakouts, he makes simple, short-range controlled plays. In the neutral zone, he shows a bit more nuance, going cross-ice or even delaying for a split-second to allow his teammates to build speed before passing. Zero offence. Not sure if he has NHL upside, but he's a solid player. Could be a late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 28th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Mayo showed a bit more willingness to activate, and with it, a bit more skill. I still don't it NHL skill, but he's getting closer with the odd pass to the inside or stepping into space before making the next play. Defence is his best attribute. He closes space a bit too late in the NZ, but stays locked on in the DZ. Reads attackers and diffuses plays both eliminating space and with fast reaction speed. Maybe not a draft pick this go-around, but maybe he ends up with enough offence and puck skills next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 31st, 2021

Red Deer Rebels vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

Mayo's solid. NHL solid? Not convinced, but he could be worth a draft pick. Simple with the puck like Weir, but he makes his plays faster than Weir. He recognizes options before getting the puck and executes immediately. Joins the rush at the times. DZC needs some tweaking (too aggressive), but he's a physical player with some details while defending the rush (angle, drive wide, force dump-in or pivot early and angle). Doesn't activate and he's too basic from the point. Needs to use space better, although he did on one occasion. Perhaps

not on our board, but I could see him getting picked.


**Mitchell Brown:** October 26th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Barring an offensive explosion, Hunter Mayo's probably too basic to become an NHL draft pick. He's quite physical defensively, and usually keeps plays to the outside. But he's too passive and reactive to bring defence to the NHL. Skill is simple, hindered by poor decision-making and habits. He rarely takes passes in motion, never uses the inside, and doesn't show any handling ability or deceptiveness. Not a pick at this stage.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 23rd, 2021

Brandon Wheat Kings vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Mayo had a couple of solid rush defence sequences, but that was about it. He's a basic player without notable tools. He takes the right point shots, makes the right passes, and makes positive reads defensively. He's inconsistent in reading pressure, can't manipulate, and never activates. The result is a player who rarely makes the best play. Doesn't look like a draft pick. 

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# LUKE MITTELSTADT

D | MADISON CAPITOLS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JAN. 22, 2003  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT

1%	1%	0%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	60	19	36	55

> Committed to Univ. of Minnesota

## Scouting Report

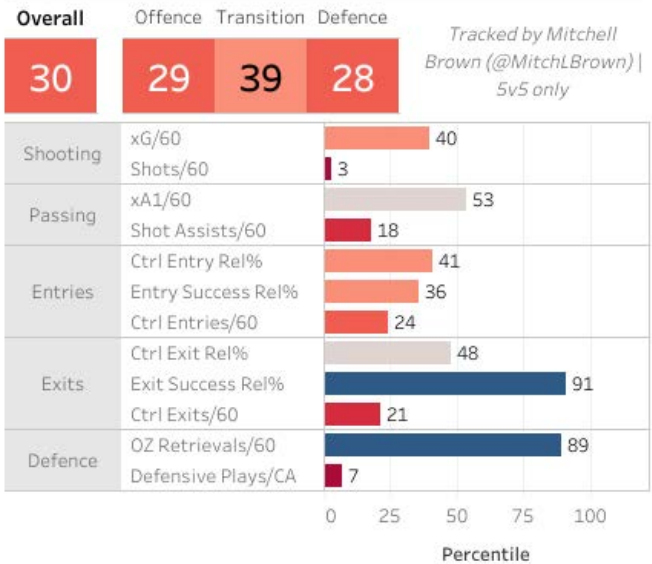
Three standout years at Eden Prairie and a short, but effective USHL stint weren't enough to get Luke Mittelstadt drafted last year. After making the USHL First All-Star Team while posting 55 points, Elite Prospects' 87th-ranked prospect for the 2021 Draft should hear his name called this time.

But it's not the point-getting ability that immediately stands out when watching Mittelstadt; it's the rush defence. "He builds backwards momentum with c-cuts, angles attackers, and times his engagements," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote. "Kills a lot of attacks by disrupting the inside of the attacker's stick without over-extending." While he doesn't get a ton of stops in the neutral zone, he's one of the best in-zone play-killers across the CHL and USHL.

Last season, Mittelstadt's projection was largely based on his breakout passing. That hasn't quite translated to the USHL, as Brown explains: "Too many passes straight ahead; there's little cross-lane or inside lane use to his breakouts, even when given space. [He] prefers to enter a glide when evaluating his passing options."

Throughout the season, Mittelstadt's breakouts improved, as did his activation. He takes pucks in-motion, then makes a quick play. While he's too dependent on point shots, he shows legitimate flashes of off-puck instincts to get scoring chances

Games Tracked: 5 | Minutes Tracked: 40.6



and skilled playmaking when he activates from the point.

Mittelstadt tends to play quite straight-forward with the puck and passive without it, at least offensively anyway. His strides and pivots also lack power, which could limit the effectiveness of his defensive game moving forward.

He's an uncertain bottom-pairing projection, but the University of Minnesota, an activation, east-west passing-heavy environment, should bring out the best in him.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 30th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

The most encouraging viewing I had of Mittelstadt this year. Beat a couple of times when defending the rush, but mostly kept it tight and angled attacks. Stride requires work, but he's fluid when moving backwards, using heel pushes to manage distance and reducing the need for crossovers. On breakouts, he cutback to escape pressure rather than throwing the puck up the boards - a lot more patient. He still does much of the same frustrating stuff from the point, like needless point shots. But he showed some playmaking and activation. Nothing nuanced, but enough to work Mittelstadt back into draft discussion. Maybe a late-rounder here, based on the rush defence and transition skill.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Mittelstadt has mostly positive touch habits: he moves on pass receptions and tries to fake out incoming pressure. But he settles for low-quality plays time-and-time again. He throws pucks away off retrievals, in open-ice, and from the point. He could manipulate defenders, but he often doesn't. Away from the puck, he looks a lot better. He proactively activates to fill space and become a shooting threat. He kills rushes in largely projectable ways. A solid off-puck defender too: he scans and eliminates but rarely overextends. Could be a late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Chicago Steel vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

If Mittelstadt had any confidence with the puck on breakouts, he'd be an easy pick as a re-entry. Instead. The projection mostly comes down to rush defence and the odd flash in the offensive zone. The rush defence looks projectable: he builds backwards momentum with c-cuts, angles attackers, and times his engagements. Kills a lot of attacks by disrupting the inside of the attacker's stick without over-extending. His pivots remain a problem, but it's easier to accept when he's killing plays like this. From the point, he occasionally works play to the inside, shows some vision, and uses space before shooting. Until he decides to just blast low-percentage plays with any thought. He's not a pick this year, but the odds of him becoming an NCAA free agent signing seem high. He's solid.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 5th, 2022

Madison Capitols vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Mittelstadt had the odd moment, stepping into space before firing or making a projectable stop in the neutral zone. His game isn't advanced and lacks creativity. Too many passes

straight ahead; there's little cross-lane or inside lane use to his breakouts, even when given space. Prefers to enter a glide when evaluating his passing options. In general, his game would benefit from more aggression - whether that's jumping into the play or eliminating his check faster. Pivots and skating are weakness; he was beat on the pivot a couple of times because he pivots late and doesn't load his push off leg. Didn't look like a draft pick, but his numbers are eye-popping.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 8th, 2021 -

Youngstown Phantoms vs. Madison Capitols - USHL

Mittelstadt was a low-volume player in this game. Not many touches, and the ones that he had were mostly simple plays. Created a scoring chance by pinching and sending a backhand pass to the inside. In open-ice, he looks for teammates cross-lane and had the skill to connect, even if he lacks pace. Times his defensive engagement and doesn't over-commit. More activation and confidence with the puck are necessary to become a draft pick this year. Skating improvement will help, too. Wide recovery with limited ankle flexion.

**J.D. Burke:** September 24th, 2021

Madison Capitols vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

I really wanted to see a lot more from Mittelstadt this weekend than I did. Some of the usual hallmarks of his game were ever-present -- the point activations, the end-to-end rush attempts, etc. -- but nothing ever really came of those rush plays. Granted, I missed his goal on Thursday, and for all we know, that's the play where it all came together. For the most part, a lot of ineffectual rush plays, most of them kept to the outside. Found myself pretty impressed with Mittelstadt in the defensive zone, for the most part, but his habits come and go. When he keeps his feet moving, he's an awesome defender in space. Late in shifts, he starts to lunge, stops moving his feet, and takes penalties accordingly. Skating looked a bit off. Recovers wide, his hips flair, shin angles all wrong. Could've had a better weekend.

**Daniel Gee:** April 17th, 2021

Lincoln Stars vs Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Strong showing in around 15 minutes of TOI. I came away with a much better opinion of Mittelstadt's shot. His weight-transfer and downforce are still a bit of an issue, but he scored a wonderful goal off the right-hand circle. Arms unblocked, snapped through his wrists, and placed top corner. He took a large quantity of low, rebound oriented shots through traffic. Mittelstadt also had a string of high end passing sequences while exerting sustained pressure. He completed a couple of crossbody, no look pass off the



point. In the second Mittelstadt tee'd up a perfect pass into a teammates wheelhouse for an open net one-timer (that was missed). Really good job working the point and pinching to keep cycle plays alive and operated well under tight forechecking pressure.

Mittelstadt had more issues defending transitional attacks. He makes good decisions in terms of when to pivot, but the lack of hip integration into his stride limits his knee bend means that he has to be super proactive in fast transitional breaks. He guided a few transitional attacks wide, typically playing man-to-man coverage as the broke down the boards. His toughest shift came in the second period. First he missed a pokecheck and allowed an attacker to drive the slot. Later in the shift, he faced a 2-on-1, lunged to block the crosscrease pass, and missed, resulting in a goal against.

**Daniel Gee:** April 4th, 2021

Eden Prairie High vs Maple Grove High - USHS-MN

So, Mittelstadt played... most of this game, which also went to overtime. Eden Prairie's reliance on him amounted to a ton of puck touches, transitional defending plays, and essentially playing every other shift. In totality, Mittlestadt was excellent in this game, recording three assists, activating in highlight reel fashion at times, and displaying translatable defensive habits.

Mittelstadt is a 4 to 4.5 grade skater, but even with this deficiency, he vastly overcomes mobility issues with his decision-making and proactiveness. He put on a clinic defending the transition in this game. His gap was suffocating, his deci-

sions to be aggressive almost always paid off, and he actively pushed attackers to the outside lanes and finished them with physicality. The habits here are immense; he guides and prods with his stick, disrupts the release of opposing shots, keeps his feet steady after c-cutting to get lateral positioning, and protects the slot at all costs. The processing is so quick. Out of the many stops, his biggest came in overtime; he made a huge pokecheck play while defending the transition, which went the other way and led to Carter Batchelder's overtime goal. He also had a huge open ice hit in the second after he stepped up to halt a transitional play. Mittelstadt also showed some great habits while defending under sustained pressure foremost, his ability to read developing plays and proactively moving to make defensive stops. In the first, he read a far board to right-hand circle pass, proactively moving to deflect the shot-pass. He is definitely a weaker defender under sustained pressure, though. In the third, he was on for a goal against after he was passive while defending a cross-crease pass. A similar play also occurred at the end of the first on the penalty kill; he failed to stop a cross-crease pass — just a bit late getting his stick in the lane. Where his skating catches up to him is on puck retrievals — they can be a bit of an adventure at times. I also worry about his four-way mobility and stop and start under sustained pressure -- he reads developing plays and activates to stop them but I don't think he can explode from a stop position to make a major difference. Closing space was an uphill battle in this game.

Offensively, Mittelstadt really put his mark on this game with his transitional passing; he hit teammates in stride,



from distance, and facilitated Eden Prairie's high octane rush attacking. There were examples of one-touch passing which added to the quickness in which he transports the puck. Mittelstadt pops into the mohawk to add some lateral mobility and is great at using the boards for bank passes. He manipulates on his transitional carries, shifting his weight and driving his shoulder down to protect the puck and beat F1's -- not sure if he will be able to do this at higher levels. In the first he faked to the backhand on an entry, driving to the net for a high-danger stuff play -- wonderful effort. He will need to carry the puck more laterally. He activates off the blueline as well, getting to shooting positions deeper in the offensive zone -- his shot appears to be bit below average due to the lack of power he generates through his weight transfer and downforce on his stick. Two of his assists were off of sustained offensive pressure shifts; he facilitated well to Blake, Holt, and Batchelder, who were a menace in this game.

**Daniel Gee:** January, 16th, 2021

STMA vs Eden Prairie High - USHS -MN

Mittelstadt recorded two-assists in a relatively positive outing against STMA. Great decision-making and pro-level habits allowed Mittelstadt to be a force for Eden Prairie.

Mittelstadt's defensive game was built based on his pivoting and ability to read developing transitional and sustained pressure plays. He was assertive, angling/guiding transitional threats wide, finishing them along the boards on his chances. He timed activations well, recognizing secondary threats, tying up sticks between the dotted lines, effectively limiting STMA on their possessions. He incorporated body-manipulations on retrievals, shoulder and head faking to shake aggressive forecheckers. The adaptability that he possesses blends so nicely with his ability to pivot his body quickly to face puck carriers or move into optimal puck-protection scenarios.


The pro habits continued in the offensive zone. I liked Mittelstadt's large-ice maneuverability on transitional carries in this game -- he easily cut through STMA's transitional defenders in the neutral zone, allowing for many clean entries and passes into the offensive zone -- not sure this translates to higher levels though. His first assist resulted from a successful opponent-guide to the boards, and a long, cross-rink outlet up the far boards. Another stand out play

occurred in the third, where he created a turnover with an aggressive attack on the red-line; Mittelstadt was able to start a 3-on-1 rush, passing to his left wing, before getting the pass back as he drove through the slot -- resulting in a high-danger chance and more sustained pressure. While exerting sustained pressure, he constantly moved pucks from the boards into the dotted-lines, setting up an umbrella attack.. He is a solid facilitator, deferring to pass to his wings for one-timed chances. He identified backdoor teammates and passed through layering well. Mittelstadt isn't too proficient on his backhand -- so many of his attempts failed to connect due to power and precision issues -- can be inefficient. His glaring deficiency comes in the form of his shot -- his body was so arched back as he shot one-timers, reaching back in his stance to make contact.

Mittelstadt's skating is probably a 4.5 tool grade. His edges are great and he can create some power through his 90-degree knee bend and quick extensions. Linear crossovers are a major part of his transitional carries, but his mechanics can start to waiver as his shifts extend. His stop-start is another deficiency -- he lacks explosiveness under no momentum. The skating worries me; pace in the NCAA might be an issue. Extremely intriguing first viewing for me.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 28th, 2020

Lincoln Stars vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Mostly a solid game from Mittelstadt, especially in transition. Quick outlets up the boards started the offence, but it was his ability to take and make passes in motion that really stood out. He identified his outlet before receiving the puck, then took the pass in motion, and quickly passed to his teammate in motion. A bit of off-puck activation, including one sequence down the boards where he tried to throw the puck back across the slot. His skating's going to be interesting to watch going forward. His shin angle is just about there, but his hips don't follow whatsoever. He's constantly on his toes as a result, and his strides don't really have much push off, more like a swipe of a credit card or something. He doesn't have much small-area separation ability, and he fell behind opponents in transition. Recovers too wide and doesn't generate any power. Not sure if he looked like a draft pick, but it's always hard to evaluate HS players in the USHL. 



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# DAVID MORAVEC

D | BK MLADÁ BOLESLAV

HEIGHT 6'0"

D.O.B. SEP. 18, 2003

WEIGHT 190

SHOOTS LEFT

14%

2022 XLS

9%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

0%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.47

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
Czechia	57	12	38	50

## Scouting Report

For most of the season, David Moravec was playing good minutes on BK Mladá Boleslav's blue line, showing that he can hold his own against professional competition. The points never really came, but the flashes of breakout and offensive ability were there.

"I like the way he skates, he is one of the better prospects from Europe in skating," Elite Prospects Czechia and Slovakia regional scout Marek Novotný wrote in a March 10th game report. "He can carry the puck up the ice with solid speed and manoeuvrability."

His mobility is his biggest asset. He can walk the blue line, outpace the opposition, and stretch passes to teammates,

but the finishing touch on his play was absent this season. Moravec's shot isn't threatening enough to pierce through defenders and beat goalies cleanly. All he can hope for right now is to shoot for rebounds.

His defensive game is a work in progress. Although we liked his effort and his attempts at mapping attackers away from the puck this season, engaging opponents on the boards and picking them up as they drove the net proved particularly difficult for him. Adding strength will alleviate some of the issues, but for him, it's also a matter of technique. He has to learn to move ahead of the play to not find himself in a disadvantageous position in a battle.

## Game Reports

**Marek Novotny:** April 3rd, 2022

HC Oceláři Třinec vs. BK Mladá Boleslav - Extraliga

Playoff game and against one of the best clubs in the Czech Republic. David Moravec, even with the low ice time, was quite good considering the level of the game and his age. He attempted a nice long-stretch pass, which didn't work out, but he showed how he thinks. Moravec can control the blueline well. Again, there was a problem with being more aggressive in the defensive zone, not scanning enough and not guarding his opponent well, and the opponent scored.

**Marek Novotny:** March 12th, 2022

HC Škoda Plzeň vs. BK Mladá Boleslav - Extraliga

David Moravec's performance with such a low ice time was interesting. I like the way he skates, he is one of the better prospects from Europe in skating. He can carry the puck up the ice with solid speed and maneuverability. He also used his stick well and made some nice pokechecks. He needs to work on his defense, be tougher and watch the space around him - scan more. Moravec can be a great pick in the late rounds.



**Marek Novotny:** September 19th, 2021

BK Mladá Boleslav vs. Bílí Tygři Liberec - Extraliga

David Moravec started the game well. Thanks to his relatively good range, he was able to get the puck to his teammate in a difficult situation when he pushed the puck between the opponent and the boards. Once again he showed his ability to be involved offensively and create chances. For example, by quickly driving into the offensive zone and making a quick and accurate pass to set up a

quality scoring opportunity. He was quite aggressive, not afraid to play physical. Moravec made a lot of accurate passes. He disrupted the play in the neutral zone. He showed incredible speed in the second period. Moravec is not afraid to send a long crossing pass across two zones. I like that Mladá Boleslav included him in the PK unit. Again, I liked Moravec a lot as a pick in the later rounds of the draft, but his skating makes him a very interesting pick. P

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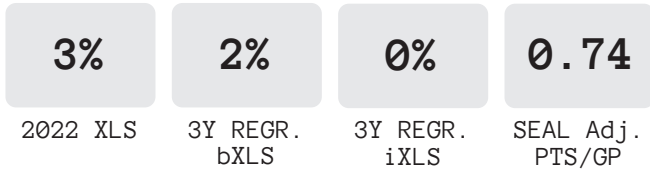
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# MAXIM MURANOV

F | CALGARY HITMEN

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. JUN. 2, 2004  
WEIGHT 168 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	68	19	10	29

## Scouting Report

While Maxim Muranov's stat line doesn't command one's attention, his penchant for flashy plays did.

"Muranov's hand speed stands out," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in one of his game reports. "He pushes pucks through and around defenders faster than they can react." Shoulder shakes and head fakes set up his best moves, making the defender freeze before he attacks his desired space.

While Muranov's not a consistent passer, he shows flashes of what could be. The handling skill feature in his slip passes through pressure and hook passes around it. Where many players push plays forward, he cuts back, then attacks the middle.

Wildly inconsistent lower body flexion limits his quickness and stability. As a result, he's most confident in a controlled glide, but such reliance on a wide, slow base kills many of his best ideas before they start. But as he gets stronger, the skill should feature more regularly.

Similarly, Muranov's an engaged puck pursuer, using a seemingly endless motor to push the puck carrier to the perimeter, grab steals, and force clearances. However, he's

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 13th, 2022

Red Deer Rebels vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

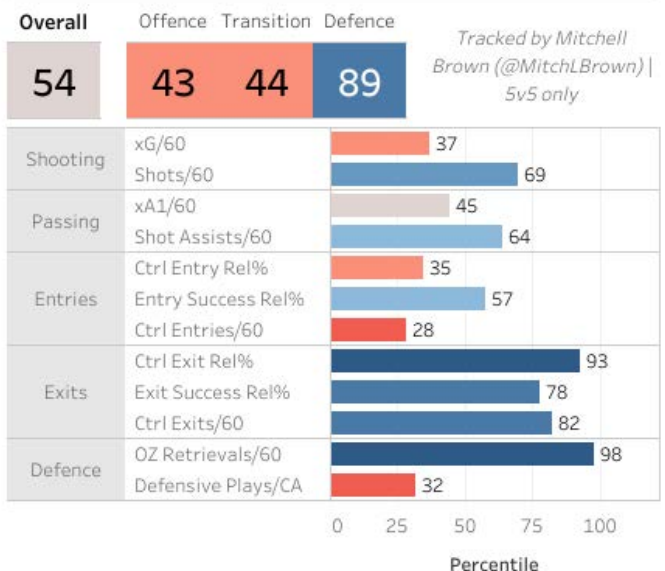
Muranov has hands and that's about it. He tries to deke through players but his flailing feet and wildly changing depth limits his effectiveness. Lacks quickness. In the offensive end, he makes basic plays. Everything comes from his inside edges and he doesn't create advantageous situations. No board game or defence. He's a fun junior player but I don't see NHL potential.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Calgary Hitmen vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

Muranov had a solid game. He's reactionary and late to

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 76.9



a reactionary player across the ice, meaning that his effort is often for nothing.

Still, Muranov has some upside through the hand speed, motor, and playmaking flashes. He's likely a depth player. First, he must start scoring in the WHL.

read plays much of the time, but he's not disengaged. He's always working. Took pucks off the boards and tried to drive the middle. Won races and got in the way of clearances. Not a transition player or playmaker, lacking vision, adaptability, and passing skill. He's not a pick but he could become a solid WHLer in time.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 15th, 2022

Calgary Hitmen vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

A lot more proactivity from Muranov in this game. He anticipated passes, angled out plays, and took good supporting position across the ice. He found himself inside the slot with space a couple of times. Still ends up chasing too often,

but his motor is admirable. Gives himself a chance on plays. Don't see any playmaking or notable puck skills beyond hand speed. Lacks a board game. Probably not a pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 20th, 2022

Saskatoon Blades vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Muranov's hand speed stands out. He pushes pucks through and around defenders faster than they can react. But his awareness is limited. He doesn't scan enough and he's late to react to the play around him. He misses pass receptions because he doesn't expect them. He's always chasing play. Lacks adaptability – when he decides on a play, he goes through with it, even if the environment changes. It's most visible in transition, where he dumps the puck in when given space and tries to force plays through defenders when not. He's a worker but the lack of awareness hinders his defensive impact. Feet are everywhere and he lacks stability. Don't see the NHL upside here.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Winnipeg Ice vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Top-line duty for Muranov. Mostly a nothing performance, but his playmaking was decent enough. A couple of short

range passes to set up shots. No overdangling this time. He distributed at the right times. Inconsistent scanning, but he brings some energy to the forecheck. Very inside edge, low-speed speed dependent to create. Not much of a transition threat or defensive player (beyond physicality). Nothing worth drafting, but perhaps he reaches another level soon.


**Mitchell Brown:** February 6th, 2022

Regina Pats vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Muranov was forechecking hard. Disrupted a lot of plays just on effort alone. The stride lacks serious refinement and his chase is just puck pursuit. Some shooting skill for WHL standards, but didn't see any other noteworthy ability. Lacks a short-range passing game and doesn't show much vision. Didn't look like a pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 2nd, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

All hands. Muranov has some tricks in his bag. He loves to feint the defender first, but everything runs through his inside edges. Overall, he's a very limited player. Movement, passing, and reads were all below-average. Lacks depth, doesn't use his teammates, and doesn't scan with any regularity. 

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Rank



Grade



Skating



Transitions



Hands



Tracking



Post



Depth

# TYLER MUSZELIK

G | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. JUL. 1, 2004  
WEIGHT 194 CATCHES LEFT

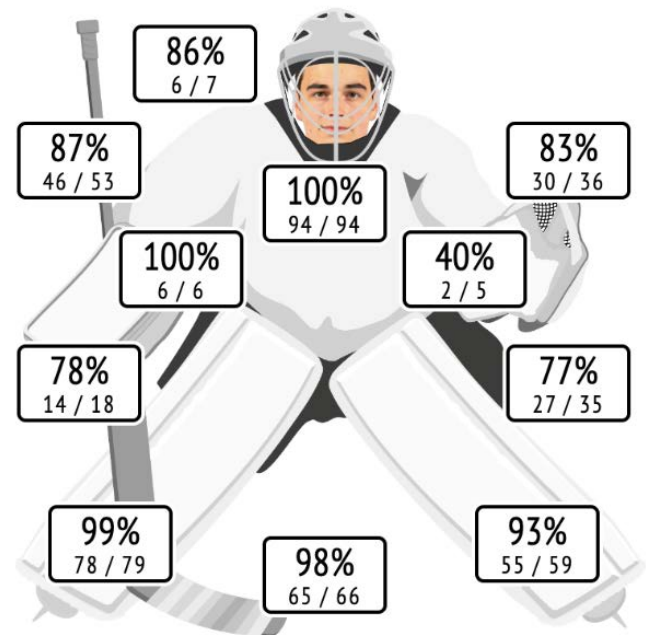
LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
USDP	35	2.91	.900	2
USHL	16	3.17	.900	1

## Scouting Report

You could flip a coin to decide which of Dylan Silverstein or Tyler Muszelik to rank first on a team's draft board – chances are, depending on the week you pick to evaluate each of the two American-born prospects, you're going to pick the right order at some point either way. The two, despite boasting different styles and technical tendencies, sit nearly neck-in-neck in the prospect pool rat race heading into the June Entry Draft.

Muszelik plays like he's spent his entire life studying the Corey Crawford's and the Carey Prices of the NHL, rather than the Marc-Andre Fleury's and Jonathan Quicks. Always fast to adjust his angles but conservative in the magnitude of the adjustments, Muszelik thrives when he's able to play a game of predictions. He'd rather wait out an oncoming breakaway and stay on his skates to take away the top of the net, utilizing quick lower-body movement to turn away lower shots with his pads from his knees once he's figured out where the puck is headed.

While he's got far more control than Silverstein, though, he also lacks that extra little element of surprise to his



game that keeps his opponents on their toes; as his level of competition continues to get tougher in college and the pros, he'll potentially find himself struggling if he can't add some flexibility to his game.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# MATVEI NADVORNY

C | MHK DYNAMO MOSKVA

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. FEB. 17, 2003  
WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS LEFT

0%	0%	0%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
MHL	58	22	17	39

## Scouting Report

As Elite Prospects Russia regional scout Dylan Griffing wrote in a September game report, there's a distinct possibility that we overlooked Matvei Nadvornyy last season.

The Russian forward's game is based on his skating. His strong knee-bend and ankle flexion give him both speed and explosiveness, but it's really his agility that allows him to dominate opponents. He can open up his hips and his skates at the 10-and-2 formation to slip past or behind defenders and cut back in a new direction after they try to catch up to him. The way he receives pucks, in abrupt accelerations, allows him to constantly break through opposing defenders.

His skating also serves him defensively. He can catch up to opponents on the backcheck, steal the puck, and move it the other way quickly.

"I think Nadvornyy should've been a pick last year and he has taken the next steps in his development to become a top-caliber player in the league," Griffing wrote. "It's what he does at pace that really stands out, though, whether it be making passes or using skill and agility to bounce through traffic."

Our issue with Nadvornyy is that he struggled to create in other ways than his skating this season. He's very fast for the MHL, but his speed advantage will diminish rapidly as he rises in competition. He might find himself unable to generate as much offence against better competition, especially because the playmaking, while improving, remains inconsistent, as his lower numbers this season suggest.

## Game Reports

**Dylan Griffing:** December 18th, 2021

MHK Dynamo M. vs. MHK Dynamo St. Petersburg - MHL

I may have been off base about Nadvornyy's playmaking in my first viewing this year. He had eleven shot attempts in this game, resorting to shooting from less-than-ideal locations, especially off the rush. However, there was still playmaking in flashes. Just one shot assist in this one, but it did end up turning into a goal for Nadvornyy after he followed the shot and put away the rebound. Problem-solved through his hands and pace, driving play through the middle of the ice or cut-

ting inside from the flanks. Solid puck protection to hold off defenders while he crossed the dotted line and pushed for the netfront. Off puck routes were questionable at times, but that knack of getting open in space while absolutely flying, receiving the puck, and bursting through everyone was still very present. Again, some defensive plays came easy to him because of his pure speed. There's still clear areas of concern with Nadvornyy, but it's easy to justify why he is deserving of a draft pick this year.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 19th, 2021

SKA-Varyagi vs. MHK Dynamo Moskva - MHL

Not a lot going on in this one. Two primary assists, one being pretty nice, but overall his performance was limited. Played with his usual pace, bursted through the neutral zone, generated offense through passing. His usage of teammates has improved so much since last season. Even though he was struggling to generate individual offense, he kept play moving forward through his teammates, used his off-the-puck movement to get open in space and wait for a return feed.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 19th, 2021

MHK Dynamo Moskva vs. Krylya Sovetov Moskva - MHL

Nadvorny still struggles to be a problem-solver consistently, but he is getting there. Again, the playmaking stood out. He gets going to receive a pass in motion, takes smart routes, and then makes his plays while at that pace. Maintaining speed on his turns was an area of concern, as he got caught from behind a couple times because of it. Shot a lot more in this game, deceptive shot, good release, just not shooting from great areas or reading lanes. Definitely more of a playmaker than a goalscorer. Speed on the backcheck is so valuable and he has it in bunches. Quickly applying back-pressure, getting his stick on the puck, and generating turnovers. Still playing on the PK, where he is not great, but he turned the puck the opposite way and scored a shorty in this one. He looks so much better than last year. More positive off-puck movement patterns, the playmaking improvement, and his skating looks even better.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 11th, 2021

MHK Dynamo Moskva vs. Almaz Cherepovets - MHL

I think Nadvorny should've been a pick last year and he has taken the next steps in his development to become a top caliber player in the league. The playmaking ability that popped up in his game every once in a while is becoming more consistent and his passing this game was incredible. It's what he does at pace that really stands out, though, whether it be making passes or using skill and agility to bounce through traffic. Still makes some weird decisions (i.e. pulling a Blake Comeau on a breakaway), but his game is much more refined compared to last season, while still playing in a limited role for Dynamo. He made some nice defensive plays in this one, as well, and it really comes down to his speed. He had the ability to do this last year, he just never made the efforts outside of the offensive zone. Two primary assists in this game, both from sweet passes.

**David St-Louis:** January 20th, 2021

JHC Dynamo M vs. Sakhalinskije Akuli - MHL

Again, Nadvorny's game is purely based on speed and outskating. He aims to receive the puck already in flight and blast through the neutral-zone, past the line of defence, create odd-man rushes and score. It happened once this game. Otherwise, his rush patterns aren't manipulative or particularly clever. He sometimes attacks defenders at an angle, which gives him a choice of direction to beat them, but mostly tries to slip by them in the wide-lane. His skating is a huge plus. His strong form means he could add even more speed and his multiple crossovers could become even more dangerous, but I don't see how his game translates apart from that speed. He doesn't use teammates off the rush and is easily pushed off the puck or angled to the outside. What keeps me intrigued is the occasional playmaking flashes in the offensive zone, the passes to the slot and the second efforts on defence, where he uses his speed to hunt opponents and steals pucks. His game really needs to develop around his skating.

**David St-Louis:** December 27th, 2020

JHC Dynamo M vs. Russkie Vityazi - MHL

Nadvorny only tried to outspeed defenders the whole game. He tried to beat them wide on the walls and, away from the puck, to gun ahead of the line of defence to receive passes. He is speedy, probably a 5.5 skater on our grade, but not speedy enough to play that game in the professionals. His speed did generate a bit this game, however, as he managed a 2-on-1 with a teammate. He held on to the puck and feed it perfectly cross-ice for a tap-in that was missed. Otherwise, he made another pass from below the goal line into the slot to a teammate. Nadvorny checked out mentally a few times this game, defensively and offensively.

**David St-Louis:** December 22th, 2020

JHC Dynamo M vs. HC Kapitan - MHL

Nadvorny is an above-average skater. It's really his agility that pushes that grade past average; he can open up his hips at full speed, make outside edge mohawks, and slip behind defenders. He also has speed and explosiveness due to a strong knee-bend and ankle flexion. Nadvorny scored at the very end of the game by banking the puck off the goalie from below the goal-line -- kind of a hope play, but if it works, it works. I liked his off-puck game. Nothing elaborate, but he went to the net when needed and supported teammates by giving cross-ice passing options. Some good defensive efforts on the backcheck. All in all, I think Nadvorny is a long-shot NHLer -- his game is based on outskating -- but he is worth a pick due to that mobility.





Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

## JOSHUA NIEDERMAYER

D | PENTICTON VEES

HEIGHT 6'0"

D.O.B. FEB. 20, 2004

WEIGHT 201

SHOOTS LEFT

5%

2022 XLS

4%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

2%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.35

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
BCHL	43	4	14	18

> Committed to Arizona State Univ.

### Scouting Report

Joshua Niedermayer is the son of NHL legend, Scott Niedermayer. He has the same penchant for physical play as his father, too. For some teams, that NHL bloodline will matter a fair bit, too.

He's a stable skater, one capable of resisting hits and dishing them out when defending the rush or in zone. He cares about the defensive details, the positioning of his stick and himself relative to teammates, and about boxing attackers out of high-danger areas.

Joshua's athleticism will have to develop if he is to earn a role in the NHL at some point, however. His skating projects

as significantly below NHL average. His lack of knee-bend, ankle flexion, his wide recovery and clunky pivots prevent him from forcing him to play a very safe defensive game, to back up preemptively against the opposing breakout to not get caught out of position.

The defenceman also has a long way to go in terms of his ability with the puck, both in transition and in the offensive zone. He only scored 18 points in 43 games in the BCHL this season. He's a late-round project that NHL teams will have time to see develop as he's taking the college route, joining Arizona State University next season.

### Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 18th, 2022

Nanaimo Clippers vs. Penticton Vees - BCHL

A shutdown defenceman. That's what you could expect Niedermayer to become at the NHL level. The potential seems limited and I doubt he gets there still. He's physical, safe, conservative...The breakout passes were mostly missed, but he did get an assist making an evident pass to an open teammate in the slot in the second period. The stride is extremely wide, short in length, and lack flexion, although the knee-bend appears when he gets to speed.

**David St-Louis:** April 14th, 2022

Penticton Vees vs. Prince George Spruce Kings - BCHL

The skating needs a lot of work. The stance is high, barely any ankle flexion and not enough knee-bend. The pivots, especially, will get exposed at higher levels by faster and more manipulative attacks. There is not an NHL future for him if he doesn't improve the mobility. That said, he's solid on his skates, capable of resisting hits and dishing them. And he can also separate attackers from the puck with his stick or by cutting through their hands. He had some good ideas on breakouts, but a lot of his passes were intercepted. The best part of his game really seems to be the physicality.



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# FILIP NORDBERG

D | SÖDERTÄLJE SK J20

HEIGHT 6'4"

D.O.B. MAR. 5, 2004

WEIGHT 207

SHOOTS LEFT

9%

2022 XLS

5%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

3%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	45	19	21	40
Allsv.	9	0	0	0

## Scouting Report

Like many rangy defenceman, Filip Nordberg's technical game is a bit behind the curve. When he gets going, his straight-line speed allowed him to match most attackers in the J20 Nationell and even the HockeyAllsvenskan, but picking up that momentum and transferring it laterally proved more difficult for him this season.

Still, the occasional slick skating move gives us hope about his potential to push his mobility to an NHL level.

"He had sequences in the game where opened his hips and connected hands and body to manipulate the defence to deliver a pass to the slot for a scoring chance," Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin wrote in a January game report. "He had one or two sequences where

he was beaten on the rush. In those situations, he is not able to cover up."

Nordberg flashes playmaking skills. He pulls off passes under pressure that one wouldn't necessarily expect out of a defenceman with more of a stay-at-home etiquette. That said, he is more effective defensively than offensively. His large frame and long range allow him to close down the space of opponents, and his awareness, to do so proactively before they receive passes. He's also a fierce net-front defender and engager on the walls.

If he continues to improve his skating and makes the NHL, he'll probably play in a shutdown capacity near the bottom of some team's lineup.

## Game Reports

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 15th 2022

Södertälje SK vs. Brynäs IF - J20 Nationell

There is stuff to like about Filip Nordberg's game that should translate well. He is engaged in both ends of the ice and uses his reach and size to his advantage. He is quick and shifty on short distances and his cross overs in forward skating is quite slick. He can carry the puck as well as play his way through break outs. His decision-making is solid when it comes to puck handling as well as pinching. He closes gaps with his stick and delivers hits when he gets the chance to do so.

He had sequences in the game where opened his hips and connected hands and body to manipulate the defence to deliver a pass to the slot for a scoring chance. He also had an assist in the game where he shut down a player entering the neutral zone forcing him back to his own end where Filip won the puck and quickly delivered a pass to an open teammate in the middle who scored.

Defensively he shows awareness, he is quick to the boards to win the puck and he is strong in front of the net. He is aware of risk and covers the slot well. Offensively he likes to join the attack when opportunity presents itself for him even

though he mostly tends to be a stay-at-home defenseman.

The big weakness that pulls down his draft stock is his skating technique. In shifting from forward skating to backwards he is awkward and kind of slow. He had one or two sequences where he was beaten on the rush and in those situations he looks bad and is not able to cover up. In the speedy modern game you need speed in all directions to defend well and he needs to improve that part of his game if he is ever going to be successful at the highest level.

I would take a chance on him with a late pick, maybe in the fifth or sixth round. There is much to bet on and there are good parts in his skating ability too. I would rank him as an average skater rather than a bad skater.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 20th 2021

HV71 vs. Södertälje SK - Allsvenskan

Filip plays on the third pairing with regular rotation. He also plays some shifts on the PK.

This was a fast paced game and I made the same skating assessment as in the last game report. When he needs to shift directions he gets into trouble but the north-to-south skating speed is good. He will need to work on his edges and balance.

Filip moves his head well in both offensive and defensive situations. He is active in trying to figure out what to do and does not hesitate to move around in the offensive either to make a play. His mobility makes him strong defensively when he reads the situations right. He can shut down his own blue line with his speed and reach.

Filip shows confidence with the puck and controls it well and makes strong passes, but is not an offensive player.

Filip needs to be stronger in front of his net to be defensively effective at this level. He has trouble when the game is standing still and is not strong enough yet even if he has the size. With time he should be able to develop into a strong defensive defenseman though with bottom pair potential.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** September 8th 2021


Linköpings HC vs. Södertälje SK - J20 Nationell

Filip played on the top pair in Södertälje and was used in important situations. He had a solid defensive game.

Filip is a good skater, at least average in speed borderline to above average. North-to-south he has strong strides and good speed. He is quick on short distances and uses that well to shut down plays. He is not as smooth sideways and backwards but it is not a big issue for him either.

Filip has few offensive weapons with the puck, but his backend passing is good. He wants to move the puck and can both skate out with the puck as well as his way out on the breakouts.

I like how Filip reads the game defensively. He can use his size and skating to play with a tight gap and shut down his own blue line effectively. He also detects danger in his own end. With the puck, he plays a simple but often effective game.

Nordberg is strong on the puck and with his 6'4 and 210 lbs body he is strong in the corners and in front of his own net. With his size combined with defensive reads and mobility I see Nordberg as a bottom pair prospect and a good middle to late round draft pick in the upcoming draft. 

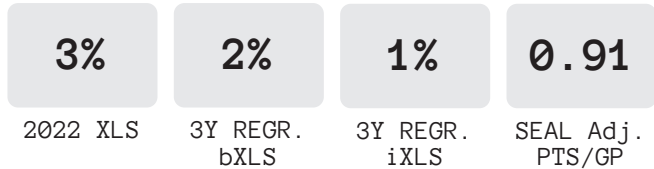
**"Nordberg flashes playmaking skills. He pulls off passes under pressure that one wouldn't necessarily expect out of a defenceman with more of a stay-at-home etiquette. That said, he is more effective defensively than offensively."**



# GAVIN O'CONNELL

RW | WATERLOO BLACK HAWKS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. FEB. 19, 2004  
WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	62	8	16	24

> Committed to Univ. of Minnesota-Duluth ('23-24)

## Scouting Report

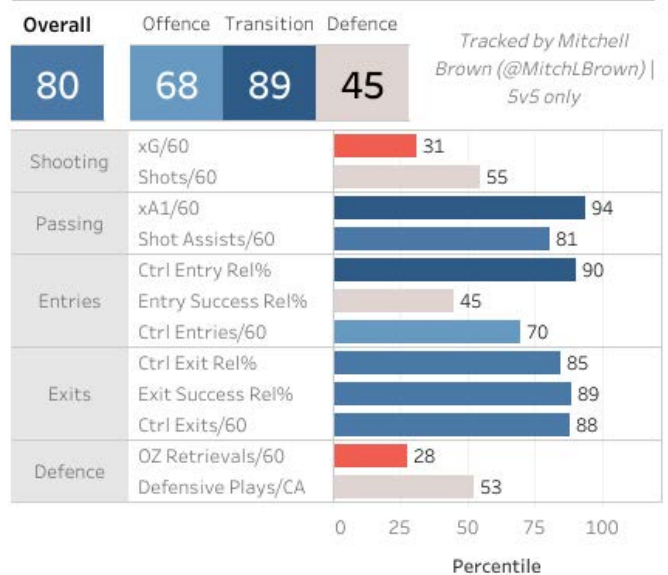
24 points in 62 games is terrifying for a draft-eligible forward, even on a low-scoring team like Gavin O'Connell's. But O'Connell's is yet another USHL forward with points that lag his impact.

O'Connell's a playmaker, combining vision, skill, and a give-and-go mentality to beat pressure in all three zones. Hand speed allows him to access tricky lanes, while head fakes and weight shifts leave defenders guessing. Along the boards, he slows down to wait for pressure, then passes. He slips pucks through defenders, over their sticks, and off the backhand.

As the season wore on, O'Connell improved his effectiveness in transition. Instead of relying on hand speed alone, he started using passes to beat defenders. He works pucks from the boards to middle through traffic, and delays to outwait forecheckers.

Skating explains O'Connell's lack of production, at least partly. He lacks projectable mechanics and quickness, unable to separate with strides, crossovers, and edge work. And while he's a creative playmaker, he lacks the extra layer of

Games Tracked: 12 | Minutes Tracked: 141.4



skill - manipulation and off-puck instincts - to consistently overcome the skating limitations. The stat-line suggests that NHL is out of reach for O'Connell, but his three-zone improvement and passing skill suggest a player who, if given plenty of time and development, could surprise.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Omaha Lancers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

O'Connell connected with two of the best passes of the game: an intentionally high, but soft saucer pass to use an otherwise inaccessible lane and a step-in cross-slot pass

with a shot fake. Everything else I've written about his game this season applies, same limitations and strengths. He's probably not a pick this year, but I appreciate his game. There's upside here.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

The skating is really limited, but O'Connell still finds ways to impress. Connected with a quick pass from the boards for a goal after following the play. Rarely positioning himself in prime scoring location, he instead prefers to find space on the strong side or along the boards to become a passing option and then quickly move the puck. It helps offset some of the skating limitations at this level. Forced into the odd poor shot or pass because of the lack of foot speed, and he's not a manipulator. Overall, he's become a smarter player this season. But to make the NHL, the skating has to take several leaps forward (more ankle flexion, hip engagement, keeping his chest up, altering stride mechanics, developing outside edges) along with the addition of more planning and problem-solving ability.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

O'Connell's puck skills continue to shine, albeit with the skating limitations I've written about so much already. He fakes out defenders, then tries to work around them. A crafty curl-and-drag wrister, where he curled the puck through a defender's feet, highlighted how he combines the handling with shooting. Connected with a precise pass through three defenders for a chance. It's clear that he identifies the high-value plays, but the issue remains getting there consistently. I like his growth as a give-and-go distributor in transition, but I'm not sure if it's enough.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

I don't see the same playmaking skill and creativity I saw earlier in the year. Perhaps it's the result of his skating. Can't separate at all, and he's not advanced at inverting pressure. In a way, he'd benefit from playing slower: cutback, reset, and delay. No creativity or off-puck ability shown in this game. Didn't look like a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

O'Connell's limited by his mechanics, not by his brain. He can't properly shift his weight, leading to turnovers when he tries to deke and a weak shot. Doesn't rely on outracing defenders, but instead of delaying, he tries to beat them with his puck skills. It doesn't work in the USHL, a league filled with poor skaters. To his credit, he shows a lot of passing creativity: cross-lane, in-motion, backhand, and slip passes. If he's not pressuring breakout attempts, he anticipates the pass and waiting just outside the lane to get the interception. Fun player, but mechanics likely prove too limiting.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 28th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

O'Connell has handling and playmaking skill. That might be it. Neither are standout elements. His hands are limited by his feet – he can't shift his weight properly and always things in a glide. The playmaking is also limited by his feet, as he can't separate from pressure or manage contact. He works without the puck – his second-effort directly created a goal. But I don't see an adaptable or diverse player here, and he's not a strong off-puck attacker either. Probably not a pick, but he'll have an offensive breakout soon.

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Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Alright, I think see why O'Connell doesn't score. The skating's limiting, even at this level. He can't separate, and without separation, he doesn't know what to do. He plays a puck-dominant game, and if he's not getting the puck, he's not contributing. And his off-puck movement means he struggles to get the puck consistently (he overskates space). Nothing about this performance suggested an impending breakout or an NHL prospect. But the flashes of skill remain intriguing enough.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 10th, 2021

Des Moines Buccaneers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

O'Connell's stride requires significant work. It's more limiting at this level than I previously thought. He can't separate from opponents, unless he's escaping with hands and a cutback along the boards (which won't work for him at the next level because of his lack of depth). He strides behind him, finishes his strides with an exaggerated kick, and has an upper body that sways but never loads his stride. In one sequence, he recognized the right space but his feet wouldn't allow him to get there in time for the pass. One skilled pass from the boards to the inside on the backhand, and he's a plus on breakouts because he always looks for the inside lane option. He's clearly an intelligent player who works. I like his game. But it's tough to imagine an NHL outcome at this stage.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 20th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

O'Connell isn't scoring for reasons I can't figure out. The skating's the obvious flaw, but it's not crippling at this level. He consistently gets open in the right places with timed movements, then kicks the puck out to a teammate in an even better position. Finds teammates behind him, ahead of him, or along the perimeter. Dekes through pressure through feints and hand speed, but he'll lose a disproportionate amount of his handling skill at the next level without skating improvement. Consistently looks cross-ice for breakout and

entry passes, able to connect immediately or delay for his teammate to catch up. The profile doesn't suggest a draft pick, but his play in this first three viewings did.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Another solid performance from O'Connell. It's the handling that stands out the most. He constantly changes pace and throws out feints. Even if his setups aren't perfect from a technical standpoint, he consistently beats defenders from the deceptiveness and information overload. The hand speed doesn't hurt, either. A few steals via a well-timed stick check, and he's generally quite proactive in his defensive positioning. Looks for cross-lane passing options sometimes, but often ends up getting stuck along the perimeter before running out of space. More off-puck movement in this game, consistently finding space between checks, including for a scoring chance. Set-up a goal after getting a steal, then working give-and-go, finished with a pass into the slot through a defender. The skating's problem, lacking ankle flexion, explosiveness, and projectable quickness. Perhaps a fringe draft pick.

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**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

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Quiet game from O'Connell, apart from one nifty handling sequence. His upright, wide skating posture locks into these straight-line rushes. He can't separate, and while he's a skilled handler, he can't shift his weight or change directions. His motor on the defensive end is a plus. He's disruptive for a player who constantly chases. In transition, looks for cross-lane passing options – emphasizing that will help overcome the mechanical limitations. Didn't look like a draft pick.

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Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# CAMERON O'NEILL

F | MOUNT ST. CHARLES ACAD 18U AAA

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. JAN. 24, 2004  
WEIGHT 194 SHOOTS RIGHT

3%

2022 XLS

2%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

1%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
18U AAA	62	57	76	133
USHL	4	1	1	2

## Scouting Report

Never heard of Mount St. Charles Academy? It's time to get in the know. Cameron O'Neill looks to be their fourth NHL draft pick in the past two seasons after Owen McLaughlin, Nate Benoit, and Joaquim Lemay.

With Mount St. Charles, O'Neill was the play-driver, if his rather absurd stat-line didn't already make that clear. He powered past defenders and dangled through what he couldn't outrace. His shooting game did most of the damage, but he also showed passing skill: one-touch plays, slip passes, backhand plays under pressure, and a bit of deception to prolong lanes.

In the USHL, O'Neill's off-puck game stole the show. He popped into space at the perfect moments, finished his off-puck routes to create offence, and supported the play. Pre-scanned on retrievals to identify threats and options before touching the puck, then made quick passes to limit time

cycling. He combined pressure, positioning, and awareness to get stops on the defensive end, and showed the beginnings of a projectable physical game.

As expected for a prospect playing at a low level of competition compared to most, O'Neill's an inefficient player. Despite his passing skill, he forces passes that aren't there or throws pucks into spaces his teammates can't access. He's not a manipulator or best play creator, either. But that he doesn't rely on untranslatable foot and hand speed advantages like so many of his peers bodes well for his adjustment to the USHL and NCAA.

Right now, O'Neill's a collection of interesting skills and intelligence. He has NHL upside, likely as a bottom-six forward who brings shooting and off-puck play. That's an uncertain projection, given the level of competition.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Lincoln Stars - USHL

A quiet game from O'Neill, beyond more impressive off-puck play. He adapts his route according to the situation around him. Defensively, he disrupted a bunch of plays through pressure, positioning, and awareness. Whiffed on his best scoring chance of the game and forced a couple of passes that weren't there. Didn't look like a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 22nd, 2022

Lincoln Stars vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

More of an off-puck performance from O'Neill. He was timing his movements into space, presenting his stick, and getting inside positioning on defenders. Looks like there's some scoring upside when coupled with his shot. Skating looked rough, leaning back inside his crossovers and stumbling multiple times. He threw the puck away on two of



his breakout touches. Little in the way of passing except for a short-range saucer late in the game. Nothing too interesting in isolation, but when combined with the AAA viewings, it's clear he has NHL upside. Skill and off-puck intelligence.

**Daniel Gee:** April 16th, 2022

Sioux Falls Stampede vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

O'Neill was pretty controlled in this viewing, but had limited minutes in this game against the Stampede. O'Neill was able to score his first USHL goal early in the first. After a net front screen, O'Neill tracked a point shot, spun off of a planted defender and easily potted the rebound off his forehand. He almost always made off-puck shifts into the slot, waiting in high danger areas for teammate passes. He missed a sure goal from one of these areas in the second, missing the centering pass backdoor. O'Neill had one significant on-puck sequence, a far board cut inward allowed him to open a lane to find a teammate on the right-hand circle for a high danger chance. He accomplished a lot but appeared more as an off-puck supporter than an actual driver.

In transition, O'Neill has some obvious skill. His touch is pretty nice, taking pucks off his backhand and stringing in-stride passes to teammates. O'Neill slipped the puck a couple times, including a couple of one-touch plays. Scans on end-board retrievals and doesn't really throw pucks away. Not the most dynamic player in this viewing though.

Contributed defensively on a couple of sequences; was able to deflect a right-point shot with a great pressure pushing play. He made a major mistake in the second; while fighting for the puck on the far boards, he let his man escape the pile, leading to a goal against. O'Neill is probably too limited on the skating and handling side of the puck to be a pick for our board (100 players). His knee bend is lacking, he takes

extremely short steps in the crossover, and he has limited power as he pushes off. Also has a penchant for carrying the puck in front of his body. Hesitant to judge him too much as he is pretty adapted to USHL play already.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 2nd, 2022

Mount St. Charles Academy vs. South Kent - 18U AAA

Plenty of different skills on display in this game, although inefficiently. O'Neill shows shooting skill, playmaking, and handling skill. He strings together pass receptions, dekes, and shots. Manipulates with his skating, then passes to the inside. Made plays on the heels of defenders. He also blindly spun pucks into the slot and threw a bunch of passes to no one in particular. He doesn't try to outrace defenders, preferring to slow down – but sometimes ends up missing opportunities to create the best play. There's a physical side to his game, although he didn't show any tangible board skills. Not sure what to think of his game.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Mount St. Charles vs. Northwood School Prep - 18U AAA

Do I have any idea how to evaluate a player at this level? No. Was O'Neill good? Yes. He's a regular scanner, with and without the puck, which allows him to make plays off the walls and come up with solutions to failed plays. Mechanically, he's roughly average, but he's clearly intelligent. He supports the puck, anticipates pockets of space, and times his off-puck routes well. Uses give-and-gos, although many of his passes weren't even close to their target. Tried to deke through everyone without much success several times. From a creation standpoint, this was a shooting game. Nothing too interesting shot-wise. Need to watch more.

•P

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# ANDREW OKE

G | SAGINAW SPIRIT

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. MAR. 26, 2004  
WEIGHT 201 CATCHES LEFT

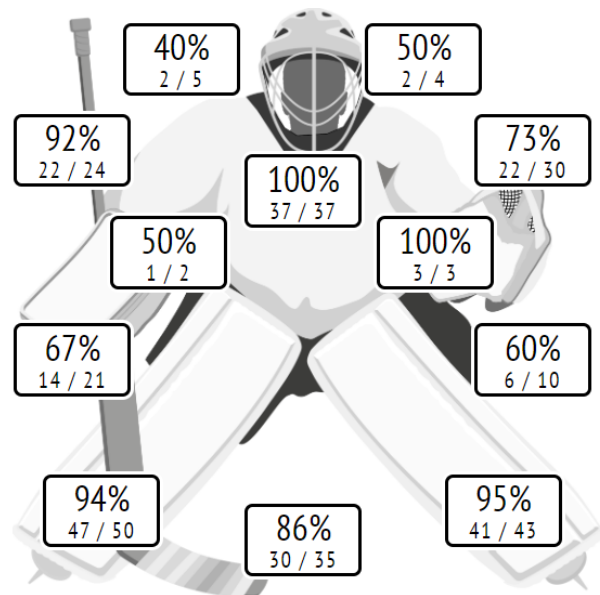
LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
OHL	36	4.63	.848	0

## Scouting Report

Where many of the goaltenders who are likely to hear their name called at this draft play a great technical game but struggle to shake their structure when the play breaks down, Andrew Oke thrives when opponents crash the crease. His puck-tracking around the crease is great, and it speaks to his instinctual ability to know when to put technique aside to make reaction saves.

Still, there are some kinks in his overall game for Oke to iron out. Like many OHL goaltenders, he missed out on an entire draft-minus-one because of the ongoing pandemic, and it shows. Oke struggles with relative positioning when he's faced with a skilled shooter from outside the hash marks, and he has to clean up some inefficiencies with his upper body positioning and hands.

If he can get his body in front of a puck well enough to even allow a minor rebound, that's all he needs; he's got a great grasp of spatial awareness in and around the crease, and it's clear that he did all the necessary legwork during the league shutdown to perfect the transition to messier parts of his game that so many goaltenders tend to fall apart when forced to use. But ultimately, he still has some major groundwork he'll need to cover when it comes to figuring out where he needs to be and how he needs to react on the simpler – but more surprising – plays that he can only learn during live game action.



There's a chance he'll be a much better prospect next season, so it wouldn't surprise us to see a team take a flier on Oke in the later rounds and hope he develops into a blue-chip goaltending prospect. But given his somewhat underwhelming game on the plays that really just shouldn't have led to goals, Oke may need to wait another year to hear his name called at the draft.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# DANIIL ORLOV

D | SAKHALINSKIYE AKULY

HEIGHT 5'8"

D.O.B. FEB. 9, 2002

WEIGHT 172

SHOOTS RIGHT

9%

2022 XLS

7%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

1%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

0.42

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
MHL	54	9	21	30

## Scouting Report

There is nothing in Daniil Orlov's game that screams NHLer at this moment. He's just so far behind the curve compared to the majority of draft-eligible players who are in consideration for our board.

He's agile, but not speedy or explosive. He can fire pucks and one-touch them to teammates, but don't expect him to create plays, even at the MHL level, because of his lack of

handling skills. His coaching staff mostly used him in defensive deployment, this season, due to his ability to close on opponents with his footwork and range. If a team decides to draft him, they will have a large project on their hands, the kind that comes with some pieces, but needs a lot of patience to figure out the assembly.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** March 7th 2022

Mikhaylov Academy vs. Sakhalinskije Akuly - MHL

I don't see an NHL player. Orlov is decently effective at this level because of the slow-pace, but I'm not sure his game holds up at a higher level because of both the processing and tool limitations. The skating is maybe his best attribute, but it still ranks as below-average-to-average to me.

**David St-Louis:** March 3rd, 2022

MHC Spartak vs. Sakhalinskije Akuly - MHL

Orlov is very far behind other draft-eligible prospects on our board, in about everything. The best part of his game was his defensive footwork in close-outs. He's smooth. The skating has other limitations in terms of speed and acceleration, and the puck handling is absent. Orlov has trouble making plays, even setting up shots well. He's purely a defensive defenceman who can make one-touch

rims to teammates. The tools limitations and the below-average hockey sense makes him an easy player to overlook at this point.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 16th, 2021

Sakhalinskije Akuly vs. SKA-Varyagi - MHL

The relegation system cannot come to the MHL soon enough. Orlov showed signs of a decent toolkit, but overall, nothing stood out enough to be a worthwhile prospect. East-to-West movement was good, clean crossovers and pivots, but he cannot move North-to-South. Rush defense was terrible, beat on his back foot, and no gap control to be found. Struggled hard against the forecheck and failed most of his breakout attempts. He picks his spots offensively well and picked up a goal and primary assist because of it, but the overall ineptitude off-the-puck overshadows all of that.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Puckhandling



Shooting



Hockey Sense



Passing



Physical

# ERIK PÅHLSSON

RW | HV71 J20

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. APR. 9, 2004  
WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS LEFT

7%	5%	3%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	45	19	21	40

## Scouting Report

Erik Pahlsson would make a fine late-round draft selection for any team willing to make that investment.

Most of the forward's tools project as NHL-calibre, but it's his handling skills that set him apart from other prospects in the J20 Nationell. He plays a supportive style of game. He's a constant passing option for teammates all over the ice. He attacks space and follows the system guidelines well.

"His passing is precise and his shot is decent too," Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin wrote in a January report. "I would like to see him manipulate more

but he is good at finding passing lanes through traffic and he finds plays quickly."

The biggest limiter of his potential is his physical play. Specifically, his tendency to shy away from contact. Although he'll occasionally make a sprint for the net, we worry about his ability to translate his complementary game to a North American setting, where he will have to not only support plays in open ice, but also on the walls. Learning to retrieve, win, and protect pucks is a must for him to broaden the scope of his professional career.

## Game Reports

**Jimmy Hamrin:** March 26th 2022

HV71 vs Frölunda HC - J20 Nationell

Pahlsson moves well and drives play. He is fast at this level and looks explosive but his skating technique will limit the room for further improvement. His puck handling at speed is not as impressive either, he could connect hands and feet better and become more offensively dynamic. When he skates at top straight line speed his hands look more stiff and the range of puck control is short. When he shifts pace, he can deke to attack the middle and be harder to handle. He takes charge though, working hard both offensively and defensively. He gives good puck support and he also attacks the middle often with the puck. He scored a goal on a brea-

kaway and looking at just this game it is no surprise that he has been so productive this season. Probably more of an SHL prospect, but you could definitely take a chance on Pahlsson in a late round. He has some offence, a competitive mind and good habits.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 30th 2022

Mora IK vs. HV71 - J20 Nationell

Pahlsson had a strong game driving his line. He played almost 17 minutes and had 8 shots and was very involved offensively.


Pahlsson is a slick and quick skater. His foundational technique is good and he can keep a high pace without using



much energy. His top speed does not stand out but he has the foundations to develop with muscle power in his legs. He is agile and can make quick turns.

His best assets are his puck skills. He has good control with soft hands. His passing is precise and his shot is decent too. I would like to see him manipulate more but he is good at finding passing lanes through traffic and the puck does not have to be long on his stick for him to make a play.

I like his game reading too. He makes good reads in both directions and plays a responsible two-way game. He supports puck carriers offensively and is a good passing option for defenseman down low. He backchecks and covers the middle well. With the puck he has good habits and plans well. He is not a strong driver of play and could show more competitiveness and drive.

The worst part of his game is his physical game. He plays soft and shys away from contact. He is not strong in puck battles and it limits his game. He is a long shot to make the NHL but has a chance to be a late round draft pick. The skill and senses are good. 

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Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# JAKSEN PANZER

F | SIOUX FALLS STAMPEDE

HEIGHT 6'4" D.O.B. FEB. 13, 2004  
WEIGHT 214 SHOOTS RIGHT

6%

2022 XLS

4%

3Y REGR. bXLS

1%

3Y REGR. iXLS

0.98

SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
NAHL	16	5	13	18
USHS-MN	27	30	31	61
USHL	18	3	5	8

> Committed to Univ. of North Dakota

## Scouting Report

For many High School prospects, their superior skill allows them to dominate without much effort away from the puck. When they step into the NAHL or USHL, breaking the selective motor habit becomes part of the adjustment. That didn't happen to Jaksen Panzer, one of this draft class's foremost workers.

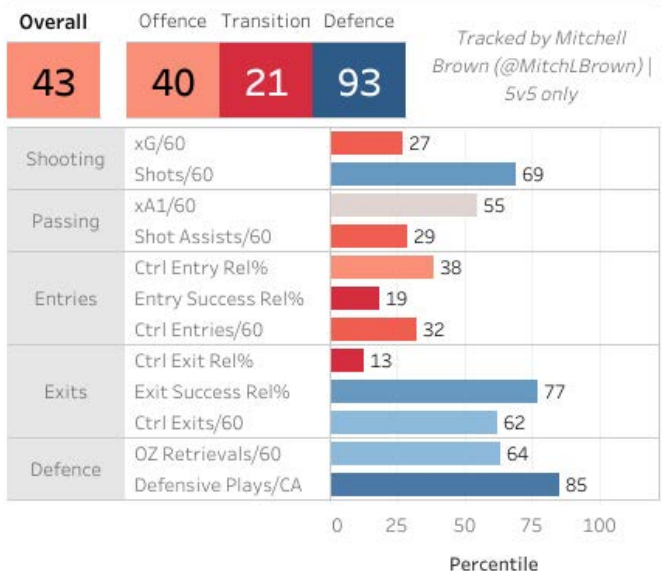
Panzer hunts down every loose puck with ferocity. He applies pressure on the puck-carrier non-stop, sometimes to the detriment of his own assignment. When necessary, he locks on his check and doesn't let go. And he's in the middle of every puck battle.

That motor drives Panzer's offensive game. He's always looking to force pucks to the net after winning a board battle. In open-ice, he sprints full-speed ahead, trying to outrace defenders into passing lanes.

While Panzer shows some shooting ability, passing skill, and off-puck instincts, the motor also works against him. "He's a straight-line, single-speed attacker who doesn't manipulate or deceive defenders," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a USHL game report. "Instead, he tries to force the puck through them - it never works."

Going forward, Panzer needs to move away from this

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 87.3



individual skill-based game. He lacks the skating form, quickness, and puck control to make this game work in the USHL regularly, let alone the NHL.

Solutions already exist in Panzer's game, flashing a more suitable give-and-go game in moments. Further developing his passing, skating, and puck skills could earn him a checking role in the NHL.

## Game Reports

Daniel Gee: April 16th, 2022

Sioux Falls Stampede vs Tri-City Storm - USHL

Panzer's minutes were a bit of a rollercoaster ride, until the

game became a blow out for Sioux Falls, leading to a lot of TOI as the game continued ( seven minutes TOI in the third). There seems to be a lot of adaptability from USHS to USHL.

Panzer actually looked better through normal deployment in the first period of the game. His motor is apparent right off the bat -- Panzer's recoveries are a bit wide, but he's always moving his feet and it works at this level. You see a lot of evidence of this in transition. In the first he harassed a puck carrier in the middle of the neutral zone, poke checking the puck away. He then tapped the puck past the last defender, upped his pace to create a breakaway and fired a weak shot below the goaltenders glove. Wonderful play. Panzer had another transition sequence in the first where he cut into the high-slot, fumbled the pass reception as he went to one-touch wrist the puck on net, the rebound hitting the endboards and converted at a sharp angle. Generally tried to float pucks through layers but struggled with execution. Gets off the walls constantly. Has one-touch ability in terms of passing. Most of Panzer's sustained shifts were on the power play -- planted on the right of the net. Failed a bunch of catch-and-release plays, delaying long enough for the goaltender to set -- pass receptions seem to be an issue? Activated and tried to work low-to-high on puck a couple times. Hip-pocket protection and some great stop-and-start plays. Seems like he can change directions on a dime.

Still extremely puck-focused, something that has translated from USHS. He can get lost in a lot of sustained sequences, just completely ignoring rotations. In the first, he just failed to cover secondary threats. Panzer still pushes pressure fairly well, especially on the point men. Scans occasionally when helping on the end-boards but he doesn't really implement the information (still makes a pass that ends up being a turnover). He's a pick based on the first period, not sure about the totality of his play throughout -- The scoring adaptability to this level is super encouraging.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Panzer had one play this game, a net drive out of the corner. He's an intelligent, hard-working off-puck player. Chases a bit, but he's consistently getting open inside space and supporting the puck. Touches were infrequent for no fault of his own. But he didn't do much with the ones that he had. He's not a manipulative player. No deception. No changes of pace or direction. Instead, he's a single-speed, single-lane attacker who handles and strides in sync. Once he's pushed to the outside, he stays there. Perhaps the give-and-go game from earlier resurfaces. To become a draftable prospect, he'll have to show more playmaking.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

With the puck on his stick for extended periods, Panzer doesn't look like much. He misses passing options, lacks quickness, and gets pushed to the outside. But when he keeps his touches short and focused on a give-and-go game, he shines. Immediately recognizes the next play and relocates to get open while staying aware of backpressure. Led directly to his assist, where used a give-and-go before cutting inside and pass cross-slot. Took a tricky pass, too. Mechanically, he's limited. Mostly an inside edges attacker with the puck in front of his body. No in-motion skills shown. But I like the ideas, especially for a HSer playing up on a weak team. Time to watch more.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Des Moines Buccaneers vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Panzer scored with a crafty far-side wrister, demonstrating some projectable mechanics (elbow up, creating downforce with lower body flexion). But I didn't see anything interesting in his game beyond that. He's a checker. Plays fast, attacks the net, wins races, and gobbles up loose pucks. But the details are lacking, whether that's consistently establishing body positioning or playing more of a give-and-go game. He's so focused on outracing defenders that struggles to gain the offensive zone, despite having a speed advantage in the USHL. Not a pick, but he could become something down the line.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Sioux Falls Stampede vs. Lincoln Stars - USHL

I appreciate Panzer's game. The motor, pressure, and desire to play physical could all make him a checker down the line. But he's barely break-even with the puck. Forces plays that aren't there. Misses teammates in better positioning. Doesn't have a give-and-go game despite not having the tools to play an individual game at this level. It's still early in his USHL stint, but I don't see how the current make-up of his game results in an NHL, and I don't see enough tools to bank on his game changing.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 23rd, 2022

Fargo Force vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

First USHL goal for Panzer, taking a shot-pass from Fleming for a tap-in. Often tends to overshoot the best pocket of space, but he stops at the net. With the puck, he works in straight-lines, one play at a time. He doesn't manipulate or deceive defenders. Instead, he tries to force the puck through them. It never works. His playmaking and transition game suffer as a result. To become an NHLer, he has to develop a

give-and-go game and tightening his off-puck movement, but he's always trying to outrace players. The motor's admirable, but the non-stop pressure only exacerbates his limitations. Even defensively, he tends to end up on the wrong side of the puck because he overcommits. I doubt he's a pick this year, but he could be something down the line.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 20th, 2022

Fargo Force vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Panzer's a checker. Plays fast, enters every battle with energy, and works hard on the backcheck. Non-stop pressure, sometimes to his detriment. With the puck, he's a straight-line, single-speed attacker who looks to outrace defenders into lanes. When it works, he shows passing skill and vision. When it doesn't, he turns the puck over. Lacks the mechanics and explosiveness to play this game in the NHL. He'll have to learn how to delay, use the triple threat, play off the heels of defenders. He does none of those things. I also don't see a particularly strong play supporter or off-puck threat. I don't see the upside in picking him, but there's an argument as a late-round gamble.


**Daniel Gee:** February 26th, 2022

Warroad High vs East Grand Forks High - USHS-MN

This game wasn't particularly close, Warroad High dominating puck possession for most of the game. In turn this meant limited touches for Panzer, who was a fairly hard worker in this game. The mismatch between teams affected Panzer's transition game primarily. He almost always works off-puck, defaulting the responsibility onto his linemates.

His habits are solid off-puck though; he crashes the middle lane, drives the net, and attempts to hop into passing lanes. On-puck, he is fairly proficient even with a lower volume of opportunities. On one shift he carried the puck out of the zone, spun off an F1, changed direction on his entry, and dropped his shoulder in an attempt to drive to the net (lost it in the corner). Can play the puck off of the first touch but overall I need to see more in other viewings.

In sustained pressure, Panzer possesses some positive habits. He regularly pops into shooting positions, stick set -- shot attempts are sometimes limited by a locked arm to his hip. His pace is heightened in this zone, especially as he chases in on retrievals. Give-and-go attempts, body positioning on end board crashes, some funnelling to the crease, and one-touch passing. He tended to take a lot of garbage sharp angle shots in this one. Failed to move the puck fast enough on some late power play opportunities (lack of pre-scanning). Probably not the best viewing to really evaluate but his individual tools weren't very separating in this one.

Panzer primarily covered Daimon Gardner in this game. He made a couple stops on him throughout, the best being a harassment play on the back check that created a turnover. In another sequence he helped guide Gardner to the end boards. Panzer is a fairly good pressure pusher, especially on point men. Very puck focused, however. In the third, he was puck watching, failed to occupy an obvious pass lane, and the sequence ended in a goal. Chases at times. Didn't look like a pick in this one, but as mentioned, the viewing was lopsided. 

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Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# MATTHEW PERKINS

C | HUMBOLDT BRONCOS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JAN. 21, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
SJHL	57	23	36	59

## Scouting Report

Matthew Perkins has the hockey sense to play in the NHL at some point, but his overall technical ability, especially his skating, will have to improve for him to get there.

Looking past his limitations, however, one can come to appreciate the forward's ability to move on the ice, especially without the puck. Perkins showed that he could anticipate plays this season and support them at the right time, speed, and pace. His awareness of the position of his teammates allowed him to connect plays rapidly to outpace the opposition in transition. And his poise enabled him to hold on to the puck to let those teammates get in the right position

before feeding them the puck.

"The high-stance skating affects his handling stability; the puck bounces off his stick quite often and he has to rely on large motion to move it around the opposition, but he does keep a relatively high awareness inside his moves," Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis wrote on March 11th, 2022.

Perkins is a fine selection in the latter half of the draft. He will get the time to develop his game on and off the ice at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. He should become an effective forward for the program in the second half of his NCAA career and leverage speed improvements into an NHL career.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 9th, 2022

Flin Flon Bombers vs. Humboldt Broncos - SJHL

The skating lacks ankle flexion. The high-stance limits agility and speed, but he makes a good use of the occasional crossover to compensate and generate some momentum. The handling skills might be a 5; he can go through defenders at this level, but there is a distinct choppiness to it. The best thing about Perkins's game is his passing-and-repositioning game, the off-puck movements, the relative anticipatory capabilities at this level, and timing. He came down the funnel in the offensive zone at the right time to get the puck from below the goal-line and fire on net. He also goes to the net and support defensively. Not sure there is enough skill in his game to include him on

our board, but I can see an NHL prospect still.

**David St-Louis:** March 11th, 2022

Humboldt Broncos vs. Kindersley Klippers - SJHL

Perkins has the right ideas on the ice, but the execution is not up to a projectable level. The high-stance skating affects his handling stability; the puck bounces off his stick quite often and he has to rely on large motion to move it around the opposition, but he does keep a relatively high awareness inside his moves. He's capable of finding teammates at the end of it with lobs or passes through legs and he has some creativity, trying between-the-legs shots and long saucers into space for teammates.



# OSKAR PETERSSON

RW | RÖGLE BK J20

HEIGHT 6'1"  
WEIGHT 194

D.O.B. JAN. 23, 2004  
SHOOTS LEFT

7%	5%	4%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J18 Reg.	4	3	2	5
J20 Nat.	46	25	11	36
WJC-18	6	1	4	5

## Scouting Report

Sometimes NHL teams draft a player because they seem built to suit a specific role at the NHL level, and Oskar Pettersson may very well be one of those players.

We came to appreciate the Swedish forward in that sense, admiring his work as a net-front screen when his team was on the attack. He drove the net consistently – with and without the puck – stationed himself there and made life miserable for the opposing goalie and defencemen alike.

The contemporary NHL demands so much more of its power forwards than just maintaining a stationary screen at the net-front, though. Those players need to excel on puck retrievals, digging out loose pucks as they carom off the boards behind the goal line. They're tasked with re-establishing possession for their line, and if they can't do that, it's a lot of one-and-done possessions. Pettersson isn't quite built

for that role now, but he can get there if he adds another gear as a skater.

"The skating is average, maybe even below average," Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin wrote in an April game report. "He does not generate much speed with his strides and needs to use a lot of energy to play at full speed. His agility and balance are not strong either. The top speed is good enough to be an effective puck carrier though. The room for improvement is limited if he can't fix his stride."

The concerns over his mobility and the lack of playmaking component to his game forced us to leave Pettersson off our board this season, but there's a good chance that his competitiveness, frame, and penchant for the rough stuff draws the interest of a handful of NHL teams.

## Game Reports

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 10th, 2022

Rögle BK vs. Örebro HK - J20 Final Four

For context, not a good hockey game. It is a bronze medal game and both teams compete harder when they have the puck than without. A lot of puck transportation and no real structure. That said, Oskar has a decent showing. He had some strong offensive performances where he is strong on the puck and takes to the net. He is quite smart in how he skates with the puck. He finds open lanes and dekes his way through. His puck touches are not soft but quick and short.

He is a strong player along the boards and around the crease. He shows good awareness in tight traffic.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 9th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs Rögle U20 - J20 Final four


The skating is average, maybe even below average. Does not generate much speed with his strides and needs to use a lot of energy to play at full speed. His agility and balance is not strong either. The top speed is good enough to be an effective puck carrier though. The room for improvement is

limited if he can't fix his stride.

Plays the slot on the power play and is active with his stick and strong on the puck in traffic. Scored a goal on a one-timer. Oskar likes to carry the puck and some good zone entries. He needs to learn how to cover the puck better though as he often loses control of the puck if the gap on him is tight.

Most of Oskar's game comes from being physically strong. He gains space with battles and he is good at positioning

himself for a pass offensively as well. He does not need much room to be a problem for the opposition. With smarter puck coverage he would be an effective power forward.

All in all, Oskar lacks the ability to gain space with speed and hands which limits his potential. He is mostly effective due strength and competitiveness. If he gets drafted, it is in the late rounds. 

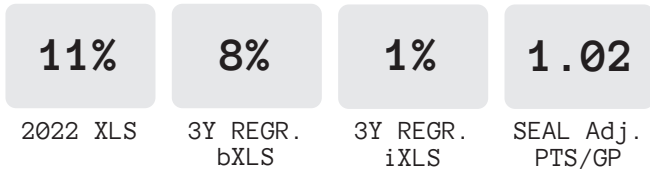




# NICK PIERRE

F | SIOUX CITY MUSKETEERS

HEIGHT 5'9" D.O.B. APR. 9, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	60	17	16	33

> Committed to Univ. of Wisconsin

## Scouting Report

After scoring just one goal as a USHL rookie, Nick Pierre became a dependent three-zone player for the Clark Cup Champions.

The core of Pierre's offensive game is pace and shooting. "He plays fast, gets to the right spots, and shoots immediately," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a game report. "He loads his stick before and shifts his weight through the pass reception for a clean one-touch shot."

With the puck, Pierre's skill level comes and goes. He's confident on passing on the backhand and occasionally fires a projectable curl-and-drag wrister. But he defaults to simple plays that result in turnovers. He's overly reliant on outside speed to gain the zone. At this stage, he's not much of a playmaker and his shooting game lacks the off-puck instincts to make him a credible goal-scoring threat.

Pierre wins races, battles, and disrupts the puck carrier without fail. While he's not always proactive on the defensive end, his motor always gives him a chance.

Skill development and improved playmaking should help

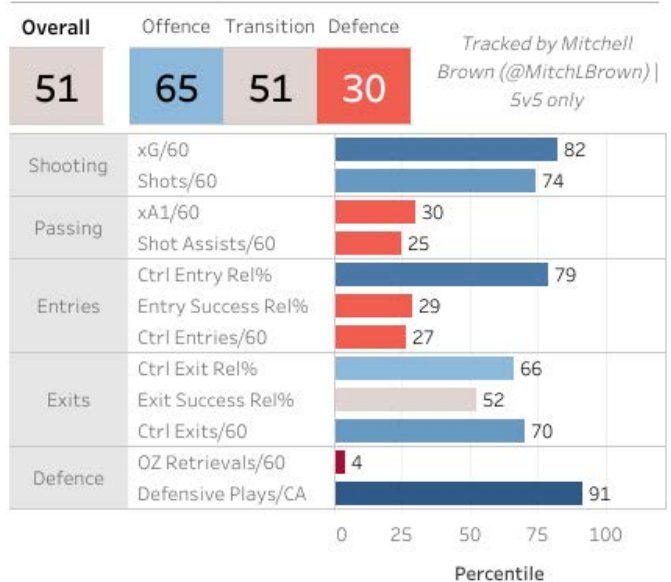
## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Nothing from Pierre in this game. He's just a transition shooter with some pace. The skating remains limited by his lack of hip flexion, but I still think he's a projectable NHL

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 118.6



Pierre attack the inside lane more regularly. Engaging his hips into skating will turn his power into speed, and improve his puck protection along the boards. If Pierre makes the NHL, he's likely to become a checker. There's a lot of work required to get there, though.

skater. He outraces defenders at this level without issue, and shows some skating skills. Didn't get the puck a lot in this one, and he wasn't an off-puck threat. Doesn't look like a candidate for our board. If the off-puck instincts return, he could become a checker.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Waterloo Black Hawks vs. Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

Pierre has a lot of the same qualities as James, just with more consistent offensive flashes. He beats defenders with speed, then looks to pull the trigger. He actively seeks to create in transition. In projectable ways? No, but James doesn't even try to make plays with the puck. Nearly scored with a slick curl-and-drag wrister, a level of skill I haven't seen from him before. He's a stationary, reactionary off-puck attacker. He's a quick player, but his lack of hip depth and extension width limit his output for now. I wonder how much more his quickness improves with mechanical improvements. I doubt he's a pick this year, but I could see him becoming something down the line.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Pierre gets to the net. He sprints past defenders to get chances off-puck. Anticipates opening and slips behind defenders for rebounds. With the puck, he's a simple play with a few twists. He uses the inside, kicking pucks out of the boards to the middle and immediately making the next play upon winning possession. Nothing advanced, but the details that should help him play a checking role in the NHL. The skating lacks hip depth and extension width - it'll require work. That posture also limits his ability to manage contact along the boards. The motor is admirable, too. He's probably not a pick, but he could prove to be a useful pro down the line.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Great game from Pierre, mostly as a shooter. He plays fast, gets to the right spots, and shoots immediately. He loads his stick before and shifts his weight through the pass reception for a clean one-touch shot. Took plays from the boards to the middle consistently. The skills are likely average to below it otherwise. I don't see any notable playmaking. Lacks deception and vision. Sometimes, he makes a play to the inside off the backhand, but that's about as advanced as it gets. Shooting-wise, he's just standing in space and waiting. Some anticipatory movements, but nothing that suggests projectable goal-scoring ability at the next level. Perhaps

if he adds more timing to his off-puck movements. He's a checker at the next level.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 28th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Nick Pierre isn't too different from Dylan James. He plays fast, brings energy on the defensive end, has some physicality, and enough puck skills to score at this level. Didn't see any notable creativity or skill. The skating's interesting. He has the ankle flexion down, but doesn't engage his hips into his stride. Finishes his strides on left, but takes short strides on his right. Forward-driving recovery with push-off inside crossovers. Clearly a lot of potential as a skater. The rest of his game is marred by his lack of patience and deception. The odd cross-ice pass followed by a sprint up the ice suggests there's a give-and-go pathway for him. But not a draft pick in this game.


**Mitchell Brown:** December 17th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Strong defensive outing from Pierre. He kills plays in the neutral zone with a seemingly bottomless gas tank. Took the extra stride to come across the hips. Supports play down low, then races to the shooting threat to pressure or prevent. Not always proactive, but always gives himself a chance. Only a few meaningful offensive touches in this game, and didn't do anything with him. Doesn't look like a prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 20th, 2021

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Pierre showed a well-rounded offensive skill set in this game. He set up a chance by making the quick pass to a teammate moving into the slot. Executed at the perfect time: through a defender as they lunged towards his activating teammate. Breakaway goal with a quick backhand-forehand stickhandle that essentially changed the angle. Common play, but the speed of execution isn't. Some mechanical improvements in stride, but his skating stands out with inside leg push-off in crossovers and forward-driving stride recoveries. Consistent pressure on forecheck and backcheck, using speed and awareness to overwhelm and force poor decisions from the puck carrier. Definitely looked like a draft pick in this game, perhaps a mid-rounder. 



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# ALEXANDER PONOMARYOV

RW | LADIA TOGLIATTI

HEIGHT 5'9"

D.O.B. OCT. 7, 2003

WEIGHT 150

SHOOTS LEFT

0%	3%	0%	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
MHL	55	15	19	34
VHL	3	0	1	1

## Scouting Report

Alexander Ponomaryov is a skilled puckhandler. He often pulled off flashy dangles, especially after scanning the ice beforehand to locate approaching defenders, seams, and nearby teammates. His offensive awareness was not a constant positive over the season, though. His tunnel-vision and tendency to attack packs of defenders in the offensive zone led to far too many turnovers.

Due to the inefficiencies of his plays and his periphery game, Ponomaryov required a volume of opportunities to

score this season, something he won't get as he climbs the ranks through the Russian hockey system.

Still, his flashes of 1-on-1 skill and playmaking ability, on top of his motor and defensive engagement, could make him an effective winger in the VHL and KHL somewhere down the road. His weaknesses and the lack of progression in his play over the course of the season don't make him a likely candidate for an NHL career, however.

## Game Reports

**Dylan Griffing:** February 13th, 2022

Lada Togliatti vs. Khimik Voskresensk - VHL

Alexander Ponomaryov may just think he is Connor McDavid. Super individualistic offense despite this being his VHL debut, skating directly into traffic – including a literal 1v5 that, unshockingly, resulted in a turnover. No scanning to be found. Retrievals were solid, bouncing away from contact and using his agility to his benefit. However, that was probably the only positive to take away here, barring his (over)confidence.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 10th, 2021

Irbis Kazan vs. Ladya Togliatti - MHL

He just... shoots. The Ladya system (or lack thereof) defi-

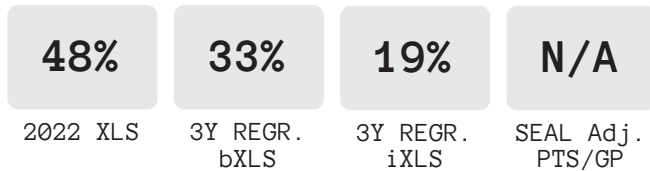
nately plays a factor, but there's just so many inexcusable plays. Constant unpressured, low percentage shots or plays where he clearly didn't scan at all, ignoring every passing option, and put the puck on net. Relied a lot on his speed and really struggled when he couldn't outpace the defense. Blocked some shots on defense, but was mostly just floating around. Breakouts were a major issue, again, just not scanning and opting for the least controlled option every time. Rimming the puck around the boards instead of using either of his open defensemen or trying to brute strength a dump out of the zone and giving up a high danger chance. Just a bad game made worse by his fear of going close to the net.



# TUCKER ROBERTSON

RW/C | PETERBOROUGH PETES

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JUN. 22, 2003  
WEIGHT 190 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	68	41	40	81

## Scouting Report

Exceptional production at the junior level doesn't always translate to the NHL, and this is how we came to feel about Tucker Robertson's projection after many of our viewings this season.

We came to appreciate his anticipation-based defensive game along with his ability to place himself and his stick in the right position at the right time to intercept passes and turn them into offensive chances. This season, the pressure he applied on the opposition led to a flurry of mistakes that generated favorable attacks for his team against disorganized formations, even on the penalty kill. Robertson scored eight shorthanded goals.

But contrary to other OHLers who find success through their checking game - like Matthew Poitras, for one example - it was harder to project that facet of Robertson's game to the NHL due to his problematic skating mechanics, specifically his lack of ankle flexion. They limit his total speed. His age, too, his status as a re-entry forward, also brought down our confidence in his projection.

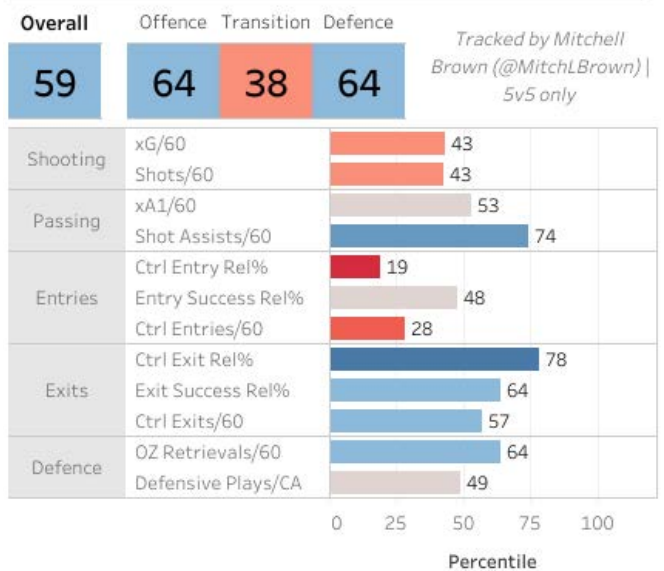
## Game Reports

**Lauren Kelly:** April 17th, 2022

Peterborough Petes vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Two goals for Robertson in this one, the first was banging in a rebound on the doorstep and the second was finishing off a pass on the doorstep after an excellent set-up by a teammate. Nearly got taken out in this one but avoided what

Games Tracked: 4 | Minutes Tracked: 77.2



Robertson's constant awareness of options, passing game, and ability to find open shooting spots in the offensive zone has a chance of making our projection look foolish in a few years, however.

could've been a hit to the head in time. Let linemate Sproule get in on the forecheck first, usually the last of his line into the OZ. Maybe it was because this game was the last of the season and Peterborough had already locked up a playoff spot at this point, but I didn't really see much urgency from him. Definitely didn't see much of the forechecking abilities

that he's typically known for. Opposing players lose him quite easily in the defensive zone as he tries to pressure them. Quick puck touches under pressure, I like the distribution abilities that I saw. Will probably be a draft pick this year, but how high? Maybe second round at best?

**Lauren Kelly:** March 25th, 2022

Peterborough Petes vs. Ottawa 67s - OHL

Robertson had two points in this game. The first was a secondary assist on a 5-on-3 PP, the second was a nice cross-ice feed down low to a teammate - also on a 5-on-3, according to the number of players on the ice? This game got out of hand quickly though, Ottawa scored seven straight goals in the first and second periods. He was only on the ice for one of the goals (at even-strength), but it was his mistake that led directly to the goal. Couldn't get the puck out of his own end, despite having time and space to clear it. Passed the puck right to an Ottawa player and then overcommitted to the puck carrier and left the goal scorer wide open at the hash marks. I wouldn't draft based on this game though.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 2nd, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

I didn't see anything that suggested a draft pick in this game. Robertson's an intelligent player, who turns an anticipation-based defensive game and hard-nosed forechecking into a moderate offensive impact. He's usually occupying the right areas of the rink. Follows up shots. Tactical heel-to-heel use to survey the interior as he worked the puck around the perimeter. Some playmaking ability through patience and awareness of options, but never created lanes or tried the best play. The shot's a bit wonky (elbow stays too close to his body but yet it's an upper body-dependent shot) and the skating's a problem from a lack of ankle flexion and hip engagement. A relatively smart skater overall through crossover integration, timing his cutbacks, and starting his routes at the right times. Finishing his routes, however, is an issue. He's in the right places, but doesn't take an active hand in getting the puck back. He glides when he should sprint, glides when he should slow down, and generally shows a lack of timing around the slot. He's too stationary in the slot, too.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 25th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Peterborough Frontenacs - OHL

Robertson's scoring a lot for reasons that aren't visible in my viewings. In general, I like his involvement on the backcheck, anticipation on the forecheck in and DZC, and his supporting reads. His skating requires some significant work, starting with his ankle flexion. He doesn't generate much

power, can't dig into his edges and explode out of turns, and lacks gets locked into straight line rushes on his inside edges (despite having otherwise notable skating habits). He delays regularly in transition, showing some awareness of options and with the odd creativity delivery. Skating and handling limitations impact his ability to turn this delay game into an inside game. Off-puck, he's in the right areas but late to space regularly. One instance stood out: standing along the boards after passing instead of sprinting to the inside for the give-and-go. He teammate passed, but he wasn't there - would've been a HD look. I have yet to see a draft-worthy performance from Robertson.

**EP Rinkside Staff:** November 21st, 2021

Peterborough vs. Ottawa - OHL

A 6 point game is certainly going to raise some eyebrows. He was the facilitator in this one, with four(!) primary assists, one secondary assist and a shorthanded goal. Everything that remotely resembled offence ran through Robertson tonight. He was the best player for either team tonight, by a fairly wide margin. Every shift he played, something positive occurred. It remains clear that Robertson has a knack for timing - right place, right time or getting the puck to a teammate at the exact moment it needs to be there. He continues to loop in his skating as opposed to stopping and starting. I'd like to see more explosiveness from it, as it will need to be in order to translate. He showed great patience with the puck to find passing lanes and create space for teammates. But, his defensive habits remain a strong point of his game - back pressuring to force dump-ins, creating turnovers and supporting the puck in all areas of the ice. This was Robertson's best game of the year, and if he can build on it, he could go in the second round.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 7th, 2021

Peterborough Petes vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Robertson's scoring a bunch, which continued in this game with a pair of tap-ins. There's something to be said about being in the right place at the right time, but I don't know how well this current style scales up. More of a traditional net-front presence who lacks movement and timing around the slot, but has hand-eye coordination and enough awareness of body positioning to keep his stick free. The skills seemed average to below-average elsewhere, including skating. Lacks depth and doesn't generate much power. Very straight-line, very inefficient in transition. I was most impressed with his defence: very disruptive on the backcheck, grabbed steals, and forced dump-ins. Got above the puck when necessary and then angled out attacks well. He's probably a draft pick, perhaps this was just a so-so viewing.





Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

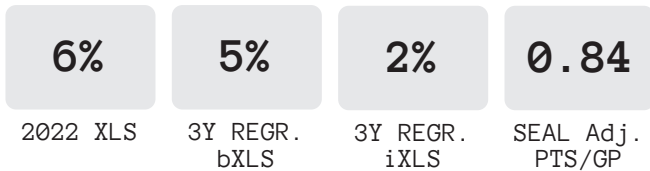


Physical

# RYLEN ROERSMA

C | BRANDON WHEAT KINGS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. JUL . 25, 2004  
WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	68	19	10	29

## Scouting Report

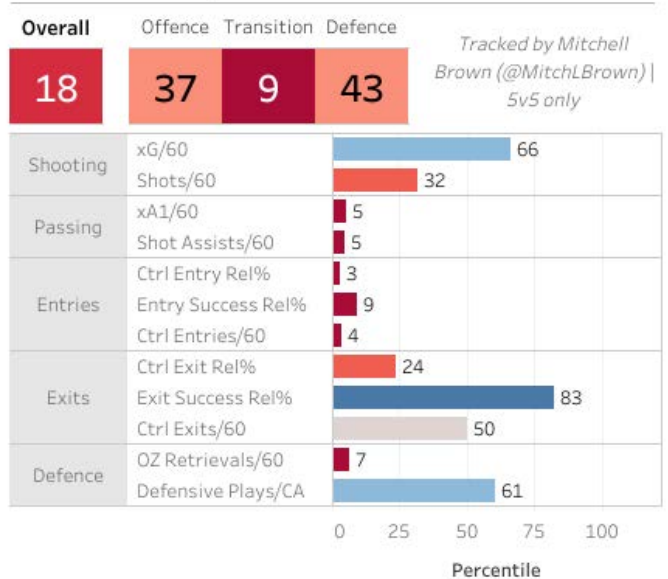
With eight goals, 14 points, and several stand out plays through the first 15 games of the season, Rylen Roersma looked like a soon-to-be top-three-round pick. By mid-November, the points dried up. Still, his puck skills stand out in a skilled WHL group.

“Not only does he have the touch and control, but he has the mechanical foundation, set-ups, and awareness of pressure,” Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote early in the season. “Spins off checks and attacks the inside, and in one sequence, toe-dragging around a defender to get a backhand scoring chance.”

While playmaking isn’t Roersma’s strength, it could become one. He’s deceptive when given a bit of space, looking off his target before sliding a pass through a defender to a teammate in the slot. The handling skills appear in his numerous deliveries, including slip, hook, and spinning backhand passes.

To put those abilities to better use, Roersma must develop his game away from the puck. Offensively, that means finding space above the slot or slipping behind defenders before popping to the middle, rather than just sprinting to the net,

Games Tracked: 5 | Minutes Tracked: 74.3



as well as using his teammates effectively. Defensively, that’s taking the extra stride to gain inside positioning on the puck carrier instead of reaching.

Roersma’s puck skills are NHL-calibre. To make it, he must continue to develop better details and habits.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: April 15th, 2022

Brandon Wheat Kings vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Puckhandling is Roersma’s NHL skill, but he only used it effectively a couple of times in this game. The skating

lacks ankle flexion and refinement; as he gets stronger, he’ll have better form, but the kicking heels, upright stance, and hopping crossovers likely make him a below-average projection, despite his crossover use. Showed better off-

puck instincts in this game, finding space above and behind defenders, adjusting his positioning to maximize his odds of getting the puck. A spin pass and another intelligent play from the boards through two defenders show that he has some scoring ability, too. He's not a candidate for our board, but I can see a bit of upside. It's a bit concerning that few players on Brandon have progressed lately.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Brandon Wheat Kings vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Roersma scored twice by sprinting to the net and tapping in a cross-slot pass. His off-puck game isn't much more advanced than that - he misses opportunities to stay in space and get open inside the slot. The skating's still a bit concerning, lacking ankle flexion, depth, and skills, but he's always moving. Gives up on pucks too early and disengages after losing possession. Clearly skilled, however. He stepped inside towards the defender, then used a look off pass to set up a chance. Didn't look like a candidate for our board, but he's more skilled than the numbers suggest.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 11th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Roersma had several scoring chances. He found space in the offensive zone, making the subtle adjustment to keep the lane open. In another sequence, he outraced a defender for a loose puck and drove the net. The heel kick remains. It's pronounced. His strides lack lateral push off, but he's quite quick for this level. He won't keep the advantage, but there's a path to becoming an NHL skater. The handling and passing skill that were intriguing early in the season didn't appear in this viewing. Applied pressure on the backcheck, but ended up on the wrong side of the puck several times in the defensive zone. Didn't look like a pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 27th, 2021

Winnipeg Ice vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Roersma's points have dried up entirely, and it's easy to see why. He's overcorrected, becoming too risk-averse with the puck. He doesn't look to beat defenders 1-on-1, which is fine. But he doesn't look to pass to create those advantages, either. Occasionally looked cross-ice for an entry. Off-puck game still lacks. He moves, but he struggles to find space around the net and doesn't seem to identify pockets further out. Doing little with his touches and doesn't have the skills to consistently get the puck back. He didn't look like a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 23rd, 2021

Brandon Wheat Kings vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Roersma wasn't dynamic in this blowout but showed some NHL-calibre qualities. In one sequence, he problem-solved pressure with a spin pass across the slot, stayed active, and hit the return pass off the post. Established body positioning on the back pressure, too. Hook pass use to get inside, and when he cuts inside on the PP (he plays the net front), he tries to beat the goaltender across instead of just jamming the puck into his pads. His stride's almost there (lacks a bit of hip depth), but he hops into his crossovers. Limited 5-on-5 impact in this game. Tough game to evaluate, but I thought he looked like a late-round pick in this game.


**Mitchell Brown:** October 16th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Roersma's handling will certainly be above-average in the NHL, probably around a 6. Not only does he have the touch and control, but he has the mechanical foundation, set-ups, and awareness of pressure. Spins off checks and attacks the inside, in one sequence, toe-dragging around a defender to get a backhand scoring chance. Understands how to seal off back pressure. The rest of his game? Not sure. He's somewhat active off-puck in OZP, but a complete non-factor in transition. Lacks any sort of defensive impact at this game. He throws pucks blinding into the slot, fails to recognize the best play, and doesn't seem to identify plays through layers. I think he's a draft pick given his handling and skills around it, but he needs to find more ways to get involved.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 13th, 2021

Brandon Wheat Kings vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Roersma was more of a secondary option in transition in this game and wasn't terribly involved defensively, but he brought the offence in this game. On the PK, he stole the puck, escaped pressure twice, then toe-dragged around a stick and between three defenders before passing cross-ice to an open teammate for a goal. Deceptive set-up, too. Cut around pressure to the inside a couple of times, and had he established body positioning earlier on the second one, could've had another goal. Feet are disorganized during release and he doesn't elevate his elbow -- shot needs some work. Skating lacks depth through the hips, but he shows some quickness and gets inside-leg push off in his crossovers. Definitely looks the part of an NHL prospect. 



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# ILYA ROGOVSKY

C | LOKO YAROSLAVL

HEIGHT 6'2"

D.O.B. AUG. 21, 2003

WEIGHT 185

SHOOTS LEFT

0%

2022 XLS

2%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

0%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
MHL	49	13	14	27

## Scouting Report

Ilya Rogovsky burst onto the scene this year with a triumphant showing at the Hlinka-Gretzky Cup, scoring at more than a point a game clip and helping Russia capture gold at the tournament. It was enough to capture our attention, but everything that followed left us cool on the 5-foot-11 winger's game.

The foremost concern among our staff centres around Rogovsky's below-average skating and pace – lost foot races were a consistent theme throughout our reports. As defenders caught him, he was forced to make plays under duress. To his credit, he seemed to perform admirably under those circumstances, but that shouldn't be someone's default at this stage in their development.

Still, there's some legitimate skill there. Rogovsky is a talented passer and handler who can slip pucks under sticks

and evade pressure with timely manoeuvres. He also holds up well against backpressure. Just in general, his ability to fend off contact and drive through sticks and bodies for scoring chances is a big-time strength of his game.

“Created a goal with his strength and puck control and almost picked up another assist after skating into a board battle, quickly nabbing the puck out, and finding a wide-open teammate in the slot who couldn't finish it,” Elite Prospects Russia regional scout Dylan Griffing wrote in a November game report.

Rogovsky's playmaking, physicality, and ability to recognize offensive advantages represent a strong foundation for his development, but his pithy counting stats in the MHL this season and skating problems don't suggest there's an NHL future in the cards for this Russian winger.

## Game Reports

**Dylan Griffing:** February 8th, 2022

Russkie Vityazi vs. Loko Yaroslavl - MHL

The low pace that Rogovsky plays with is limiting. He was effective on breakouts, planting his feet with possession, waiting for the press to come to him, and then finding a teammate in stride. While this is not very translatable, the skills he showed while doing this are promising – poise with the puck while under pressure, scanning, and crisp passing. Outside of his passing play, there wasn't too much

of note. Played as a center for most of this game, so he took advantage of his quick wingers and let them all of the work after he passed to them. Defensive positioning was strange and not good, always looked like he was in the wrong spots on the ice and panicked his way around just looking for a man to take. Lost a loose puck race to a player who looked about six inches taller than him, which is not ideal. I like certain aspects of his game and think he's worth a pick, but this is a late round option.

**Dylan Griffing:** November 2nd, 2021

Amurskie Tigry vs. Loko Yaroslavl - MHL

Limited role, but looked solid as a checking forward. Aggressive coverage on the forecheck and dominated possession. Read the ice well to always be covering a lane and engaged physically early and often. Lacks open ice skill, but is patient enough to wait for lanes to open and can use that strength to attack the inside, which he did very well. Created a goal with his strength and puck control and almost picked up another assist after skating into a board battle, quickly nabbing the puck out, and finding a wide open teammate in the slot who couldn't finish it. Looks like what he did this game would project well to tougher Russian competition, just needs to work on being less shot happy and adding more puck skill.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 7th, 2021

MHK Dynamo Moskva vs. Loko Yaroslavl - MHL

An impressive season opener for Rogovsky saw him really shine in his ability to create offense. He drew attention to himself with the puck in the neutral zone, just to brace for contact and find a teammate with a slip pass, but if he saw the space to move the puck himself, he took it and excelled. In the offensive zone, he slipped down under the net to distribute the puck to the net front. While he had the quantity of dangerous passes down, the quality was lacking and his teammates had difficulties corralling his overpowered passes. Still, though, a few made it through the defense and found his target for scoring chances. Skating looked average to slightly above average. Not much explosiveness, but fluid movements allowed him to use deceptive footwork and stickhandling to evade pressure and get past opponents. Shot release was slow and he struggles under pressure to get his shots on net, but

he is good at finding soft spots on the ice or grinding his way into space to get into valuable shooting locations.


**J.D. Burke:** August 4th, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Czech Rep. U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

There haven't been many opportunities for Rogovsky to prove his mettle at this tournament, but he's made the most of every one of them. His work rate, his activity rate... they're through the roof. Rogovsky just finds a way to place himself in the thick of it on a shift to shift basis. Made a really slick, high-pace play, pulling the puck off of the half-wall, cutting inside, dangling past a defender and going wide on the goalie to light the lamp. Picked up another goal in the third period by driving the net and sending the rebound home. He's physical, inside-driven, and a little bit reckless. I like it.

**Dylan Griffing:** August 3rd, 2021

Russia U18 vs. Switzerland U18 - Hlinka-Gretzky Cup 2021

Rogovsky was engaged this entire game. Defensively sound, covering for his adventurous defensemen, keeping positive body and stick positioning, and attacking the puck carrier with his reach and physicality. He was very effective on the boards, using his body to shield himself and getting the puck out of the scrum and to a teammate. Offensively, he was just taking advantage of Switzerland's poor attempts at defense. Really liked his puck protection skills, again using his size to shield the puck, but he has the hands and elusiveness to get out of pressure and find room to make a pass. That passing was exceptional in this one, as well. He made quick reads to decide his plan of attack and then executed, using a variety of pass types to leave the defense guessing. 

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Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# DYLAN ROOBROECK

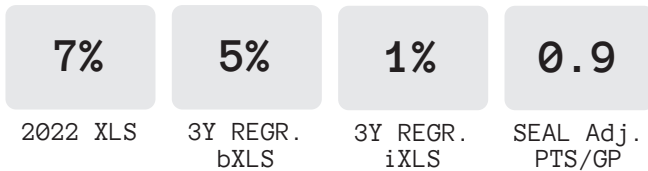
C | NIAGARA ICEDOGS

HEIGHT 6' 7"

D.O.B. JUL . 27 , 2004

WEIGHT 190

SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	64	8	13	21

## Scouting Report

Standing at 6-foot-7 and doesn't score – we've all seen this story before, right? Think again. Dylan Roobroeck isn't a towering checker who throws his weight around. Instead, he's an intelligent playmaker.

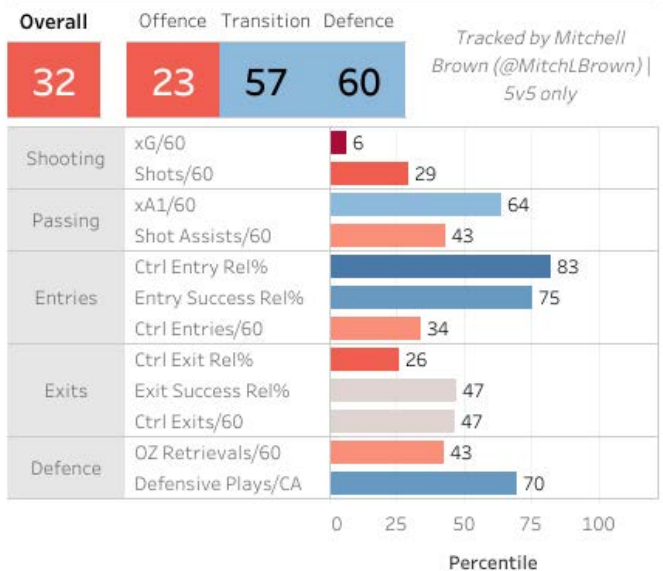
With the puck, Roobroeck starts give-and-gos, uses the middle, and even delays to outwait pressure. He shows play-making skills, regularly slipping pucks under defenders' sticks to teammates on the other side. He's confident on the backhand and has the handling skill to deke around defenders.

In all three zones, Roobroeck effectively supports the play – feet willing. "He shrinks his distance to the puck carrier, moves wide, and controls his speed to stay a viable target," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown in mid-April.

Roobroeck's also a disruptive defender, using his reach to knock down passes, poke pucks away from faster attackers, and tie up players along the boards.

However, Roobroeck's size often works against him. Opponents easily knock him off balance along the boards. He lacks the quickness and edge control to separate from opponents, even when he has the advantage. He struggles to control pucks in his feet, and any time he goes to do something with

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 107.2



the puck – handle, shoot, pass – he enters a glide, makes his decision, then executes. Usually, that's all it takes for a defender to kill the play.

Roobroeck's too far out to project in any capacity beyond a potential professional player. Without significant skating improvement and more coordination, he will struggle to his use intelligence and passing skills at the next level.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: April 16th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Roobroeck's interesting from a development standpoint.

He's clearly an intelligent player with skills. He slips pucks through defenders, uses the backhand, starts give-and-gos, looks inside for passing options, and even delays to outwait

pressure. In all three zones, he supports the play effectively – feet willing. Offensively, he gets open between checks. In transition, he shrinks his distance to the puck carrier, moves wide, and controls his speed to stay a viable target. The feet and handling skill hinder everything, however. He sees space early but can't get there in time. He can't separate. He struggles handling pucks in his feet. He's fluid at times, but he has little stability or control on his edges. I wonder if he goes late. He's years away from being a legitimate prospect, but he's smart and clearly has some pro potential.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Another disruptive game from Roobroeck. He doesn't even really have to move to poke away pucks from opponents and intercept passes. He wins battles on second efforts. Took a tricky pass, then slipped it through two defenders for a cross-slot chance. Another time, he dangled around two defenders along the boards, then passed to the point instead of forcing a play to the inside. He also knows how to get open, moving between defenders and stopping inside space. It's clear he's a relatively intelligent player, but he's often let down by his mechanics. Ultimately, his size works against him, with the body simply not being able to get to the areas and access the lanes he sees before they close. Could be a solid pro.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

The advantages and disadvantages of Roobroeck's size were on display in this game. He poked possession away from attackers, even if they had a head start. He fended off attackers and threw a couple of hits. Even in the moments of fluidity, he's far from quick and he's easily knocked off balance by smaller opponents. Release lacks speed. There's some passing skill here, even if he's a bit inaccurate. On breakouts, he looks inside and cross-ice for options, then connects through defenders. Not a draftable game, but I think he could become interesting down the line.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 30th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

I liked what I saw from Roobroeck when I noticed him – that is to say, I didn't notice him all that much, which is surprising considering he's one of the tallest players on the ice. Had a couple of good stick plays in the neutral zone to cut off passes and passed the puck well himself, but I don't know that there's anything in his game that indicates it will translate to success at future levels.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Tall with hands. Roobroeck lacks quickness, but his hand-eye coordination helps offset some of those issues. A disruptive defender and forechecker, for sure. Tried a high-skill that just missed his teammate off the rush. Everything originates from a glide. He can't handle, shoot, pass, or make decisions with his feet moving. That doesn't suggest an NHL player. I suspect he'll become a solid scorer next season.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Roobroeck was the best of Niagara's draft eligibles. Now, that's a bit of criticism of Castle and Fimis, but Roobroeck had a solid game. I like his vision, as he spots teammates on the other side of a defender, doesn't force plays, and tries to time the pass with the opening of the lane. The passing stands out on the breakout, where he looks inside for options regularly. He's reasonably slick as a handler, but he struggles to play with pucks closer to his body. He's very upright and unstable. He struggles to connect with passes because he enters a glide well in advance and defenders figure out of his play by the time it leaves his stick. Lacks OHL speed and quickness, let alone NHL.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 22nd, 2021

Niagara IceDogs vs. Oshawa Generals - OHL

This was more of the same from Roobroeck – good agility and edgework, but acceleration is going to be an issue going forward. Follows the play up and down the ice, good in battles along the boards, but doesn't toe the line physically. He doesn't have much in terms of his offensive skills, but he could prove to be a reliable depth forward down the road, and his size gives him an advantage in that regard.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 7th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

As far as first impressions go, Roobroeck is massive and towers over most players on the ice. It was actually surprising to see how fleet-footed and fluid his edgework was, but he does lack the acceleration that plagues many taller players. He's active in the offensive zone and constantly moving. Roobroeck is a strong net-front presence and does good work down low and along the boards. His puck control needs to improve though; he had a couple of passes that misfired. He also bobbled the puck and had trouble receiving pucks from teammates.

# PIER-OLIVIER ROY

D | VICTORIAVILLE TIGRES

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. MAR. 5, 2004

WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS LEFT



<b>5%</b> 2022 XLS	<b>3%</b> 3Y REGR. bXLS	<b>2%</b> 3Y REGR. iXLS	<b>0.53</b> SEAL Adj. PTS/GP
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LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	56	10	19	29

## Scouting Report

Pier-Olivier Roy was the pillar that kept the rebuilding Victoriaville Tigres from utterly collapsing this season. He played close to 27 minutes a night for the upstart QMJHL club, and to the naked eye, it seemed as if he took the ice every other shift.

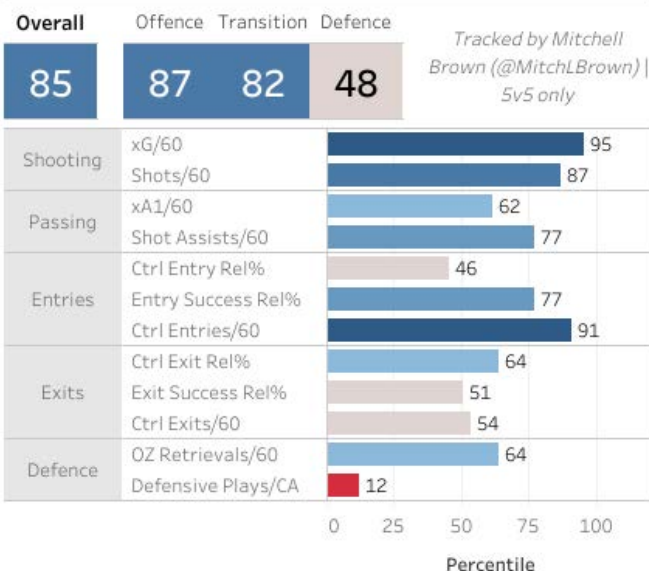
There isn't any major weakness or glaring flaw in Roy's game, which was probably a contributing factor in the Tigres coaching staff calling his number so often. He shuts down puck carriers between the blue lines, closes on them with urgency in the defensive zone, rotates well, and moves the puck with effective, short passes. He's a consistent, effective defenceman at this level.

Roy should establish himself as one of the very best defencemen in the QMJHL over the next two seasons. There is no doubt on our part that he'll at least achieve that much.

We're far less certain of Roy's ability to develop into much more than a great junior player, though. His average skating stride coupled with a lack of anticipation and creativity suggest that he just might not be built for professional hockey.

His lack of burst and short defensive range will limit his capacity to contain attacking forwards at the next level. And the power play role that most diminutive defencemen often

Games Tracked: 6 | Minutes Tracked: 86.5



occupy will likely fall in the hands of a more inventive, skilled player who can quarterback an attack from the point.

Because of these potentially fatal flaws in Roy's game, we just couldn't find a spot for him on our board. His chances of hearing his name called by an NHL team at the draft aren't especially high either.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** May 1st, 2022

Victoriaville Tigers vs Rouyn-Noranda Huskies - QMJHL

Roy is a good Junior defenceman, but I don't see anything else right now. He's decently aware and capable of a few breakout plays. He shuts down opponents in transition, but he lacks the finer mechanics and tricks to become a positive breakout player or offensive player in the AHL, let alone the NHL. His size and skating combo, which ranks below-average is also a problem for his projection. He's effective, which

is why he earns a lot of minutes, but a little too simple in his game.

**David St-Louis:** March 27th, 2022

Rimouski Oceanic vs Victoriaville Tigres - QMJHL

I only see a great Junior defenceman, not much else. Roy is engaged, but not ahead of the game in any way; he's gliding in between plays and his skating as a whole isn't a strength. At this level, he has shutdown impact and even

"Roy should establish himself as one of the very best defencemen in the QMJHL over the next two seasons. There is no doubt on our part that he'll at least achieve that much."

some offensive one through his activation, but he just doesn't have the agility to escape NHLer and create against them.

**David St-Louis:** March 24th, 2022

Victoriaville Tigres vs Rimouski Oceanic - QMJHL

I don't see an NHL prospect due to the size/skating combo. He lacks the elusiveness of smaller NHL defencemen, even if he has their poise. He commands the ice for Victoriaville at this level and can shutdown opponents.

**David St-Louis:** November 24th 2021


Victoriaville Tigres vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Roy is committed defensively and has some desperation in his game, which can be a quality but also a fault as it can lead to overcommitting. He rammed his own goalie trying

to catch up to a breakaway after going for the puck in a 2-on-1. His first touches were good in this game, they lead to escapes, but he didn't complete his offensive plays, stopping short to dump the puck.

**David St-Louis:** February 28th, 2021

Victoriaville Tigres vs Rouyn-Noranda Huskies - QMJHL

Roy is a smaller defenceman with average to potentially above-average skating ability (he is young still), who plays a conservative defensive and transition game. He hits the first play on breakouts and if it's not there, rims the puck around. I like his physicality -- he uses his body, gets underneath opponents -- and his gap off the rush. There wasn't anything interesting offensively from him in this game. 

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Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# TRISTAN SARSLAND

F | PRIOR LAKE HIGH

HEIGHT 6' 0"

D.O.B. FEB. 25, 2004

WEIGHT 185

SHOOTS RIGHT

N/A

2022 XLS

N/A

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

N/A

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
NAHL	28	12	21	33
USHS-MN	8	4	3	7

## Scouting Report

After finishing an impressive career with Benilde-St. Margaret's in Minnesota, Tristan Sarsland ventured up to Fairbanks, Alaska to play in the NAHL.

Sarsland has NHL potential through his manipulation, especially in transition. Before touching the puck, he scans for threats and options. Then, he starts deceiving by faking a pass up the boards or skating towards a forechecker. When the opposition reacts, he hits the open teammate.

Much of Sarsland's best work in the offensive end comes when he's activating. He pops into space on the weak side to become a backdoor threat and dekes around defenders

from the point before stepping into space before shooting.

Defensively, Sarsland lacks refinement. In High School, he's a disruptive defender who eliminates off-puck threats, wins positioning, and kills plays along the cycle. In the USHL, inconsistent scanning and powerless pivots were exploited by attackers with and without the puck.

Developing better defensive details will help Sarsland become a competent pro but improving his in-motion puck skills while upping the frequency of activations will be required to reach the NHL.

## Game Reports

**Daniel Gee:** April 30th, 2022

Minnesota Wilderness vs Fairbanks Ice Dogs - NAHL

First time seeing Sarsland out of a high school setting and he remains an interesting player. Leaned on pretty heavily by Fairbanks in this one.

There were some obvious issues with Sarsland's transitional defending in this viewing. He struggled mightily with judging speed, gapping up proactively, and outside drives. This meant multiple pivots to try and preserve the integrity of the middle lane, often sacrificing body positioning as he made that transition. He's developed some habits such as an incorporation of a pokecheck as he pivots, which does work to some extent to at least disrupt releases. He was walked pretty badly in the second, a failed heel push sent him

flying as the Minnesota forward executed an inside-outside move on him. Other than that mistake, he does keep his feet steady, but he needs develop more defensive skating habits to translate better. Another area that Sarsland struggled with was off-puck secondary threats. Multiple shifts where he allowed players behind him, giving up body position -- even when he did find them his tie-ups were weak to say the least. This was a trend in sustained pressure as well -- it may be a product of a lack of scanning but I am unsure. He's generally a hard worker, who can create stops on the cycle. He had a wonderful containment and pin play on the end boards to kill a cycle. On the same play after a turnover in the DZ, he blocked a point shot and bodied a man out of a high danger area.

As a puck mover, Sarsland has some elements of manipulation to his game. Stutter and weight-shifting through his crossovers. He shakes off defenders with cut-backs but sometimes spins into pressure, reading the forechecking pathing wrong. Sarsland's best carry was in the second; a fake cut-back manipulated the first forechecker, allowing him to carry the puck in on the near boards. From there he cut into a heavily contested area of the slot creating havoc. He carries the puck directly in front of his body -- an end-to-end rush in the third died to a turnover due to poor protection. Sarsland is pretty bland off the point. He activated infrequently and for the most part stapled himself to his point. He showed off some ability to work pucks from the boards out, popping into the mohawk on the powerplay to move laterally into the slot. Late in the game he even used a stutter move to freeze a pressure-pushing defender. Overall, I am not sure if Sarsland is a candidate for our board. Right now it seems like there is a lack of translatable offensive zone habits and a lot of defensive skating work to be done. Wouldn't be surprised if a team saw those deficiencies and thought they could work with him though. Bottom-pairing projection possibly.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2022

Fairbanks Ice Dogs vs. Kenai River Brown Bears - NAHL

A nonchalant defensive performance from Sarsland. He didn't scan off-puck, costing his team several chances as a consequence. Stick was off the ice too much. Late to close out, and sometimes, didn't even bother. Defensive skating was exploited several times -- poor pivots and didn't show any urgency on the recovery. Offensively, he showed a lot more ability. He activated away off-puck, manipulated defenders to create passing lanes, and dangled around players from the point. He's a bit low pace and doesn't always choose the best play, but this was an interesting performance. Looked like an interesting prospect.


**Daniel Gee:** December 29th, 2021

Benilde-St. Margaret's vs Maple Grove High - USHS-MN

Sarsland has an element of polish to his game, but he was

essentially an empty calorie transition and offensive zone facilitator in this viewing.

While defending sustained pressure, body positioning, stick-checking, tie ups, and end-board physicality are all common patterns across his shifts. Habits are immense here; Sarsland refuses to allow free sticks at the net front and will go out of his way to clamp down and pin opposition to disrupt cycles -- enveloping opponents. He's a bit reactive but executes a high number of stops; in the second he read an in-zone net drive, probed and ford the attacker out of a lane straight to the crease. In transition, Sarsland struggles with neutral zone tracking at times, catching him off-guard as changes of pace occur on entries (may be a peripheral issue). Luckily, his gap is fairly consistent across his shifts, steadying his feet, executing heel pushes to prevent slot activations, and can step into perimeter lanes to create angle offs. Contains so well on the perimeter. He has an aggressive element -- works high into the neutral zone to limit entries. Honestly a really refined defensive profile -- question is really how Sarsland handles faster paces -- caught multiple times mid-pivot.

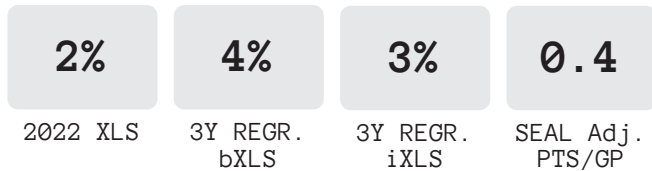
In terms of his transition game, Sarsland has some great retrieval habits that allow for higher volume outlets. He manipulates with his feet and head, pre-scans forechecking pressure, and widens his base to add extra balance. He is uber-calm and takes free ice. Some ability to handle past F1's as well. Sarsland has some layering ability as well. On one shift in the second he pulled off a two-line pass from far-boards to near-boards through a tonne of Maple Grove resistance. Weight-transfers seemed to be limited. Sarsland walked into OZ entries on a couple of occasions -- some questionable decisions like taking a cross-body wrister in pressure with options on the wings. Entry-into-cutback carrier for the most part in this viewing. In sustained pressure I am not convinced there is much here. Shot is mechanically flawed to some extent -- tucked-arm being a major culprit. Release appears quick, however. Hesitant pincher -- had it backfire on one shift. Typically operates in the middle of the blue-line. I like Sarsland -- may be a D prospect for our board. 



# TEDDY SAWYER

D | OTTAWA 6'7" S

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. DEC. 12, 2003  
WEIGHT 183 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	56	3	8	11

## Scouting Report

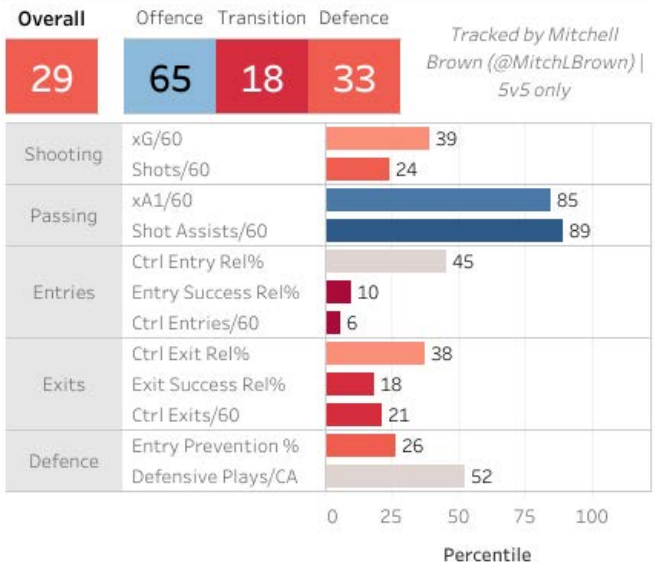
At first glance, there's nothing interesting about Teddy Sawyer. He's an average-sized late-birthday with a nondescript stat-line. Dig deeper, and Sawyer's among the draft's more toolsy prospects.

It starts with Sawyer's mechanical foundation. He extends his knees past his toes, engages his hips, and drives his recovering leg forward instead of kicking upwards. That provides a stable base for puck control. In nearly every viewing, he broke a set of ankles with a quick feint before attacking space. That base primarily appears on retrievals and from the point.

In the offensive zone, Sawyer primarily looks to create for his teammates. He avoids low-percentage shots, preferring to fake the shot and then pass. Often, that's a pass into the slot to create a scoring chance. While many players make these plays, Sawyer doesn't just react; he plans. He deceives, waits for the reaction, then executes.

Despite the mechanical ability creating space for him, Sawyer struggles on breakouts, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown explains: "Doesn't manage pressure on breakouts. Instead, he throws pucks to teammates with more pressure than himself or simply offloads possession when given the chance." Defensively, inconsistent

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 122.8



scanning and athletic posture limit his range, and he tends to gamble in the neutral zone by lunging forward.

Players with Sawyer's profile don't usually make the NHL, but his skating, handling, and offensive zone playmaking suggests there's a lot to work with here. He's probably nothing more than AHL depth, but the chance that his game could take off next season means that he's worth tracking going forward.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Sawyer's a fascinating prospect. He's a '03 and not scoring. But puck skills are the most exciting part of his game. He's a skilled handler, both deking through and around defenders. A creative backhand handling sequence on the end boards opened a cross-ice breakout opportunity. Pinches at the right moments. Looks for teammates on the inside from the point over taking point shots. Not a proactive defender, but he reads the play and gets the odd interception. Gambling on the interception led to a couple of opportunities, and he lost his check on a goal against. Inconsistent scanning and athletic posture. Lots of work to be done: managing pressure on breakouts, defence, and mechanics. But he could be an interesting late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 16th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Another intriguing playmaking game from Sawyer. He uses space, waits for the defender to react, and then passes. Tries some complex plays, too – look off passes, in-motion. If he could transfer that playmaking to the breakout, he'd have NHL upside. The handling skill and escapability on retrievals look both like average to above-average projections. He's physical, but always to win possession and start play up the ice. Doesn't manage pressure on breakouts. Instead, he throws pucks to teammates with more pressure than himself or simply offloads possession when given the chance. He's not scoring at all, but he seems like a player who will really take off next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Tools, tools, tools. Sawyer has a lot to work with. He's a projectable skater with a knees-over-toes stride and forward-driving recoveries. He combines physicality with projectable defensive skating to angle players to the outside and kill the play. And he catches opponents as they lean over one leg or elevate their stick above the puck while handling. But it was the playmaking that was most impressive. Three times, he turned a point shot into a pass for a better look on the inside. The best saw him take the puck across his body, fake the shot, and pass in one fluid motion. Most of Ottawa's defencemen make these plays, but he has the extra layers

to ensure they get through. The skill doesn't translate on breakouts, but there are flashes of handling skill. He looks like a draft pick, production and age be damned.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Another solid performance from Sawyer. Lots of impressive defensive sequences, highlighted by a 1-on-1 sequence where he kept backwards momentum without overcommitting, bit on the fake with his stick but kept his feet in position, and then erased the attacker without lunging forward. Scored with a step-in wrister from the point: lateral weight shift with significant downforce. Inconsistent activation, but grabbed a chance early in the third period by following the puck carrier and cutting inside. Handling is his best skill, but his skating looks like an NHL average projection, at least. Combine that with defensive ability, and he's a draft pick with hopes he becomes a bottom-pairing defender.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Sawyer has some fun moments, usually as a handler in the DZ. He evades pressure with a combination of dekes, head fakes, and shoulder shakes. Some creativity to go along with it, and he usually identifies the next play in advance. Would benefit from sprinting out his passes and join the rush. Once scoring chance by stepping into space. Much better gap than my earlier viewing, getting on his check early and angling the play to the perimeter. Chaotic game with the puck, but his skill level's moderately high – he should improve with time. Looks like an end-of-board type.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 5th, 2021

Ottawa 67's vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Sawyer was one of Ottawa's best players in a tough game. Crafty DZ escape with a quick deke through pressure before starting the breakout. A tough night in transition otherwise, largely for reasons that weren't his fault. Needs to tighten the gap but he looks to establish body positioning along the boards, mirrors footwork, and gets stops deeper in the zone without over-extending. Activates and pinches at the right times, largely from his aggressive positioning that doesn't introduce too much risk.

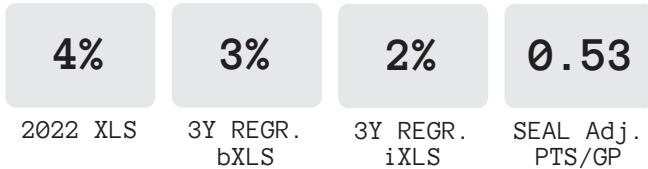




# BRAYDEN SCHMITT

D | BLAINVILLE-BOISBRIAND ARMADA

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAR. 18, 2004  
WEIGHT 161 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	22	14	15	29

## Scouting Report

Brayden Schmitt is the kind of QMJHL prospect who could come out of nowhere next year and establish himself as one of the best defencemen in the entire league.

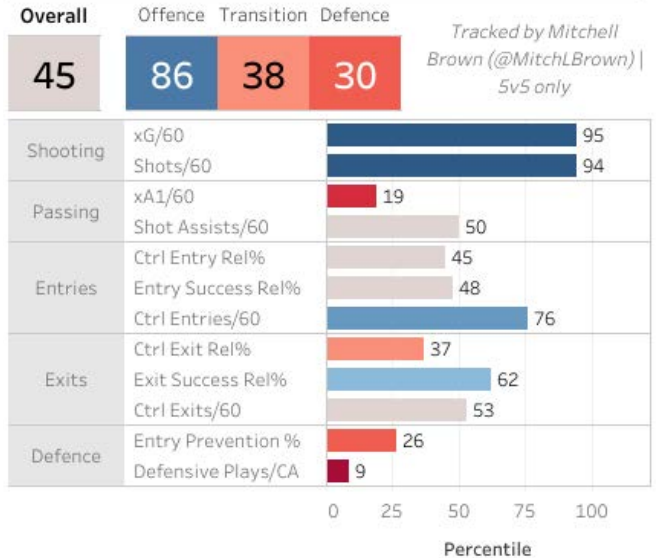
His foundation is solid. Almost all of his tools earned an NHL-calibre projection and his defensive habits are more mature than what we generally see out of draft-eligible blueliners.

“Schmitt's rush defence is probably the best part of his game,” Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in a February game report. “He pinches up, leaves no space to opponents, shows good posture, and tight gaps. He does the same in the defensive zone: good check identification and check attachment, and even risk mitigation.”

Schmitt's proactivity and aggressiveness defensively show that he cares about that facet of the game. Few opponents can beat him in the neutral zone or in races to the net. He's always right there, ready to pick them up in their course.

It's only when the puck is on his stick that Schmitt's limitations reveal themselves. He only makes the simple

Games Tracked: 4 | Minutes Tracked: 70.0



and expected plays, the kinds that the opposition can read easily and take away. The next step for Schmitt is adding a playmaking game, more fakes, and the poise to find better options and generate more points.

## Game Reports

David St-Louis: May 9th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs- QMJHL

Schmitt just lacks the flash of an NHL prospect and also the mechanical skills. He has tools, average skating and handling, and he's pro-active on defence at boxing out and

when stopping the rush. He lacks engaging abilities, however, as he failed to establish body positioning on retrievals a few times in this game. His offensive instincts aren't really there; he relies on the same scripted fakes on regroup and the blue-line, fakes that are made independantly of the

movement of defenders and position of teammates. Some hockey sense concerns.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 6th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

If Schmitt's breakouts were better, he'd make our board. Right now, he punts on too many playable pucks. And when he passes, he underestimates his space and rushes. Struggles to manage with front and side pressure. Without the puck, he shows a bunch of modern skills. He defends the rush, angles, and contests early. Activates regularly, often in creative ways. He works laterally, then moves down the weak side or slips around a defender before popping back into space. Always ready to shoot off the pass, and uses space when possible. The tools might not quite be enough to justify his inclusion, but he's a player to watch going forward.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Impressive game from Schmitt. Never beat in the neutral zone, getting stops just inside the zone. But this was mostly an offensive performance. He activated, joined the play, and tried to create offence. Nothing complex, but he used cross-overs, cut across the front of defenders, and tried to use the middle. Activated off-puck when joining the rush, drawing defensive attention. No wasteful shots, although he wasn't manipulating or creating the best play. Perhaps his game is just a bit too average, but an intriguing performance.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Blainville-B. Armada - QMJHL

A poor game from Schmitt in transition. Beat several times with a passive gap. Lunged forward to make up the distance. Struggled to complex breakouts or gain the offensive zone. From the point, he looked far more inventive. Activated off the point regularly, usually without the puck. Uses space before shooting. Showed a projectable wrister, including a curl-and-drag wrister inside a pass reception. Managed space by dragging multiple defenders towards him, then passed into the space he just cleared. He looked like a draft pick in this game.

**David St-Louis:** February 27th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs Chicoutimi Saguenéens - QMJHL

Schmitt's rush defence is probably the best part of his game. He pinches up, leaves no space to opponents, shows good posture, and tight gaps. He does the same in the defensive zone: good check ID and check attachment, and even risk mitigation. It's with the puck that his game loses some of it's shine. He misses opportunities to improve the offence: doesn't attack space or look to pass. It's everything on net. Does he lack confidence? Maybe. He's playing that type of safe, conservative game of someone who wants to stay in the lineup. But there is potential for more here. The skill is average and the stride lacks ankle flexion and a bit too much too the back. I'll keep an eye on him. The production is unattractive, but he has some hockey sense elements.


**David St-Louis:** February 26th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs Rouyn-Noranda Huskies - QMJHL

Schmitt is engaged defensively, covering for teammates, standing up to opponents off the rush (good posture and gap) and he can make some plays offensively. He takes pucks in movement, attacks down, but his point-game is mostly just shooting. He lacks the mechanical ability to really develop creativity and he's too tentative with the puck at the blue-line to become a point producer, at least this season. He's a player to keep an eye on as a re-entry. I like the urgency and the pace and the engagement in his game, especially defensively. He makes some clever plays.

**David St-Louis:** December 11th, 2021

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Schmitt got a chance to fire a one-timer bomb from the slot, a fully open slot, but he didn't beat the goalie. He will have to wait to score his first QMJHL goal. His skating looked average (speed, quickness, and agility) -- or maybe it was just his pace of play that was lower. A lot of his transition plays came down to using his partner or moving behind the net until the forecheck would back off. He was a bit late to cover his partner on an Antonin Verreault breakaway -- not his fault, but a more aware defender would have picked up that his partner overcommitted offensively. 



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# WILL SCHUMACHER

F | PRIOR LAKE HIGH

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAY 4, 2004  
WEIGHT 165 SHOOTS LEFT

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
NAHL	28	7	9	16
USHS-MN	31	23	32	55

## Scouting Report

A two-point USHL debut first put Will Schumacher on our radar. After a digging back through the tape, it became clear that he's a prospect worth following.

Schumacher's game is one of pace. Away from the puck, he's constantly applying pressure, running into the puck carrier, and creating loose pucks. Simply put, he's a nuisance.

That same mentality drives Schumacher's offensive game. He sprints down the boards, challenging defenders to a race to the net. On the cycle, he cuts back and uses his bottom hand to fend off defenders, creating lanes to the inside for

a shot. He slips pucks through defenders and makes time dashes to the net for rebounds.

The pace that makes Schumacher effective at lower levels could work him against at higher ones. He's too reliant on a foot and hand speed advantage he won't carry to the next level. Instead, he must integrate changes of pace and direction to avoid running out of space.

Ultimately, Schumacher's game presently lacks the nuance necessary to translate his play to the next level. But prospects with his motor, pace, and defence often surprise.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 8th, 2022

Minnesota Magicians vs. Kenai River Brown Bears - NAHL

What a nuisance. Schumacher sprints straight into the puck carrier, forcing turnovers and grabbing the odd steal. He applies that mentality on the defensive end to force battles and cause panic. With the puck, there's no nuance - he's just pace. He sprints until he runs out of space. In the zone, he always tries to take the puck from the boards and shoot. But I didn't see any playmaking or greater purpose to his attacks. Didn't look like a draft pick in this game, but there's some pro potential.

**Daniel Gee:** March 12th, 2022

Prior Lake vs. Hill-Murray - USHS-MN

Schumacher played on the wing with Bump in this game,

and connected pretty much instantly, winning a retrieval and battle in the near corner, and facilitating a centering pass to his linemates who were posted up front (Bump scored). This is kind of Schumacher's role on this line -- does a lot of dirty work to support Bump's scoring ability at the USHS level.

In general, Schumacher and his linemates benefit greatly from a large volume of offensive touches. The argument could be made that their offensive generation is somewhat inefficient, even if their play does wear down defences. Failed catch-and-release shots/lack of finishing, hope passes, and telegraphed actions (manipulation elements missing) hurt Schumacher's effectiveness from a shift-to-shift basis. Shot is rather weak power-wise; unlocked arms but far too much flex and not enough downforce. There's skill here though -- a near-goal on a lacrosse attempt in the second speaks

for itself. This makes his projection tricky -- he can handle out of space, one-touch passes, and pop into soft ice. He will dominant a retrieval, only to lose the next one due to a lack of physicality. Adaptability up to higher levels may be a struggle.

Even in transition, he's frustratingly perimeter, but slips an absurd amount of checks, allowing him to make something out of a poor rush pattern. He tries inside-leg shots in-stride, slips passes constantly and crashes the net hard off-puck -- all solid habits. There was a sequence of shifts where he essentially fed Bump with forward slip passes -- really high difficulty plays. As mentioned, a lack of manipulation hurts him to a high degree; very easy to combat with rudimentary gap and stick work.

While he works hard defensively and is extremely physical by nature, he doesn't scan enough -- his value is more represented by harassment than anything. I am not sure what to think of him at this point -- USHL viewings would be extremely helpful. Still questioning his translatability (too perimeter, inconsistent tools).

**Daniel Gee:** January 8th, 2022

Shakopee High vs. Prior Lake High - USHS

Schumacher's pace was more controlled and less impactful in this game against Shakopee. Shockingly different, actually. Regardless, he created, showed some two-way elements, and was first on retrievals all game.

All of Schumacher's offensive production came transitionally, an area of the game in which he frankly struggled. Very limited puck control while in-stride affected a lot of his on-puck carries -- he just couldn't corral pucks or beat defenders one-on-one. Poor puck carrying habit (puck held in front of body) further exasperated the issues. He couldn't execute or string a pass together transitionally for much of the start of the game. Later in the second, after bobbling a pass, he wheeled around Shakopee's net, connecting on a cross-crease pass for a high-danger chance. He continued to improve in the period, converting an assist on a very awkward 2-on-0, and scoring a breakaway goal after hunting high in his own zone. Schumacher was able to get behind Shakopee's defence, deking to the backhand for an easy goal on a biting goaltender. Question his overall individual tools projectability. In sustained pressure there were more positive habits. He scans and jumps on puck retrievals and drifts to open ice. The problems are really the continuation plays out of these positive habits. He will often send hope passes through the crease with zero teammates occupying high-danger areas. On top of this, he is very static off-puck, failing to adjust for the

constant opening and closing lanes that occur in sustained pressure. This limits his overall impact and it relies on him getting a volume of chances to convert. Even when he does get the passes needed, he can never really get clean shots off because of the lack of movement. Shot is a detriment too -- no power generation or weight-transfer. He generally works well with Alex Bump, but there were numerous execution errors all around him.


Defensively, Schumacher clearly is advanced compared to peers. Constant turnovers created through pressure, pick-pocket plays, and pace-based strips. Not sure if he is a pick after this viewing -- tools are too bland and inefficient. Didn't like his play as much as his USHL game (which is something) -- need more viewings to solidify patterns.

**Daniel Gee:** November 20th, 2021

Waterloo Black Hawks vs Sioux City Musketeers - USHL

This was Schumacher's first USHL game and despite limited deployment, it's hard to ask for more from a player in terms of chance creation.

The base of Schumacher's play in this game was really his motor, edge-work, and pace, a legitimate sense and tool blend that allowed the winger to be an impact player on the forecheck. What was probably more impressive was Schumacher's ability to create out of won puck battles and retrievals; he constantly tried to funnel centering pucks and work play to the inside. In the first he made a forechecking swing, and knocked a puck away in the near corner; Schumacher then fed the open slot leading to a high-danger shot, subsequently jumping into another battle after the rebound and chipping another puck in front. On the next sequence as Schumacher fought to ring a puck from low-to-high, he re-filed through open space in the slot to get his own high-danger shot -- elbow unlocked from body, even getting a stick on the rebound as he dove under pressure. He's constantly prepped for counter attacks; in the second off a broken entry, Schumacher was able to take a pass, with his stick set for another chance. No finish at all really -- unfortunate.

Schumacher recorded a couple of assists in the third; the first coming off a long cycle sequence where he completed a wrap-around on his backhand to set up a backdoor teammate. The other was a product of a fake-shot pass that Schumacher eventually fed into the slot -- the rebound converted. Despite his average size, he has some solid protection habits; uses his edges and base, along with a free arm to fend off close pressure. Looks like a late pick based off of this viewing. 





Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# BRAYDEN SCHUURMAN

F | VICTORIA ROYALS

HEIGHT 5'9"

D.O.B. FEB. 22, 2004

WEIGHT 192

SHOOTS RIGHT

25%

2022 XLS

19%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

10%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

1.08

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	68	29	25	54
WJC-18	4	2	0	2

## Scouting Report

If the 29 goals on a low-scoring team didn't give it away, Brayden Schuurman's a shooter. His game is built around his release, and with his shooting ability, why wouldn't it be? He's dangerous with one-timers from the flanks, two-touch wristers after sprinting down the middle, or no-pull back wristers after gaining the zone. As soon as the puck arrives on his stick, everyone knows he's shooting, but few opponents can stop him.

To translate the shooting ability to high levels, Schuurman must develop more play-building skills, whether that's through give-and-gos, delaying instead of shooting, or better rush routes to offset. Similarly, he rushes the net at the right

times, but tends to plant himself in front of the goaltender instead moving, establishing body positioning, and keeping his stick prepared for deflections, passes, and rebounds.

In the meantime, Schuurman will continue to impact the game in other ways. "He has a real knack for freeing pucks in battles, intercepting passes, and winning retrievals, even from a disadvantage," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown wrote. "Applies intense pressure on the backcheck consistently if he's not already above the play."

With improved details and skating, Schuurman could become a useful depth piece.

## Game Reports

**Daniel Gee:** April 9th, 2022

Victoria Royals vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

It's been a while since I have seen Schuurman live, but unfortunately he still presents with a lot of the inefficiencies mentioned earlier in the year. He's still a very inefficient on-puck player, who pushed perimeter entries almost exclusively. He had some absolute brutal sequences in this game. In the first on the powerplay he mishandled the puck as he faced pressure turning over the puck shortly after. On another entry he just lost control as he walked in on the far boards -- he lacks a lot of handling skill. Schuurman becomes static as he activates his hands, making him even easier to combat. In sustained pressure

Schuurman was better. He can activate his edges to pivot off of pressure. In the first he made an amazing pivot off passing play that was layered, circle-to-circle. On another sequence he crashed laterally across the net for a chance. His best play was late in the game with the net empty. A cross-crease pass meant to deflect off a Cougars' skate -- missed the net by inches. Not really much of a threat on the powerplay -- planted on the side of the net and simple half-wall and low-to-high plays.

Mixed result defensively for Schuurman. He made a poor read on a hit attempt in the first, pulling him high as a battle in the crease initiated. Scanning habits are on-and-off. Wish he engaged physically more. Sense is probably a

4-grade overall -- won't advocate for him for our final board. Skating and handling are also below average.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 3rd, 2021

Victoria Royals vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Schuurman's a hard-nosed puck pursuer with some off-puck offence. He has a real knack for freeing pucks in battles, intercepting passes, and winning retrievals, even from a disadvantage. Applies intense pressure on the back-check consistently if he's not already above the play. Prefers to offload in transition and find space for the shot. Acts as the trailer, dips off the radar along the perimeter, and cuts inside generally at the right times. The skating and handling we're both average at best - short, choppy, inconsistent movements that reduce his deceptiveness, speed, and puck-carrying ability. Not a draft pick based on this game.

**Daniel Gee:** October 27th, 2021

Prince George Cougars vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

The rough games against the Cougars continued tonight for Schuurman, who was a relative non-factor offensively in the first period, and pushed similar perimeter offensive forays throughout the reset of the game until injury forced him to retire.

Schuurman is on an island in Victoria, not an ideal situation with injuries plaguing Victoria's roster. Regardless, Schuurman had some notable offensive sequences, even if they aren't wholly translatable up. Pacey, and outside dominated, Schuurman almost never patterns his rush into the middle of the ice. Most of these activations are born out of DZ carryouts where Schuurman pushes pace and handling. He had one instance in the first on a powerplay where he executed an inside-outside move on the F1, just to be kneed as he walked around the Cougars defender. While I'm not convinced of his forward stride mechanics are translatable (too tilted forward, collapsed at his hips, short recoveries), it's undeniable that his footspeed pushes some advantages. Later in the game, Schuurman attempted perimeter activation after perimeter activation, all leading to turnovers or weak sharp angle shots placed medium/high as Cougars defenders protected in the inside lane. His best sequence in the entire game was on a penalty kill -- after pushing pressure he drove a weight-shift heavy linear crossover drive up the middle, beating Hudson Thronton, and but still resulting in a far too angular shot. His shot is pretty much a non-factor in motion. In sustained scenarios his leveraging of mechanics is better. On a powerplay he worked into the slot and unleashed a snappy wrist shot with a tonne of downforce and a deceptively quick wrist

roll. Scanning habits in sustained scenarios is questionable. While his handles and movement, low-to-high, leveraged rotations, he attempted a pass on one shift while looking at the puck resulting in a turnover. On that same powerplay, it ended because he activated downhill, didn't scan (or look up) and shot right into a Thronton block. He was used differently on the powerplay in this game; placed on top of the left-hand circle instead of beneath it -- he leveraged a couple of one-time shots from this positioning. One left him spinning as he fired all his momentum into the effort, the other a muted half-follow through attempt. Spends a lot of sustained pressure time in the crease 5-on-5.

Defensively, his pace is impactful -- Victoria uses him as a penalty killer high in his zone and right-hand faceoff man. Despite his 5-foot-9 frame he was able to muscle a puck out of a goalline battle, and fight off immense pressure to carry the puck out of his zone. His pressure pushing also led to stick check in the second preventing entry string of actions. Support wanes, however -- mainly because he's trying to get high to push transition initiatives out of teammate battle wins. Deserves viewings later in the season when Victoria is in better shape.

**Daniel Gee:** October 18th, 2021

Victoria Royals vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Schuurman started this game by taking a nasty high-stick that delayed his first period start up just under ten minutes and rendered him with a cage. This weekend in totality hasn't been kind to Schuurman, who was held pointless again against the Cougars.

Schuurman once again was leveraged on a lot of consecutive powerplay sequences on the onset of this game. He found more success activating into soft coverages than my previous viewings. A couple of highlighted plays occurred in the second. After taking the puck behind the net, he scanned, dashed behind the net, and sent an amazing pass into the crease that was just missed. Later, after shifting to the right of the net on a powerplay, he just tipped a pick high on a redirect. In the same period, he flubbed a tap-in, wide open in the crease. In sustained scenarios at least, the containment issues I saw previously were much better. He timed activations well, won more battles on the perimeter, and fought through pressure better. Probably the most concerning play in sustained pressure was a failure to catch and release a puck properly on the left-hand circle. He took a half second to curl and drag the puck, giving Brennan enough time to shift over. Schuurman was very hit and miss in transition. Many of his transitional forays exposed some pretty awful perimeter-based rush patterns.

Schuurman had at least three turnovers attacking in on the right-wing, unable to separate past Thornton and Dowhaniuk over multiple shifts. One shift in particular, Schuurman had some handling success, executing an inside-outside deke to cut into the dotted lines -- he ended the shift with a weak wrister, easily saved. When Schuurman didn't insist on pushing controlled carry attempts, he showed some scanning habits in transition. There was also a wonderful off-puck shift where he upped his pace to get behind the Cougars' defenders, just tipping a long arial pass wide.

On the defensive end of the puck, he showed better habits on totality. Down-low supporting plays aided outlets and he had an important high slot pass interception and clear on a first period penalty kill. I still think he watches too much in longer sustained scenarios however. Not sure if he's a pick -- probably a later round one if teams like his scoring upside.

**Daniel Gee:** October 17th, 2021

Victoria Royals vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

This was a tough game for Victoria and Schuurman. They just came off of games in the middle of the week and were down to 10-11 forwards further exasperating the stress. Schuurman in general was a tough read. He was undoubtedly one of Victoria's better forwards, creating a couple of high-danger chances, but there are some translatability concerns.

Almost all of Schuurman's sustained offensive zone sequences were due to power plays that plagued the onset of this game. His best sequence was in the first. After being completely contained on the net front, he shifted into soft coverage in the slot, opened a pass lane up, and absolutely wired a bullet one-timer off the post. Activating low, he spun violently to get everything on the shot. In general

he floated between a deep left-hand circle positioning and the bumper. His activations were timely and he had other sequences where he popped into open lanes, it just wasn't a constant habit. He's not very impactful on the perimeter -- struggles to win battles and needs space to execute. His best passing play was a cross-ice that was nullified by Thornton. Transitionally, Schuurman was better. He had a couple of insane pace increase drives. In the first he shot like a cannon through the middle of the ice, slicing through PG's defenders, and tipping the puck on net. He also had three activations off the right-wing, but wasn't able to convert; some net-crashing after the initial shot. He intercepted a high defensive zone pass in the first, but his shot was mitigated by a stick in his release. There is some passing skill; he executed a slip pass on a broken 2-on-1. I'm not sure he has enough handling skill or manipulations to be a high-end scorer at higher levels.

Defensively, Schuurman was inconsistent in his engagement level. He shoulder peaks frequently, but doesn't always act often enough on the information that he gathers. He purposely loses puck races at times to avoid contact, only to lose the ensuing board battle due to a lack of strength and size. He can be frustratingly passive later in shifts. Schuurman's best defensive play was a turnover he created on a backcheck near the Cougars net, but he ended up buried in the end boards.

Tools wise, Schuurman is pretty mobile. His stride is ugly, however. He relies on foot-speed more than mechanics to create separation. He collapses hard at the hips, lands heavily on his toes (which point out), and rarely extends his legs. There weren't many handling or passing examples to establish a concernable pattern. I need to see more of his game, but I'm not convinced he can translate up, regardless of production.

EP

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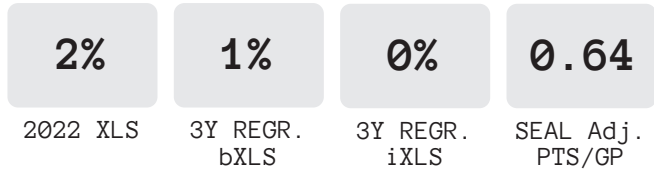
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# KAI SCHWINDT

LW | MISSISSAUGA STEELHEADS

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. DEC. 17, 2003  
 WEIGHT 194 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	47	2	5	7

## Scouting Report

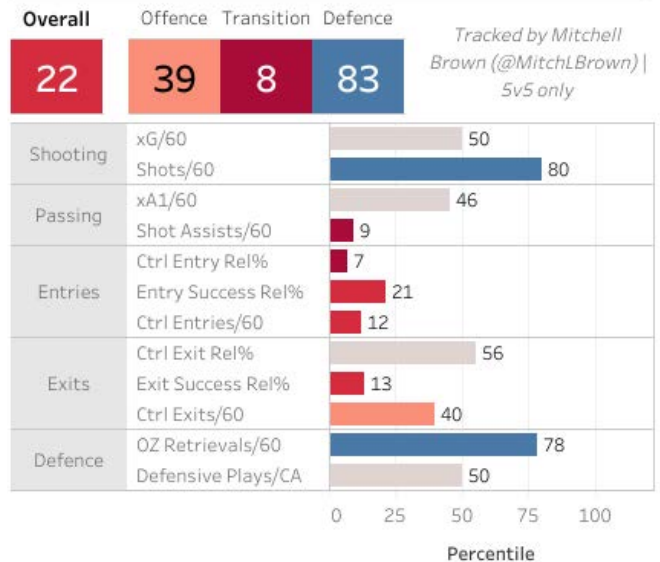
In some ways, Kai Schwindt has already beat the hockey odds. He wasn't even drafted into the OHL. Yet, he found his way to the Mississauga Steelheads and ended up ranked by NHL Central Scouting.

For the most part, Schwindt's a checker at the OHL level. He sprints up the ice to chase loose pucks, and races down it to pressure the puck carrier. An upright stance and a lack of power are offset by stride output and will. He gives himself a chance on every puck because he refuses to take his foot off the gas.

But Schwindt could be something more. OHL scout Lauren Kelly wrote, "[He's] surprisingly adept at handling the puck in small spaces and creating space for himself." In moments, he uses those handling skills to freeze defenders with a fake, before passing to an open teammate. Without the puck, he sprints his routes to back off defenders, creating space behind him. The give-and-go and flashes of shooting skill also popped up this season.

Much of Schwindt's inconsistencies with the puck can be traced to his skating. He lacks strength, sometimes getting enough ankle flexion, but rarely engaging his hips. His depth changes wildly from stride-to-stride, decreasing his

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 73.8



puck control. Defenders can simply get low and knock him off-balance, despite his hand speed.

Improved skating should unlock more consistent offence from Schwindt. The upside is probably just a depth piece, but the interesting moments and clear path to improvement are enough to justify a late-round investment.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Schwindt is a checker with some moments as a passer. In open ice, he'll occasionally deceive and he's clearly aware of teammates on the other side of defenders. In transition, he distributes at the right times and keeps his foot on the gas pedal to get open. Nothing advanced in terms of route selection or pace, but he's an effective player. Skating needs work, although a lot of it seems related to strength. He struggles to extend his knees past his toes. And when he gets there, his hips elevate and body over-rotates. He's not a pick, but he might take off next season.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 12th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Not a game to remember for Schwindt. He got his wires crossed with a teammate in the neutral zone and took them both down. Then he took an interference penalty. He did pick up a primary assist on the 5-4 goal, but it wasn't anything to write home about. I don't know if there's a draft pick in him based off this game.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 30th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Schwindt had a sweet goal in this game, firing the puck in from an impossible angle far side top shelf. He was also playing on the line that had the biggest impact in a first period that the IceDogs dominated, from the way they attacked the Niagara defence and pressured in the offensive zone. This was my strongest viewing of him all season, but I still have doubts about a long term projection in the NHL.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Schwindt had a couple of shifts on the second line, which might be the highest up in the lineup he's played all season. He didn't fare too badly either, although he fired a Grade A chance in the slot wide. He seemed to be working and moving around a little bit better in space. The Steelheads' top six is pretty much set in stone, but I wonder if he'd be a more impactful and effective player getting more minutes on another team down the road.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 20th, 2022

Oshawa Generals vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

This was an up-and-down game for Schwindt, who did show flashes of what he could be capable of. He had a couple of nice steals, but he also turned the puck over a few times. Screened the goalie on Oshawa's first goal, but

also had a nice breakaway chance, going forehand-backhand before being stopped. If he can find a way to make more of a consistent, positive impact, there might be something here.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Schwindt definitely works hard. He's reasonably disruptive on the forecheck and backcheck every shift, and he wins battles through pace and will in lieu of proper puck protection mechanics and leverage. A bit more offence than normal: finishing his routes, getting to the net, and firing off a scoring chance and a couple of shots. It doesn't equal an NHL player, but with his height, pace, and motor, I wonder if a team takes him and hope more minutes will see a breakout.

**Lauren Kelly:** December 17th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Schwindt scored the tying goal in this game, burying his own rebound after a shot on the doorstep was stopped. He also had a weak wraparound attempt that was turned aside easily. Took a slashing penalty as well. He's still not holding onto or possessing the puck enough. Don't think there's enough to his game to warrant using a draft pick on him at this point.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 5th, 2021

Oshawa Generals vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Schwindt's just a checker in the OHL. As an '03 on a non-great team, that's probably what he is at the next level. He's a straight-line attacker with some retrieval ability. Not exactly a difference-maker in the defensive end - a lot of idling and reactionary movements. Flashes some ability to find space off-puck, but not consistently. He's not a draft pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 28th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

I felt like Schwindt had more shifts in this game than normal, especially early on (that could be because Luke Misa is off at the Capital City Challenge). He had a nice neutral zone steal that he turned into a rush to the offensive zone, but his rather harmless looking shot was stopped. He laid a big hit along the boards that sent a player into the bench. Schwindt also fell three times on one shift trying and failing to get the puck back. There doesn't seem to be much to his toolkit as far as generating offense goes, though his size and agility will likely make him a pick at the draft.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 13th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

I don't think Schwindt played more than five minutes of this game. If he did, he really wasn't noticeable unless he had the puck and most of the times he had the puck were when he was dumping it into the offensive zone before going off for a line change. There was one notable play from him in this game: a good offensive zone steal and wraparound pass to the slot (that was deflected before it could reach its intended target). Otherwise there wasn't much to evaluate on.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 5th, 2021

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Swindt didn't play much in this game, which will probably be the theme for most of the season at this rate. He likes to run into people with some force. That's his game. His routes are often solely taken for the purpose of punishing the puck carrier, rather than getting it back. I can't remember a single puck play from him. Probably not a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 3rd, 2021 - Mississauga Steelheads vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

In a competitive game, the coaching staff only gave Schwindt nine shifts. I get it. He's just not much of a skill player at this stage. He takes low-percentage shots and doesn't use his teammates. Certainly physical and understands how to win battles and retrievals to a decent degree

-- get the leg in front, follow with the hips. Nothing about this performance says draft pick, but he only played six minutes.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 29th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

A similar story in this game with Schwindt. He had a nice rush and a couple of scoring chances, and showed good hustle on a backcheck, but his acceleration definitely needs improving. Schwindt is surprisingly adept at handling the puck in small spaces and creating space for himself. But there was an instance where he got caught puck-watching and accidentally collided with Zander Veccia in the neutral zone. I still feel like I haven't gotten to see his full capabilities as far as creating offense goes, because he doesn't handle the puck often enough to try and impact the game that way.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 24th, 2021

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

There were two things that stood out to me about Schwindt in this game - his size, and how fluid of a skater he was considering his height. He kept up with smaller and faster players well. He was a contributor on the penalty kill and used his body to force players off pucks. Unfortunately, he didn't make much of an impact at either end of the ice, as most of his shots came from the outsides, and didn't handle the puck all that often - he was mostly receiving passes as opposed to distributing them.

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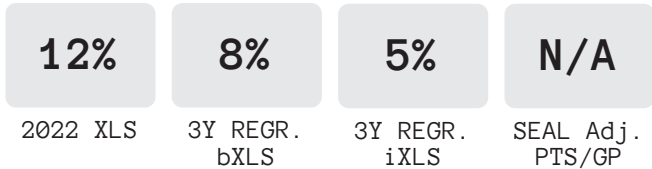
**"Improved skating should unlock more consistent offence from Schwindt. The upside is probably just a depth piece, but the interesting moments and clear path to improvement are enough to justify a late-round investment."**



# SAM SEDLEY

D | OWEN SOUND ATTACK

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JUN. 8, 2003  
WEIGHT 154 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	64	4	38	42

## Scouting Report

Despite mediocre point totals as a re-entry, Sam Sedley is one of the most fascinating prospects in hockey. In some viewings, he's a modern hockey genius, using activation, manipulation, and puck skills to dissect entire teams shift-after-shift.

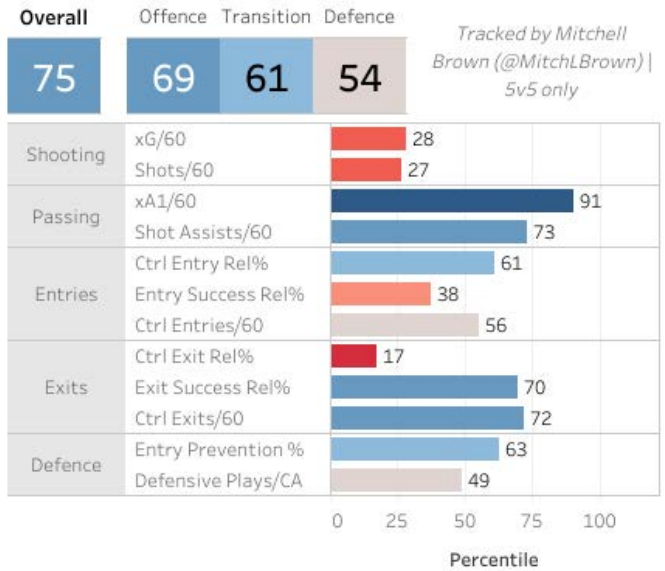
Never content to stand on the point, Sedley uses in-motion give-and-gos and crafty high-to-low passes to push play to the inside while also activating into the play. From there, he establishes body positioning, sneaks off the weak side to become a shooting threat, or skates straight down the middle to create confusion. He does all of this off the rush, and often in quick succession.

Skilled and creative, Sedley clearly can turn this intelligence into more points going forward. He chains in-tight dekes into backhand passes and slips pucks under defenders' sticks.

While Sedley's gap control is too passive, he shows many modern skills in the defensive third. He's a lockdown off-puck defender who anticipates switches of coverage, funnels attackers to the point, and shows play-killing instincts. When skating for loose pucks, he often deceives and then makes high skill plays through his legs or off the backhand to a teammate on the inside, starting the breakout.

To bring these skills to the NHL, Sedley must develop better details. Too often, he takes pucks flatfooted and then waits for opponents to come to him. In the offensive end, it

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 172.2



prevents him from making the most of his many impressive activation reads. In transition, it leads to dump outs and failed passes. And his inconsistent willingness or ability to manipulate incoming defenders and reset to find controlled plays could prevent him reaching the NHL entirely.

If Sedley develops the details, he could become an impactful NHLer. That projection, however, is just as much a projection of Sedley's game as it is the NHL continuing to move in the direction of activation and full-team offensive involvement.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 23rd, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Sedley's still an fascinating prospect. The activation and play-killing instincts are legitimate, although hindered by poor habits sometimes. He concedes too much ground, despite having a skating advantage on most players at this level. With the puck, he tends to take pucks flatfooted or stops the play entirely. Then, he just waits for defenders to come to him. But he doesn't accelerate. It led to multiple turnovers and missed opportunities in this game. Many of his passing ideas are quite sound: look inside, pass cross-ice, then join the rush. Quite deceptive from the point. Handling skill created his assist, where he deked around the defender then immediately passed off the backhand. Sedley has a lot of NHL qualities, but the details, execution, and pace remain concerns.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 2nd, 2022

Kitchener Rangers vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

One of the best activation games I've seen from any prospect all season. In one sequence, Sedley activated with a give-and-go, established body positioning on the nearest defender, got open on the short side, then cut across the middle while facing the play ready for a one-timer, then used another

give-and-go to return to the point. That's Owen Power stuff. He had a bunch of other sequences that showed handling skill, timing, awareness of options, proactive movement, and body positioning. He always skates through a defender's route when activating. Moves his top hand across his body when handling for better control in-tight. Other elements shown: killing plays at the blue line, off-puck defensive instincts, well-timed pinches, playmaking from the point. The only thing that keeps Sedley back from making our board is the details. He takes too many pucks flatfooted, preventing him from completing many of his best activation ideas. In transition, he stands and waits for pressure to come to him instead of skating at it and manipulating. With front and side pressure in transition, he tries to outrace or chip pucks past instead of cutting inside or passing cross-ice. Better details and pressure management will help him use those activation instincts at the next level, and more consistently in the OHL.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Despite repeatedly finding himself in the same situations, Sedley's puck decisions vary considerably. The good is extremely good. He doesn't just win retrievals; he completely





eliminates the threat then makes a clean play to an open teammate immediately. When he activates, he commits. And he activates in sustainable ways: give-and-gos, weak side dashes, trailing the play. If no short-range passes are available, he resets and finds a better option or looks to the middle. The bad is that, despite no real change in situation, he doesn't do these regularly. He gets forced into the odd poor decision and does nothing with too many offensive zone touches. Pulled the trigger too much, but the main issue was that he doesn't recognize opportunities to build the play. It's strange. Defensively, he's solid but sometimes passive in his gap. Engages with the pass or stickhandle. Angles the odd attack. Some switchability. Better off-puck where he's eliminating threats. Reminiscent of Cale Fleury without the shot.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 10th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Erie Otters - OHL

There some outstanding moments from Sadley, but this was mostly an underwhelming performance. The craftiness on retrievals mostly resulted in turnovers. While he activated and tried to make plays, he offloaded the puck too early. Several break ups and failed entries against, but he also back off and got deked through. As usual, the mobility, willingness to try plays, and DZ coverage were impressive, but he just didn't have it in this game. Not an outing that suggests that an NHL draft pick, but I've seen better.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

A retrieval masterclass from Sedley in this game, especially early on. Three of his best: one-touch between the legs pass through a forechecker to the inside, detecting space before spinning to face the slot and then beating the forechecker to the inside with a backhand pass, and backhand pass off the boards to the inside lane. He's definitely one of the best at retrievals in the entire CHL. And then he activates, sprinting past his check while adjusting and adapting his route to support the play. Takes the middle in transition and looks for the kick out just as he crosses the blue line. The rush activation keeps him gapped up in the NZ. Consistent down low defender with angling, physicality, and awareness. Took some faceoffs on the PK. Didn't create any offence in this game, or even really activate. Lacks the in-motion handling

skill to make the most of his brain, which also leads to him throwing away pucks in situations where his archetype usually creates a clean exit. Still, he's an impressive prospect with a clear path to improvement. I'd pick him.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 20th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Sedley's a re-entry, but he looked fantastic in this game. Passive through the NZ, but he closes space quickly in the DZ. Engages at the right times and stays locked on to his check. Slowly takes away space on the cycle while guiding the puck up the boards. His mobility and willingness to engage higher in the zone likely explain why Owen Sound used him as a centre to close out the game with a one-goal lead - he even took the faceoffs! Some crafty retrievals, including one between the legs pass after scanning and identifying the teammate on the middle. Lots of activation in nearly every form: weak side, with the puck, in the rush, down the middle in OZP. Consistently looks to set up teammates from those positions, creating two chances with well-timed passes through a defender. He lacks the in motion handling skill to manipulate, break down defenders, and create lanes, which limits the upside at the next level. Still, he looked like a player I'd draft in the third-round. Impressive performance.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Some play connection issues in this game, but Sedley has a ton of modern NHL defenceman qualities. First, he regularly joins the rush and takes aggressive OZ positioning. That positioning shrinks the distance required to pinch, as well as giving him options to move backwards with the puck. With a bit more handling skill and confidence, Sedley could become quite the playmaker from those positions. He already shows the ideas: give-and-gos, looking cross-slot for opportunities, and taking angular routes with the puck to draw extra defensive attention. In transition, he consistently uses the inside lane, even under pressure. He often takes pucks from the boards and to the middle, before looking to the perimeter for teammates sprinting. Defensive timing is a strength, but defensive skating has some weaknesses. He backs off way too early, which is especially surprising given his OZ positioning. Looks like a worthwhile pick as a re-entry.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Transitions



Hands



Tracking



Post



Depth

# T.J. SEMPTIMPFELTER

G | NORTHEASTERN UNIV.

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. FEB. 7, 2004  
WEIGHT 179 CATCHES LEFT

LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
NCAA	8	2.05	.934	-

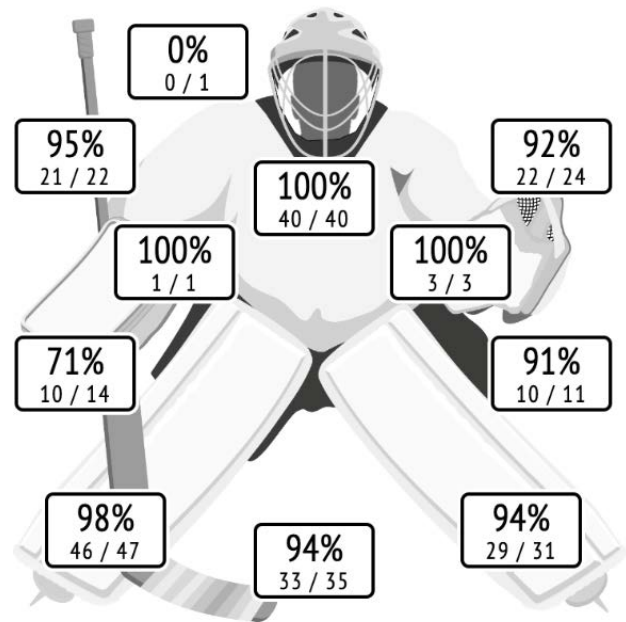
## Scouting Report

This may finally be the year that T.J. Semptimpfelter gets to hear his name called at the NHL Entry Draft. His excellent work with Northeastern filling in for Devon Levi while he was away at the Olympics should be enough to warrant some consideration from the NHL this go around anyway. Especially in a pretty weak goaltending class.

Having said that, Semptimpfelter is still a tricky evaluation. He's much more consistent than anyone in this class, but he's also two years older than most of his competition. His game tape at Northeastern offered some truly impressive performances to ponder, but he also displayed some technical tendencies that could ward general managers away from him again at the draft.

His game is characterized by structured movement and crisp edgework, and he doesn't seem to lose track of the play very often. But he doesn't take up much of the net on his own, and he lacks that extra gear that so many of the game's most effective 'smaller' goaltenders possess that pushes them across the crease faster and out to challenge sooner.

He certainly holds his own and rarely overcommits on plays, which gives him an air of confidence most young



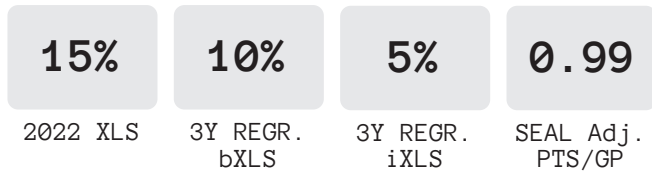
goaltenders would kill for – but with very little to offer in the way of game tape over the last few years to get a feel for how he handles those games he'd need to steal, it's hard to say with confidence that he's got the necessary tools in his game to thrive at the higher levels.



# YEGOR SIDOROV

F | SASKATOON BLADES

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. JUN. 18, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	58	23	12	35

## Scouting Report

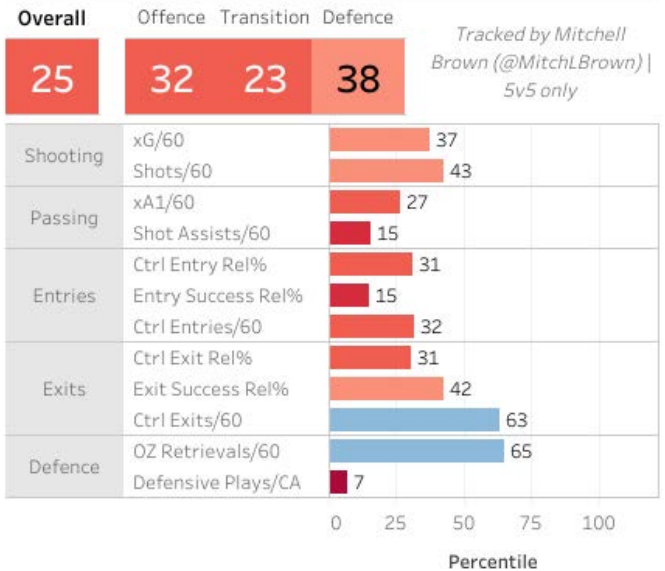
The transition from Belarus to the WHL hockey was a relatively smooth one for Egor Sidorov. After a hot start, he spent much of the season inside a top-six role.

Sidorov's habits with the puck are often translatable. He doesn't force plays, preferring to delay to wait for help. In the offensive end, he slips behind defenders and times his sprints to the net for opportunities. Handling skill leads to deft net-front plays and the occasional flashy move through a defender. There's also an inside-lane component to his game, making quick passes to moving targets in transition and cutting away from defenders along the boards.

When given a bit of space along the boards, he shows skating skills, puck protection mechanics, and handling ability," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a late-March game report. "In one sequence, he waited for the defender to arrive, accelerated, then cut back into space."

Despite the interesting flashes, Sidorov rarely creates high-value offence. He shoots from low-percentage areas with open teammates in better positions. His patience often works against him along the perimeter, preferring to cut

Games Tracked: 9 | Minutes Tracked: 133.8



back time-after-time as he looks for the perfect opening. Since he lacks the skills to manipulate defender, the perfect lane rarely opens.

Building better links between his individual skills could make Sidorov an intriguing prospect. Without them, he's likely an AHLer.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: April 26th, 2022

Saskatoon Blades vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Sidorov had a somewhat intriguing game in transition. He didn't force plays wide, instead gaining the zone, then

cutting towards the middle of delaying. None of these plays resulted in anything, losing control of the puck or trying a no-chance pass. Tried a deke that failed. The skating lacks depth but he gets reasonable through his cutbacks and turns

while showing agility and edge-to-edge quickness. There are moments where he looks like an NHL, and I like some of his habits, but I don't think it's quite enough.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 30th, 2022

Saskatoon Blades vs. Regina Pats - WHL

There were moments of NHL ability from Sidorov. He completes boards-to-middle passes on breakouts, even off the backhand. When given a bit of space along the boards, he shows skating skills, puck protection mechanics, and handling ability. In one sequence, he waited for the defender to arrive, accelerated, then cut back into space. Body positioning for a net drive chance. Missed a high-danger passing opportunity to take a medium-danger shot, furthering questions about his vision. Even in his best sequences, he rarely creates something notable. He's too patient, waiting for windows to open that never do, and lacking the skill and awareness to manipulate for better options. I don't see him as a candidate for our board, but he's an interesting player.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Wong and Lisowsky had excellent performances; Sidorov was just along for the ride. He's not an NHL-calibre skater or shooter. He struggles to push his knees past his toes. Heels kick and blades strike the ice only on his inside edges. Some moments are skilled board play, he's likely not a legit prospect. Not enough skill, passing, ideas, or even off-puck value. Not a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 27th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Despite the high QoT, Sidorov was possibly the most bland player in the game. He doesn't scan with the puck - he just guesses. He's turnover-prone as a result. There are moments of great ideas: delaying for options, cutting back, using the middle. But because he doesn't scan, he doesn't have any awareness of threats and options. Doesn't have the puck protection to problem-solve. Didn't see NHL upside in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 20th, 2022

Saskatoon Blades vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Sidorov accomplished a lot in this game, starting in transition. He didn't force plays wide. Instead, he delayed for support. Made a quick pass to the middle. Down low, he drove play to the net, usually for a jam play. Off-puck, he was solid. He disrupted plays and supported the puck. Showed scoring instincts several times. In the best sequence, he reloaded high. As the puck came up the far side boards, he sprinted past his check down the weak side and received the pass. Elbow, head, and chest up through the shot - nearly

snuck it in. But that he didn't shoot it immediately off the pass, despite a perfect pass reception continues to suggest a lack of awareness. When given a bit of space along the boards, he cuts back until he finds an opening. Lack of depth and a locked upper body prevent him from exploding out of this manoeuvres (he also stumbled through one). Interesting prospect, but I still don't see quick enough upside here. Lots of individual parts with few links between them, and skating could prove limiting.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Saskatoon Blades vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Sidorov scored with a wrister off the pass after creating the zone entry. That was about it for this game. He's easily pressured into poor decisions with the puck. He skates straight up the boards into pressure, and doesn't have the skill or awareness to escape with possession. Not an off-puck player, either: he's late, reactive, and misses space. Some impact through supporting reads. Nothing that suggested an NHL pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 6th, 2021

Prince Albert Raiders vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Sidorov's a bit of a mess with the puck. He's easily kept the outside in transition, forces plays, and runs himself straight into sticks and shoulders. He ranges from individualistic to too optimistic with his passes. In the OZ, things tighten up a bit. Retrievals continue to be a strength, where he deceives before getting the puck. Looked off his passing target and identifies options through layers, one time hitting an activating defenceman against the grain. Net drive goal -- not translatable, but he pushed the defender's stick out of the way and carried the puck across the crease before shooting. Stride proper extensions, but he gets almost enough ankle flexion (hips don't follow, however). Overall, he looked like a draft pick. Certainly has the hands. The rest of his game will require greater development throughout the season.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 13th, 2021

Brandon Wheat Kings vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Out of many prospects in this game, Sidorov showed the most high-level skill, even if he wasn't particularly good. One sequence stood out, starting with the retrieval. He pre-scanned twice, prepared space, and escaped with a double cut. Punch turn escape on the pass reception after baiting the defender on his next touch, before getting open off-puck for a chance. And then drove the inside. In the process, he showed an awareness of pressure that no other prospect did. The off-puck instincts featured throughout the game, but he wasn't limited by forcing plays that weren't there in the NZ like crazy. He only played 9 minutes at 5-on-5. Need a closer look.



# GRAYDEN SIEPMANN

D | CALGARY HITMEN

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAY. 26, 2004  
WEIGHT 185 SHOOTS RIGHT

15%	10%	5%	0.64
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	66	9	16	25
WJC-18	3	2	1	3

## Scouting Report

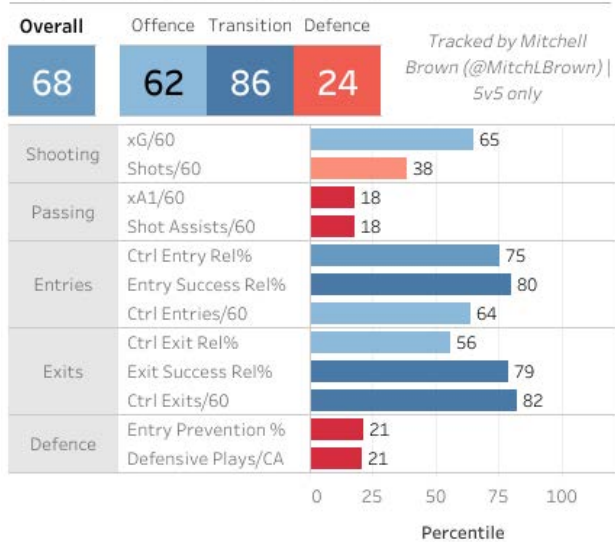
In the early stages of the season, Grayden Siepmann was barely even a blip on our radar. But after steady improvement throughout the year, along with several standout performances, we grew to believe in his NHL upside.

Not an explosive or particularly quick player, Siepmann relies on fluidity and deception to create. On breakouts, the deception appears by orienting his body and eyes in one direction and waiting for the reaction of the forechecker. Then, he passes into the space the forechecker just exited. That skill accesses inside-lane and far-side options – the best lanes to create advantages up the ice. Just when it seems like he’s out of space, he cuts back or slides the puck under the defender’s stick and retrieves it on the other side.

Those same skills appear in the offensive zone, punctuated by well-timed activation. It is, however, uncommon for Siepmann to create high-value offence. Many of his touches are either deception from a glide or immediately settling for the simple play. With a bit more patience and movement with the puck, his advantage creation-focused breakouts and flashy offensive sequences will appear more frequently.

Siepmann’s growth as a defender throughout the season was significant. While he’s not a play-killer, he contains

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 126.2



plays through keeping a tight gap and pivoting early to angle without over-extending. He’s a proactive off-puck defender, too. Areas of potential growth include eliminating off-puck threats instead of overplaying passing lanes and relying more on body positioning to win battles.

A crafty breakout artist with activation and some defence value, Siepmann could make for an interesting mid-round selection.

**J.D. Burke:** April 26th, 2022

Canada vs. Czechia - U18s

Full marks to Siepmann, who's made the most of a secondary role on the Canadian blue line at this tournament. His goal in today's loss (Siepmann charged the net and sent home a loose puck laying on the doorstep) has him leading the Canadian blue line in points and second on the team in scoring period. I've really been impressed by his ability to find soft-ice as a trailer or during sustained offensive zone sequences. His offensive sense is something that warrants further inquiry, because it may be enough to make Siepmann a player for the end of our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 13th, 2022

Red Deer Rebels vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Didn't see much from Siepmann. He made one of the short-range breakout plays that were interesting in previous viewings, but mostly made up-the-boards, low-reward plays. Didn't achieve much offensively, mostly making simple plays in his few trips up the ice. Defensively, he has instincts. He identifies his check and gets stops through well-timed engagements. A lack of consistent body positioning (and taking away attackers' sticks) limits his effectiveness overall. Often ends up on the wrong side of defenders because he gambles on many of his plays. On retrievals, he makes simple plays and while he scans, he scans too early – the information often changes. Didn't see any draftable qualities in this game, but I've seen better from him.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Siepmann lacks the offensive details to make the most of his mind. He passes inside movement, but never with purpose. He doesn't pressure the middle to draw the defender across before cutting back down the outside, for example. He sees space and skates into it without setting it up. On breakouts, he's inconsistent but potentially a positive. He cuts back, delays, uses the middle, and sometimes manipulates incoming pressure. Always looking cross-ice for options. Deceives regularly, combining looks off and body orientation to mask his intentions. Sometimes holds the deception too long, and loses his target as a result. Cutbacks are rigid and stiff, but they're sudden and well-timed. Lacks the upper-lower separation to pull away from forecheckers. Even with his breakout skill, he has moments where he just offloads the puck without cause. Defensively, he's solid. He pivots early to angle plays to the perimeter and doesn't over-extend. Some reactionary defensive zone coverage at times, and he's prone to get stuck behind attackers. Also has moments of

proactivity, where he's scanning, moving, and eliminating threats. There are some skills here. Think he could be a candidate for the end of our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Calgary Hitmen vs. Medicine Hat Tigers - WHL

Siepmann did the usual stuff, but also showed a bit more defensive upside. He got inside on attackers, then tied up their stick. Got low and used his feet to pin attackers along the board. Offensively, he showed much more vision and willingness to pass. In one shift, he faked the shot while looking off the passing lane, passed, then dangled around a defender and tried a backhand pass to the slot. A consistent theme in his passing is either that he does low-pace deception or he settles. There's a middle-ground. Deceiving while moving and cutting back to escape pressure and then try again will give him the extra layer he needs to make the most of his advantage-focused breakout passing (and make him more effective from the point). To be fair, he has moments from the point: stepping into space, cutting back, then continuing to build the offence. An interesting prospect, for sure. Upside through ideas, deception, and skill level, but the links need strengthening.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 15th, 2022

Calgary Hitmen vs. Winnipeg ICE - WHL

Siepmann has tools, skills, and fluidity. He's smooth. He's a slick handler with many creative ideas. Reads the feet of incoming pressure. Makes plays through, around, on the heels of pressure. Looks cross-ice and to the inside on breakouts. Some deceptiveness, although not always with a purpose. His awareness of space and details lack in moments; he's too late on many of his plays. He's best when he cuts away from pressure or delays before manipulating. Too often, he tries to immediately make the high-value play and turns the puck over. Breakouts are hit-and-miss as a result, despite the obvious skills. Defensively, he's fine. Gap's inconsistent, but he tries and has instincts in-tight. Getting body positioning by using his size to his advantage could make him an NHL average projection. He's an end-of-board candidate. Should score a bunch next year.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 20th, 2022

Saskatoon Blades vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Siepmann's skilled. In one sequence, he took a puck off the boards, read the feet of the forecheckers, delayed, and then sent a perfect cross-ice saucer pass for the exit. Quick evasive handling moves help him escape pressure in-tight. He looks inside on many of his plays along the boards.

Hands and feet operate independently. Never seems locked into plays. And many of his pinches are well-timed. But he rarely makes the best play. Sometimes, he does all the work but then offloads possession, even with an advantage created up the ice. One shift, he's making a skilled play through two forecheckers. The next, he's throwing away possession with time, space, and multiple options. He's an effective defender when he gets on his check early and kills plays in the neutral zone. Loses some of that ability in the defensive end, where he overplays the passing lane and gets boxed out by threats around the net. Maybe an end-of-board candidate but his NHL odds are slim.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Winnipeg Ice vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Siepmann's pinches were the only part of his game working tonight. He extends OZ possession with well-timed sprints down the boards and he's reasonably clever in making the next play. Some aggressive OZ positioning allowed him to get a scoring chance, too, but no notable skill was shown. He remains a capable defender, particularly in the DZ, because he's scanning and proactive in his positioning. Lacks some play-killing ability, particularly off the rush. If he took a tighter gap and took control of the attacker's lane, he'd have far more success. In transition, he lacks patience. He just throws the puck away with all amounts and types of pressure. His lack of patience is most visible with front pressure - he doesn't pass through forecheckers, let alone manipulate them. I didn't see a draft pick in this game, but it was a tough outing for Calgary.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 6th, 2022

Regina Pats vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Dynamic. Siepmann created opportunities by joining the rush, leading it, and activating from the point. Proactive rush activation, getting ahead of the play up the weak side. Used the give-and-go, then deked through a defender. Dangled through three players for his assist. Fast hands, but the details are even better: he doesn't overhandle through his movements, keeps his head up, and keeps pucks just outside the reach of defenders. Highly deceptive in this game, frequently looking in one direction, waiting for the reaction of the forechecker, then passing in a different space. He even does it under pressure. Then, inexplicably, he throws the puck away, passes on the heels of teammates, or skates into pressure after beating one player. His game has some foresight (advantage creation in transition through manipulating and playmaking), but it's not fully developed. A relatively generic defensive performance: he scans, but he overcommits; passive in the neutral zone, but tightens up the defensive end. His defensive range isn't massive, so killing plays early and eliminating off-puck threats will be key to his development. Looked like a late-second tonight.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 2nd, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Siepmann only had flashes: give-and-go in transition, inside-outside lateral movement to drive wide and fire off a shot, some slipperiness with the puck to escape in-tight. Defence lacked some play-killing ability, but his habits are mostly positive: scanning, aware, trying to close distance. He's rarely too committing, but usually too passive, or at least late. I'm intrigued.



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Rank



Grade



Skating



Transitions



Hands



Tracking



Post



Depth

# DYLAN SILVERSTEIN

G | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. FEB. 7, 2004  
 WEIGHT 179 CATCHES LEFT

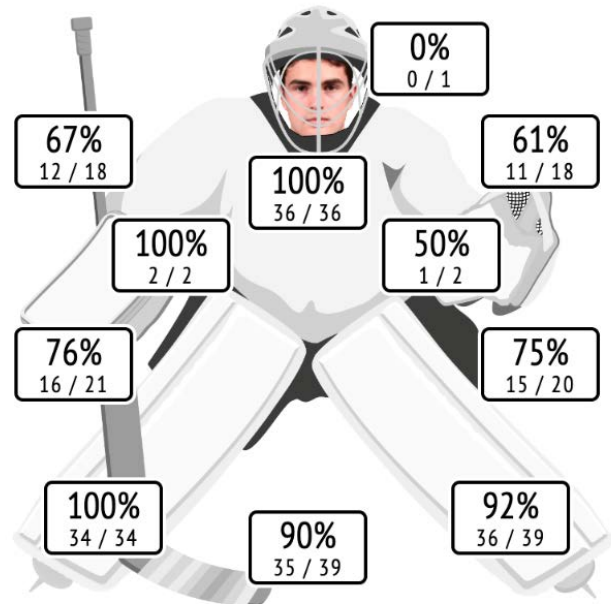
LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
USDP	20	3.52	.878	2
USHL	9	3.92	.846	0

## Scouting Report

The USNTDP is like an All-Star team for American U18 hockey players, so just playing in a starting role is a fairly impressive accomplishment on Dylan Silverstein's part. And despite the variance typically seen in their stats with the program - a combination of the wide range of competition level they face and the unique structure of the program from a goaltender standpoint - they tend to earn recognition as goaltending's darlings from the states.

Silverstein has some tough acts to follow, though; he's set to fall somewhere in the middle of the pack for goaltenders at the draft, a far cry from the fanfare that accompanied both Drew Comness and Spencer Knight during their own draft years.

That's partially a byproduct of the bizarre offerings this draft class possesses in-net, to be sure. But it's also a byproduct of Silverstein's own game; he's a bit too aggressive and not quite structured enough while clocking in at just 6-foot-even. He's unafraid to get a little creative with his saves, something a few of this year's class are woefully lacking in their games. But when he needs to slow things down and fit his game into a systemic defensive structure in front of



him, he gets just a little too antsy to get moving to really make scouts feel comfortable tabbing him as a sure thing.

Luckily, though, he's headed to Boston College - which gives him the opportunity to follow in Knight's footsteps as he works on adding some technical precision to his arsenal.



"When [Silverstein] needs to slow things down and fit his game into a systemic defensive structure in front of him, he gets just a little too antsy to get moving to really make scouts feel comfortable tabbing him as a sure thing."

**Cat Silverman:** Jan. 21, 2022

USNTDP vs. Lake Superior State University

It always tells a lot about a goaltender to watch a game in which they just come absolutely unglued, and this particular game was no exception – and not necessarily in a bad way. It's clear that Silverstein's downfall in this game was the lack of sustained, rhythmic flow on both ends of the ic. He does his best work when the game establishes that rhythm early on for him, providing him the opportunity to shake off any of that delayed reaction speed that some goaltenders can fall victim to when they aren't able to play on instinct. So although the USNTDP held Lake Superior State to just four

shots in the first nearly thirty minutes of game play, that lack of movement kept Silverstein from really getting a chance to shine. He doesn't play well when required to hold a more structured, nuanced game positionally, and that hurt him enough in this game that he allowed a goal on every other shot that he faced. While it's clear that he just didn't feel comfortable when presented with that style of opponent, though, it was promising to see that he came close to making most of the saves he needed – and if he can fine-tune some of the more technical elements of his game, he could quickly elevate himself out of middling territory and become reasonably lethal.





Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

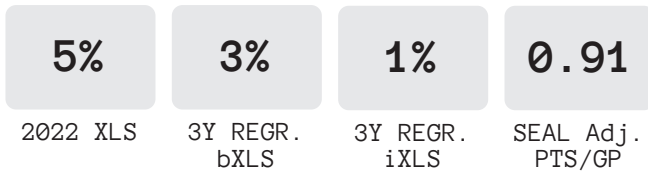


Physical

# LANDON SIM

C | LONDON KNIGHTS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JUL. 17, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	64	12	9	21

## Scouting Report

One of London's many intriguing low-minute draft-eligible players, Landon Sim looks primed for a breakout.

With the puck, Sim shows skill and creativity. He sets moves and passes up on his backhand, enabling access to lanes that most prospects can't access. As he approaches defenders, he puts the puck inside his hip pocket and waits for the reach before deking. The details appear in his passing where he uses eye deception and his shooting, as he will pull the puck around a defender's stick.

As Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown explains, Sim also brings physicality and some off-puck impact: "He chooses between supporting and engaging at the right times. Where many players sprint straight at the puck carrier, he angles them to the outside."

To make an impact in London's top-six, Sim will have to improve his rush patterns and timing. While he flashes creativity in open-ice, he defaults to outracing defenders in transition and gets stuck along the boards. And too often,

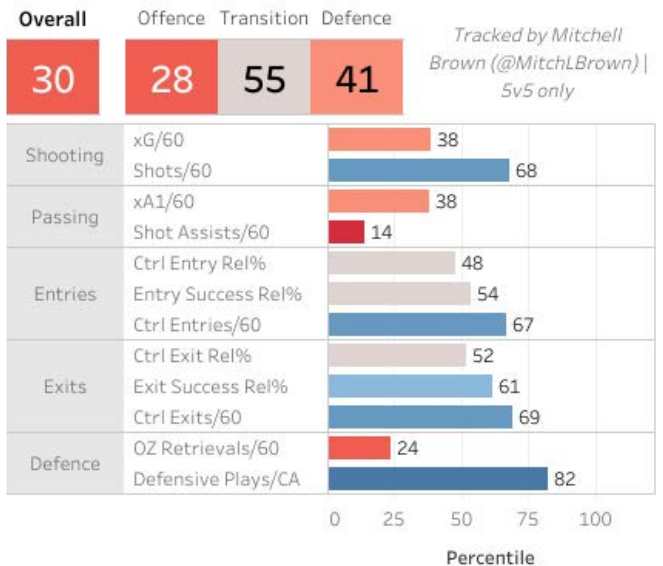
## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 2nd, 2022

London Knights vs. Barrie Colts - OHL

Sim scored off a broken play in the front of the net. It was the only notable offensive play of his performance. Still, his off-puck game is admirable. He chooses between supporting and engaging the right times. Where many players sprint straight at the puck carrier, he angles them to the outside.

Games Tracked: 10 | Minutes Tracked: 107.2



he ends up chasing the play instead of anticipating it. Sim has upside, but it will take a while to unlock it.

Didn't see any of the slick offensive skills I've seen before. But he still seems like a player who will thrive with a bigger role.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

Another solid game from Sim. Defence continues to improve. He reads the puck carrier while keeping an eye on attackers

around him. That allows him to intercept passes, proactively eliminate threats, and win races to pucks along the walls. Knees bent, head moving is his usual defensive posture. Offensively, he's crafty. Tried a between the legs shot that was actually functional! How rare. In another sequence, he pulled the puck back, waited for the reach in, and then deked around the defender and drove the net for a chance. The potential is clear: a defensively responsible third or fourth liner with handling skill and some point-getting upside. He's not quite as skilled as Crane, but he's likely to score next year. Could be a solid late-round addition.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Flint Firebirds vs. London Knights - OHL

Sim scored off a turnover and had several interesting plays. He's a skilled handler with inventive ideas. In one sequence, he took a pass, spun away from pressure, and created a clear lane to the net (had he accelerated out of the move). In transition, he used crossovers to change the angle of attack, then switched directions to gain the zone. While he wasn't pressing the middle regularly, he gives defenders plenty to think about. Spots teammates on the inside from the boards, and while he's not making the perfect pass, he's able to pass through a defender. The rest of his game wasn't particularly interesting. But there's enough reason for a team to pick him. He's likely to score a lot next season.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Sim's gamely impressive offensive play led to goal. He saw back pressure, turned his back just as they leaned on him, turning the hit into a speed boost. And that was it, as usual. There's potential here, from his lane-changing acts to his flashes of advanced offensive skill. He's a worker who understands how to support plays, get open, and disrupt the puck carrier. The make complicate things. Time to watch more.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 11th, 2022

London Knights vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

I don't know that I saw anything from Sim in this game that would indicate he'd have success at future levels. He was late to space, late to pressure puck carriers, late to chasing after the puck, and didn't have the puck all that much himself to create plays. His timing was a big issue in this one. I liked his effort

and engagement level, but the execution needs work and his decision-making seemed a bit slow.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 3rd, 2021

Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

Sim connected with a backhand cross-slot pass for a scoring chance, grabbed the rebound, and then extended OZ time by running over a player. Those last two are his game, the first one provides a potential offensive identity. The physicality translates into a knack for killing plays in the NZ. Turning that physicality into puck protection would open more playmaking opportunities. Plays too fast and straight-line with the puck in transition. He's a skilled handler but often prefers to take the puck wide and fling into it to the zone once he's run out of space. It requires some imagination, but perhaps Sim could become a fourth-liner. I need to watch more.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Of the Knights' many low-minute draft eligible forwards, Sim's physicality stood out the most. He punched someone a couple of times, before throwing a huge hit along the boards. Even when his team has possession, he understands how to use physicality to establish positioning, gain the inside, and create openings. That resulted in his best shift of the game, a give-and-go sequence followed by a spinning shot after following the play. Pushes plays inside and comes at defenders at an angle - easy to see that leading to more high-skill plays in the future. Definitely looked the part of a late-rounder, but the minutes were few and far between.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 16th, 2021

London Knights vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Sim is a shifty skater with the potential for manipulation - he wasn't really creating much with the puck in this one, but he did show some flashes every so often, especially when rushing the puck up the ice. Though he didn't play all that much, he had some really long shifts in this game - some close to two minutes long. It got to a point where I was concerned about fatigue if play turned the other way and he was caught, or if he'd been hemmed in his own end for extended time. This was a pretty limited viewing though, so I wasn't able to draw too many conclusions.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# SEMYON SINYATKIN

F | MHK DYNAMO ST. PETERSBURG

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. MAR. 14, 2004  
WEIGHT 183 SHOOTS LEFT

3%	2%	2%	0.73
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
MHL	55	21	14	35

## Scouting Report

If one were to describe Semyon Sinyatkin in a single word, the one our staff would land on is industrious. This is a player who makes things happen by sheer will and ingenuity.

So much of Sinyatkin's offence this season was the result of applying pressure to the opposition at every corner of the ice and quickly countering. He showed an above-average ability to retain possession once he'd taken the puck from his opponents and then find his teammates with well-placed passes as a distributor. Even at the MHL level, though, Sin-

yatkin looks like more of a supportive and complementary forward than a real difference-maker. Someone who scores with effort and opportunism rather than by manipulating opponents. There isn't much finishing ability there either.

Sinyatkin also has to fix some mechanical problems in his stride, mainly the fact that he punctuates each one with a heel kick and recovers too wide. If he can add the necessary speed, he could create a role for himself on a KHL line, but a future in the NHL may well be out of the cards.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** March 8th, 2022

Amuskie Tigry vs Dynamo SPb - MHL

Hard work in all three zones. Reloads above the puck, catches up to the play, and helps his teammates. I liked Sinyatkin's defensive involvement overall. It netter him a couple of scoring chances off the turnovers he created. The heels are kicking in his skating, but he generates enough speed. I don't see a lot of finishing ability or potential in his game. The skills look below-average. Some puck protection and battling abilities.

**Dylan Griffing:** October 5th, 2021

MHK Dynamo St. Petersburg vs. MHK Spartak M. - MHL

Sinyatkin worked hard offensively to break the puck into

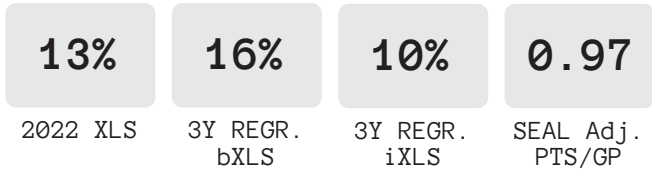
the zone and fight for open ice. He played in tight and deep, using his deceptive footwork and stick handling to weave in and out of close quarters. Outside of that, there wasn't a whole lot to take away from his game. His defensive awareness was less than ideal. Lost track of the puck a handful of times or overcorrected himself and went hyper aggressive for the puck unsuccessfully. He did engage in puck battles early and often. Average skater, lacking the open-ice footwork to attack defenders one-on-one, which led him to taking the outside lane every time. Not much dangerous offense was coming directly from him, mostly a complementary player on his line.



# JAKE SLOAN

F | TRI-CITY AMERICANS

HEIGHT 6'4" D.O.B. FEB. 13, 2004  
 WEIGHT 214 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	58	1	17	18

## Scouting Report

Jake Sloan went from a third-round pick to an effective full-time WHLer in just two seasons, largely driven by his passing skill.

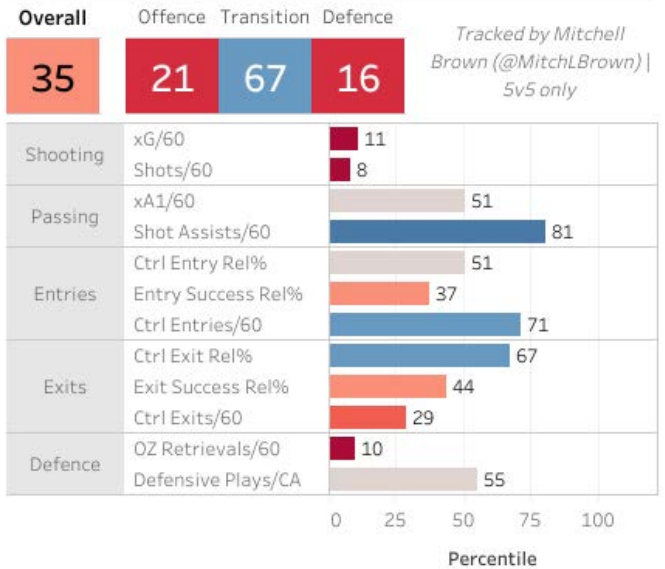
Sloan connects with backhand passes through defenders, forehand passes under sticks, and even deceives on occasion to prolong a passing window.

With skating as a weakness, Sloan uses his passing skill to make the early play, before relocating for a return pass. Rather than race defenders, he cuts back and looks for the trailer or cuts inside and hits the player driving the net.

While Sloan shows defensive ability and off-puck offence by skating his routes, his lack of pace and quickness greatly limit his impact. He never seems to find the extra gear needed to kill a play or create a passing lane.

Similarly, Sloan doesn't have the physical skills one expects for a player his stature. He improved at establishing body positioning around the net front, but he still struggles to get and keep defenders on his back along the boards. That's partly an unawareness of pressure and partly skating, unable to transition to his outside edges and turn while along

Games Tracked: 5 | Minutes Tracked: 64.9



the boards.

A lot has to go right for Sloan to make the NHL – improved skating, physical skills, and pace – but players of his stature always get a little extra time.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: April 1st, 2022

Tri-City Americans vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Sloan has passing skill. He connects off the backhand, uses give-and-gos, slip passes through defenders, and makes quick plays off the boards. The shot's a problem and his first touch

when moving kills plays before they start. He also doesn't have many physical skills despite his size. Along the boards, he tries to establish positioning sometimes, but opponents easily use his high centre of gravity against him and pin him to the boards. In front of the net, he better at establishing

positioning to keep his stick free, but it's far from a strength. He's a solid off-puck defender who eliminates threats, but a lack of pace gives him true stopping power. He's not a candidate for our board, but there's a bit of upside here.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Spokane Chiefs vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Sloan's not just slow, he's low pace. He never seems to have the extra gear necessary to pull away pressure, win the battle, or get the stop defensively. Lacks physical skills, too. Limited hand skills and coordination, losing pucks without much pressure but he has moments of fluidity. However, he's a skilled passer. He slips pucks through defenders, completes passes off the boards, and even adds in a bit of deception at times. While he lacks the foot speed to make use of it, he supports plays by shrinking distance to the puck carrier and always presenting his stick. It falls apart in front of the net, where he plants his feet and doesn't establish positioning on players. Tough to picture him in the NHL.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 5th, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

A simple game from Sloan, making little impact on the game beyond the occasional pass. Identified options and connected, but none of his plays required much skill. In one sequence, he cut inside and then tried a backhand pass that was far too late – either delaying to wait for the middle lane drive or making the early pass would've been the best play. He doesn't show any board skills either. Didn't look like a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 14th, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Blowout game, this one. Sloan showed that he has a bit of vision, completing the return pass on a teammate's give-and-go twice on the powerplay. Then, he started a give-and-go of his own scoring chance, accelerating out of the pass and then behind a defender. He's lumbering, but there's a bit of finesse to his game. He doesn't just sprint, he slows down, cuts inside, and makes quick passes. Mechanically, his shot is limited. He heels one-timers and sweeps pucks toward the net. Didn't look like a draft pick, but he's close. There's some skill here.

**Daniel Gee:** November 20th, 2021

Tri-City Americans vs Prince George Cougars -WHL

Out of the major draft eligible Tri-City players in this game, Sloan put together the most productive game out of his cohorts, who were caved in shots wise for most of the game.

A rather low paced player in all situations, most of Sloans

better sequences happened in sustained offensive zone pressure. Net-front plants, end-board supporting plays and ring passing facilitation makes the core of his game very simple. Lack of intensity and motor is apparent -- especially off-puck as he moved to pressure Cougar defenders. On one shift he was able to pull a puck out of a corner battle, cutting to the far-boards before sending a low pass into the middle (at least he's somewhat inside-oriented). Handling, passing, skating are all below average. He baulked on a sure goal in the second; planted on the right-hand circle, a Cougar turned over the puck tape-to-tape. With time, Sloan placed an awfully weak shot off of Gauthier's pad (with the 5-hole completely open). He at least drew a penalty on the subsequent retrieval play. A relative non-factor in transition, he attempted, and predictably failed a few chip-and-chase plays.

Sloan did make a nice file down the wing in the second, taking a pass from the end-boards and bumping the puck cross crease for a primary assist -- basically predicated on the work down by a teammate below the line. Scored a rather innocuous weakside sharp-angle shot that Gauthier didn't see. I can't see how any of this translates -- he's big at 6-foot-4, but doesn't leverage the size much. He is a static player who has trouble upping his pace, and as mentioned, lacks separating individual skills.

On the defensive end of the puck, Sloan was relatively impactful. He scans frequently, working his stick to eliminate options, timing checks and pokes with a focus on pushing ply to the outside. He had a great penalty killing sequence in the second where he shifted to the slot to cover a secondary threat. Saved a goal in the third with a well-timed stick-lift. Positive part of his game for sure.

He's firmly a F-grade prospect for out board right now. Needs to further develop individual tools, increase pace, and leverage his size to change that projection -- tall order.

**Daniel Gee:** November 19th, 2021

Tri-City Americans vs Prince George Cougars -WHL

Sloan was slotted in as the first-line centerman and played a tonne, but was not really used in an offensive role, with limited PP minutes. Sloan's frame, 6-foot-4, is the most interesting part of his player profile - take that as you will. A low-to-average pace skater in all scenarios, Sloan doesn't really possess much individual skills that separates him at the WHL level. In sustained pressure attacking sequences, Sloan's mismanagement of the puck was lucky to not result in goals against. On multiple occasions, the big-centre sent no-look rings up the near boards creating turnovers and putting teammates in bad positions. A lack of scanning being the major culprit here. On one play he didn't scan, passed back to

the point, where a Cougar exiting the penalty-box was able to pressure the Tri-city defender and create a 3-on-1 -- they went offside. Sloan's work is done primarily in the crease and on the side boards. He gets in there, digs for pucks and rebounds out of point shots, and looks for redirect opportunities. In the third off a broken play in the near corner, Sloan took a pass in the slot and sent a dribbling shot through the 5-hole to chase Brennan. In a subsequent play, he executed a great forehand tip that rang off the post. Other than that, a pretty quiet game -- couldn't layer passes, handle bouncing pucks, or really string plays together. He was even a bit passive in battles below the goal-line. To illustrate his passing mishaps, Sloan had a carry-in activation, 2-on-2. He sent a waist high pass to his teammate who was off-puck...

Defensively Sloan saw some penalty-killing minutes. As the high-slot man, he was fairly good at pushing pressure with his long reach -- especially at the points. Made a proactive scan

in the first where he rotated and tied up a net-front stick. Sloan probably isn't a pick based on how little tools he has -- he might do some damage as a net-front presence. Like Melynk he has barely played WHL hockey -- only 22 games.

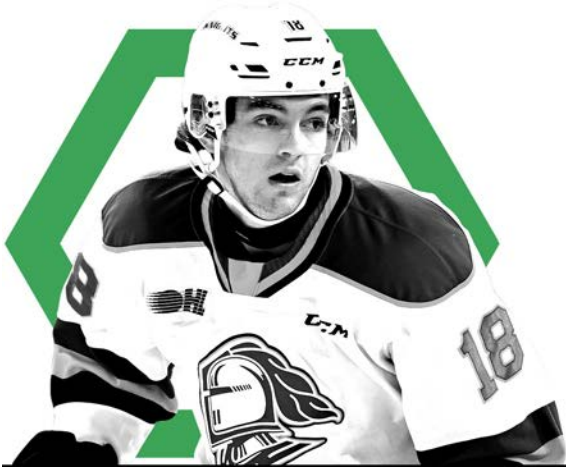
**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Tri-City Americans - WHL

Didn't see anything from Sloan that suggests an NHL prospect. There was the inception of board play -- turning as pressure arrived -- but he lacks the feet and hand skills to do anything with it. The most interesting play was a zone entry where he cut back instead of driving, then passed to create a scoring chance. Cut across the front of defenders for a short shot, but lacks the outside edges to cut sharply. Plants himself in front of the net, not showing any scoring instincts. Lacks the handling skill to adapt his puck positioning to the passing lane. Didn't look like a prospect.

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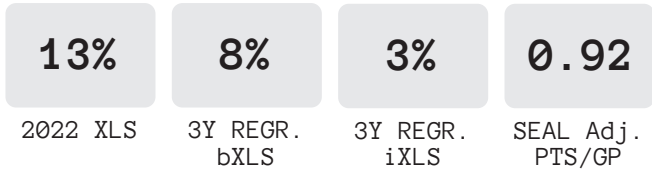




# COLTON SMITH

LW | LONDON KNIGHTS

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. FEB. 9, 2004  
WEIGHT 207 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	41	13	5	18

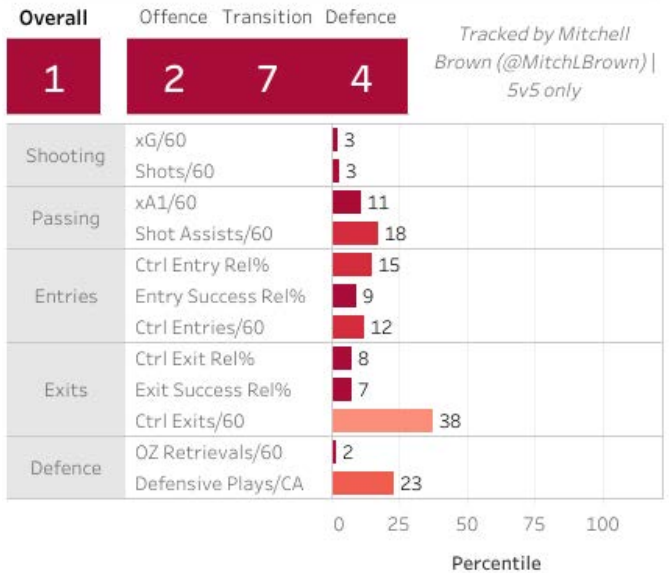
## Scouting Report

Colton Smith generated buzz early in the season by jumping out of the gate with five goals in his first five games. By early December, he'd reached 17 points in 21 games, a staggering rate for a player locked to his team's third and fourth lines. By season's end, the production had dried and the power play time that his production depended upon ceased to be there.

While Smith was usually the benefactor of London's skilled playmakers on the first power play unit, he's a skilled shooter. Pushes his hands in front of his body and elevates his elbow, allowing him to change the angle of the shot. His one-timer and hand-eye coordination makes him a threat around the net. And he has some tricks to get open, like staying behind the goal line and then dashing to the far post.

The limitations with Smith are just about everything else, as OHL scout Lauren Kelly detailed in a March game report: "He's big, but he doesn't use his size to any semblance of advantage. Not involved in battles, doesn't separate players from the puck. Lots of chasing after the puck, rendered ineffective by poor skating mechanics. Little impact offensively

Games Tracked: 6 | Minutes Tracked: 41.9



aside from low-danger shots." A draft pick on Smith is spent on his early-season production and shooting skill. Perhaps a skilled development staff helps Smith reach the NHL. There's a lot of work to be done.

## Game Reports

**Lauren Kelly:** March 20th, 2022

London Knights vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

If Smith gets picked it is because he's big and has NHL bloodlines. That's the only thing going for him right now. He's big, but he doesn't use his size to any semblance of advantage. Not involved in battles, doesn't separate players

from the puck. Lots of chasing after the puck, rendered ineffective by poor skating mechanics. Little impact offensively aside from low-danger shots. This game was just a struggle for him because all of his shifts were spent either on the rush or having to come back to defend an opposing rush. The skating is really limiting. He's a really long-term



project and he doesn't play enough for London right now. I wouldn't draft him.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 9th, 2022

London Knights vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Colton Smith had a scoring chance, set up a scoring chance, and had a number of poor plays. He doesn't finish many of his off-puck routes, which instantly puts him at a disadvantage. To be fair, he's good at getting space on the heels of backcheckers. His game's very much segmented from a lack of mechanical refinement. For example, he looks down, gets the puck, stops moving his feet, looks up, moves his feet, then enters a glide again before making his play. The result is that he's consistently late on his passes to teammates, unless he can make the play without having to move. At this stage, I don't see an NHL outcome for Smith.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

A nothing performance. His skating's very limiting. Very little ankle dorsiflexion. Too upright and he's only comfortable on his inside edges in a glide. As soon as he starts looking for options, he returns to that position and throws away possession. Occasionally tries to deke but the mechanics and lack of pace ensure he's not successful. Doesn't follow up on loose pucks, or even try to engage defensively. Struggles to get open. Not a pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 7th, 2022

London Knights vs. Flint Firebirds - OHL

Smith played nearly 15 minutes in this one, but didn't make much of an impact. Doesn't seem to know what he's doing in his own end, just a lot of aimless skating all over the place - to which he's late arriving to cover players because of bad mechanics. If London wins the faceoff, he's blowing the OZ before his

teammates have even begun the breakout. There's not enough here to suggest that he's worth drafting.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

London Knights vs. Owen Sound Attack - OHL

Scored a 5v3 goal by coming in late, taking an easy pass, and firing an angle-changing wrister off his outside leg. Unsure if he delayed inside the release or if he just required the additional time - either way, it compromised the goalie's positioning, allowing him to shoot glove side. Good read. Non-factor everywhere else beyond a couple of transition turnovers. Only played a few minutes at 5-on-5 though.


**Mitchell Brown:** December 3rd, 2021

Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

Powerplay tap-in goal. Nothing else. Smith doesn't do anything at 5-on-5. He doesn't try plays, he doesn't forecheck, he doesn't backcheck, he doesn't look for options beyond simply extending the cycle. Has difficulty finding space. Very limited ability both with and without the puck. Not a draft pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 16th, 2021

London Knights vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Smith recorded his first career hat trick in this game. The first came off a one-timer in the slot on the power play, he scored the second after taking multiple whacks at the puck on the doorstep, and the third came off throwing the puck on net from a bad angle and it beating the goaltender somehow. But offensive outburst aside (he had a hat trick midway through the second period), he wasn't that noticeable otherwise. He's not the greatest skater and he faded into the background as Sarnia clawed back to force overtime. The offensive production is great, but I'd like to see a more consistent effort from him at both ends of the ice and for an entire game. 

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# DEREK SMYTH

D | OTTAWA 67'S

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. APR. 17, 2004  
WEIGHT 181 SHOOTS LEFT

4%	2%	1%	0.41
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	53	2	5	7

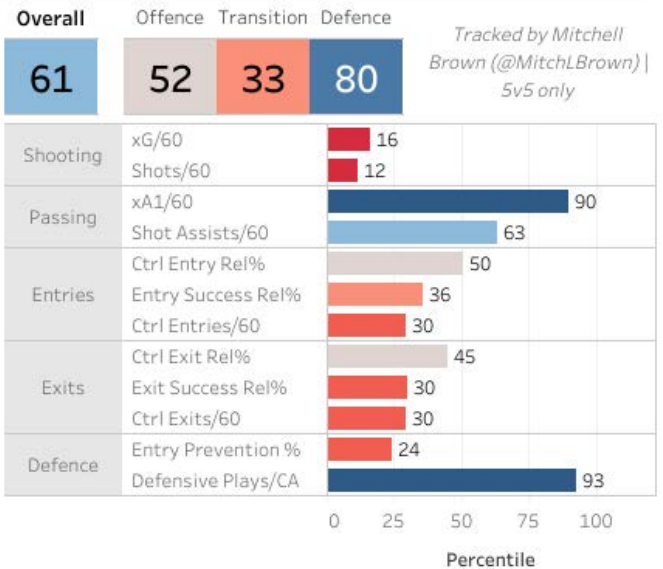
## Scouting Report

A late-round OHL pick that quickly exceeded expectations, Derek Smyth has the skill to replicate that success in the NHL. To do it, he'll have to improve his skating significantly. He's lumbering and lacks depth. He struggles to get one foot over the other when crossing over. A lack of stability on his edges causes many of his best ideas to fail before they even start.

But Smyth's ideas are often terrific. "Point shot" probably isn't even in his vocabulary. Instead, he fakes the shot, waits for the defender to commit, then passes to a teammate at the top of the slot. He takes and makes passes in motion. If he can't find a teammate, he skates towards incoming pressure, fakes a play in one direction, then goes the other.

The skating doesn't just limit Smyth's ability to make full use of his ideas, it limits his defence and breakouts. "In transition, he's a simple player: clearances, rims, and up-the-boards passes," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a late-season game report. "He gets on his check early, but his skating limitations make him an all-or-nothing rush defender - no corrective

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 98.6



ability and he stops his momentum when engaging."

Smyth's a longshot to become an effective AHLer, let alone NHLer because of the skating. But he's a much better player than his stat-line suggests. Don't be surprised if he puts up big totals in the next season or two.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Smyth hit a couple of cross-ice passes in the offensive zone, including a tricky one while under pressure. He can dish it in the offensive zone. In transition, he's a simple

player: clearances, rims, and up-the-boards passes. Easily pressured into poor decisions because of his skating. It's lumbering. He struggles to get one foot over the other inside crossovers. Edges are weak and inconsistent. He gets on his check early, but his skating limitations make him an all-or-

**“As a former 11th round pick in the 2021 OHL Priority Selection, [Smyth] earned a spot on the team out of training camp and was our most improved player throughout the season. He has excellent vision and ability to find the open man, and plays with a physical edge.”**

*Ottawa 67s General Manager James Boyd, June 2022*

nothing rush defender – no corrective ability and he stops his momentum when engaging. Not a pick, but there are interesting pieces here.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Honestly, Smyth's exciting to watch. The skating already prevents him from making the most of his intelligence at this level – that alone probably keeps him from making our board. But the ideas are great. He takes pucks in motion to activate into space. He tries to deke around pressure, often in creative ways. He'll bait the pivot, then push the puck back across. Where many players shoot, he scans the inside and looks for a passing option. If he receives pass when pressured, he defaults to simple plays. He'd benefit from actually playing a bit slower sometimes, such as turning his back to pressure and outwaiting the forechecker. Killed a few plays early, showing some defensive timing and tight gap. But, again, the skating. He's not a pick, but I could definitely see a team taking him. There's a lot here.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Smyth is lumbering. He struggles to turn and accelerate. It's not just the lack of lower body flexion. He's slow through all of his movements. But the ideas are often interesting. He

uses the middle, joins the rush, and tries to make skilled plays to connect with his teammates. Nothing suggests an NHL draft pick at this stage, but he could get there.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

So, Smyth's OZ playmaking might be legit. He set up a passing play with a cross-slot feed out of a shot fake. Later on, he used the same set up to pass to the net-front, although his timing was off. That playmaking ability doesn't exist in breakouts, unless given space. He just throws the puck away. Physical defender and gets the odd recovery stop in the DZ, but he's far from a proactive defender. Isn't scoring and struggles outside the OZ. Probably not a draft pick, but there's definitely upside here.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Smyth grabbed his second assist of the season with a cross-slot laser beam just after a powerplay expired. That was about it for positive impact on the game. Too passive defensively, too inconsistent with the puck, and shows limited vision and activation ability beyond that one play. He's big and seems to understand that his path to the NHL will be lined with hits. Doubt he gets there.





Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# ALEX ŠOTEK

RW | HC SLOVAN BRATISLAVA

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. FEB.9,2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS RIGHT

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
Slovakia	41	2	0	2
Slovakia2	17	1	4	5

## Scouting Report

Alex Šotek had a rather turbulent season when he was traded from HK Poprad to HC Slovan Bratislava. Šotek is another interesting Slovak hockey prospect whose game is characterized by quality skating with deception and hockey IQ. Šotek is a very intelligent player and thanks to that

he can get himself into scoring opportunities. The Slovak forward also has no problem carrying the puck up the ice and likes to work along the boards. A big problem is his defensive work, where he is not able to react with good coverage of the opponent.

## Game Reports

**Marek Novotný:** March 29th, 2022

HC Banská Bystrica vs HC Slovan Bratislava - Extraliga

A game in which Sotek didn't play much, but he still played his style of game. He was a very active forechecker, played smart - his hockey IQ is high. He made some pokechecks, sent a pass along the boards without looking. He registered one hit, tried to block shots. But his passing game was significantly weaker than in previous games.

but his positioning and the way he covers players causes him problems. I can see him as a late round pick.

**Marek Novotný:** February 25th, 2022

HC Slovan Bratislava vs. HC Banská Bystrica - Extraliga

Šotek was very aggressive in the offensive zone with his skating and great ability to read the play. He likes to play along the boards, which he can work well with, whether it's to keep the puck in the offensive zone or to battle the opposition. He got a nice scoring opportunity, but the puck slipped off his stick at the last moment. His hockey IQ helps him a lot, especially in creating support for his teammates. Šotek is a strong player especially in two zones, but he's not good defensively. He often scans the situation around him,

**Marek Novotný:** January 9th, 2022

HC Slovan Bratislava vs. HC Nové Zámky - Extraliga

Šotek skated on the fourth line and showed off his biggest strength despite the limited ice time: skating. On the ice, he stood out among his opponents with his speed and ability to react quickly to changes in the game. Šotek sometimes naively rushed in a direction where he had no way to pass, so he often used the boards to get the puck out of the zone. He can carry the puck coast to coast.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# SPENCER SOVA

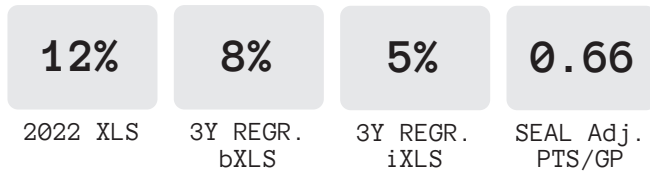
D | ERIE OTTERS

HEIGHT 6'1"

D.O.B. JAN. 10, 2004

WEIGHT 185

SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	64	9	19	28
WJC-18	3	0	3	3

## Scouting Report

A draft pick spent on Spencer Sova is a bet on tools; on his above-average skating ability, size, and physical abilities.

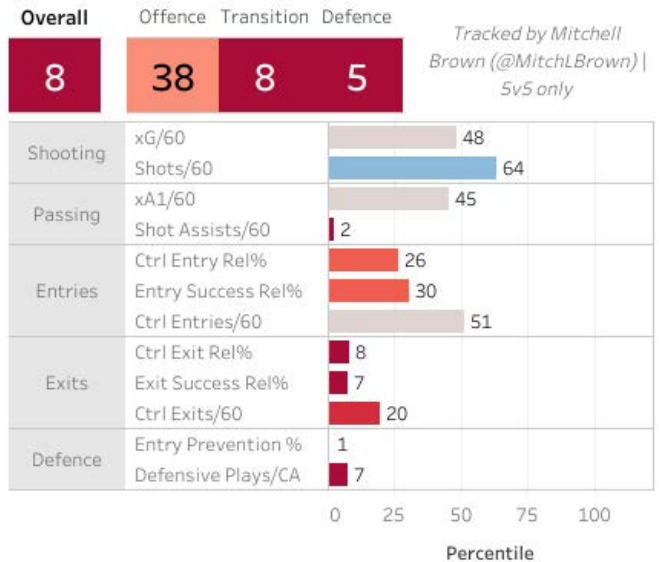
Sova is an aggressive defender who can also make plays on the offence when the conditions are right. His rush defence stands out more than his in-zone defending due to its 1-on-1 nature. Sova can better contain and erase threats from puck carriers when he has time to manage his gap. Using his mobility, he can close on attackers and strip them off the puck with a sudden jump.

Sova's defensive zone play doesn't project as well to the higher levels, however, mostly due to a lack of awareness. The defenceman has trouble processing multiple variables, like the movement of the puck and attackers behind him. He can also place his team in trouble on breakouts, as, still because of a lack of awareness, he defaults to rims and dumps that often go right back to the other team.

When he receives the puck in open ice, Sova's puck game shines a lot more. He can carry it through zones and walk the blue line with it to find shooting and passing lanes. The extra space at the World Championship Under-18 tournament allowed the defenceman to show more of his offensive game.

After watching one of his performances at the event, Elite Prospects lead scout David St-Louis wrote: "His technical ability stands out, especially his skating. Perfect posture or close to, which creates a stable pocket in which he can handle the puck, making up for his lack of handling precision

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 136.7



somewhat. Smooth puck distribution, a lot of stretch passes attempt, supports the offence, moves laterally to try and create passing lanes."

Sova's results within Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown's manually tracked data set suggest he has to improve in a lot of areas, even in the OHL. While he has the tools of the trade, he will need to spend a lot of time in the video room and become a lot more efficient in transition and in the defensive zone if he wants to become a bottom-pairing NHLer.

**David St-Louis:** April 28th, 2022

Finland vs Canada - U18s

Sova couldn't catch up to Kemell at the end of the game, but otherwise, I thought he was Canada's top defenceman for long stretches at the tournament. He tries to make plays, seems reasonably aware, and active offensively. He has some creative patterns, but no inherent creativity (he moves in predictable ways, but his movements still create something and involve teammates into the offence). His rush defence was a strong point, but his in-zone one requires a bit of work. He's physical. Average sense and average to above-average tools are enough to get drafted quite high in this draft, especially since he has the mobility.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 24th, 2022

Canada vs. Germany - U18s

As big of a weakness as Canada's blueline was at this tournament, I actually thought Sova didn't look too bad overall. Quarterbacked Canada's five-minute major penalty early on in the game, and demonstrated good awareness of his teammates with good distributions. Solid skating abilities, especially on the wider ice surface. Head up on rushes with the puck. Finds space to open himself up for one-timers. Breaks the puck out effectively. Could benefit from scanning more on retrievals (especially against more skilled opponents, maybe it wasn't costly in this game simply because it was Germany?). Was kind of all over the place early on, jumping up into the play, and sometimes he was too deep in the OZ to get back to defend a rush in time (again, because it was Germany, it didn't cost him). I actually thought his rushes really benefited from the wider ice, it gave him more space to accelerate and maintain puck control. I wonder if that rushing ability will translate back to the narrower ice in the OHL... that was something I didn't see a lot of in my Erie viewings. A mid-round pick isn't out of the question.

**David St-Louis:** April 23rd, 2022

Canada vs. Team USA - U18s

His technical ability stands out, especially his skating. Perfect posture or close to, which creates a stable pocket in which he can handle the puck, making up for his lack of handling precision somewhat. Smooth puck distribution, a lot of stretch passes attempt, supports the offence, moves laterally to try and create passing lanes. He caught up to Cooley in a straight-line race at some point. Cooley isn't the fastest, but this still suggest that his skating is above-average.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. Erie Otters - OHL

When Sova goes for skate, the tools shine. He pushes his knees past his toes, keeps the puck in his hip pocket, and shifts his weight to deceive the defender before pushing across. But these rushes very rarely result in anything. And his puck decisions are mostly poor. He throws pucks away constantly, whether that's with a failed pass of a retrieval or a dump-out to no one. Doesn't look to the inside unless there's zero pressure, and doesn't have the short-range breakout passing game to offset it and become more of an activation-focused player. I don't see the upside.

**David St-Louis:** March 24th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Sova was involved offensively all game, showing some manipulation skills, through movements and passing. He gave the puck to teammates, creating give-and-gos to improve the location of his shot and attacked down the wall. His constant movement on the blue-line opened up opportunities. I wouldn't qualify Sova as a high-end thinker of the game; most of his decisions under pressure are learned patterns or first-option plays and he also made a few questionable choices during the game, but the tools look potentially above-average and the aggressiveness and confidence matters. The defensive game was hit and miss. Effective off the rush (surfing, aggressive gapping) and looser in-zone. Still, he could leverage his positive elements to become a bottom-pairing NHL defender.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Erie Otters vs. Kitchener Rangers - OHL

More of the same from Sova with two exceptions. One was the best play of the game. He faked the shot before touching the puck on the pinch. After skirting around the defender, he faked a play to the front of the net, wrapped around, delayed, and set-up a cross-slot shot. That level of patience and awareness didn't appear at any other time. But he showed a bit more aggressiveness with the puck on breakouts. Establish positioning on back pressure, then skates through their route while attacking the inside. The skating's a bit of an interesting one. Moments of near-mechanical perfection but it falls apart quickly and his average posture is too upright. The moments of puck skill and vision give me optimism, but he's still largely a tools and a bit of defence projection. End-of-board candidate, at most.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 12th, 2022

Windsor Spitfires vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Every time I watch Sova, I ask myself "what does he do?"

The answer is not usually not much. And in this game, he did nothing. He has some tools (mobility). Some defensive potential through his defensive skating and rush defence. But he's still conceding the zone too easily. And with the puck, he's risk-averse to the point where he's just giving the puck to the other team. Doesn't scan. Just throws possession up the boards to the other team. Can't read pressure, let alone manipulate it. When he tries to actually do something with the puck, he's just going for a skate - no end goal, no passing, no planning, no greater idea to advance the play. Didn't look like a candidate for our board in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 26th, 2022

Erie Otters vs. Saginaw Spirit - OHL

Sova's more interesting than I've given him credit for. He shows the beginnings of great ideas. Controlled activation down the weak side, inside lane use on the breakout, and clever passes into the slot after a fake shot. Extends OZP with his activation. However, those are limited by frequent poor decisions. For example, he steps inside, then immediately passes to the boards to a teammate more covered than himself - turnover. He blasts needless shots with space to make a better play. Beat a few times off the rush, but the rush defence could become a strength: quiet feet, takes away the middle early, times his engagement. Maybe a late-rounder. Needs to develop both skills and sequencing.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 16th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Sova looked all right in this one, but there are some things that need to be fine-tuned in order to make him a successful defenseman at future levels. He has good body positioning defending most rushes but his skating affects how quickly he can get there. He activates from the point but only on power play opportunities, and only showed passing skills quarterbacking a unit (no shots from the point). He had one shot from the outside off the rush that handcuffed the goalie. Overall I liked his play away from the puck a lot more than when he had it, and I feel like he's got a package that warrants a draft pick. Just not sure how high a team would take him.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 10th, 2022

Owen Sound Attack vs. Erie Otters - OHL

Give Sova space, and he shows patience, awareness, and a bit of creativity. He advances the puck while keeping his options open, never committing to a play. Take it away, and throws the puck up the boards. It's true in the offensive end, too. He activated a bit more than in previous viewings, but

didn't do anything with it apart from one shot. On one hand, handling pressure is a must for the NHL. On the other, he clearly has tools that could be refined to being a positive player with defensive pressure. Defence is probably his best skill now: he angles, he hits, and times his engagements well. I don't think he's draft-worthy based on his play right now. But like every OHLer, he didn't play last year.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Erie Otters vs. Sarnia Sting - OHL

Best game I've seen from Sova so far, but it wasn't all that productive. He tried to make plays with the puck in the OZ, grabbing a scoring chance and nearly setting up one up after going around the net and just missing his teammate's stick. That didn't translate to transition. He's too passive. He either needs to start activating or making plays instead of deferring to his teammates every time. The rush defence could be a strength in the future. Doesn't crossover too early. Looked to angle and disrupts the puck carrier at the right time. I don't think he's a draft pick for us, but I can see why a team would bite. There are tools and ideas, waiting to be linked together with activation, skating refinement, and confidence.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

Defence was Sova's best dimension in this game. He guided attackers to the perimeter before forcing the dump in along the boards. Engages at the right times in the DZ, disrupting shooters and grabbing the odd well-timed steal. Scans for threats off-puck. A mess with the puck. He rims every puck up the boards and doesn't get open for a pass to the inside. Even when given a bit of space, he skates to the boards and hammers it off the glass and in. Didn't look like a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 3rd, 2021

Erie Otters vs. London Knights - OHL

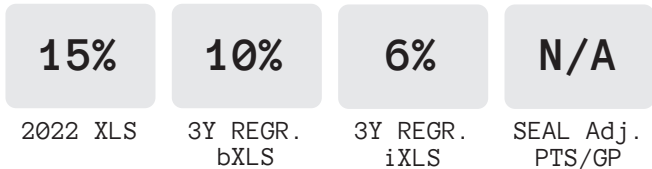
Sova threw a lot towards the net without much impact. He's not a particularly crafty shooter. Most of them were get puck, lean over inside leg, and fire immediately, without or with teammates in the shooting lane. Occasionally slick with the puck, particularly in the NZ on regroupings or with a passive NZFC, but that doesn't translate to high pressure situations like the breakout. Closed space at the right times on occasion, but mostly backed up too far. Brings a physical element and some in-zone play-killing ability along the boards, but he's a reactionary off-puck defender. I didn't see the upside in this game.



# DAVID SPACEK

D | SHERBROOKE PHOENIX

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. FEB. 18, 2003  
WEIGHT 170 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	57	12	38	50

## Scouting Report

There's something going on in Sherbrooke. Everyone is scoring.

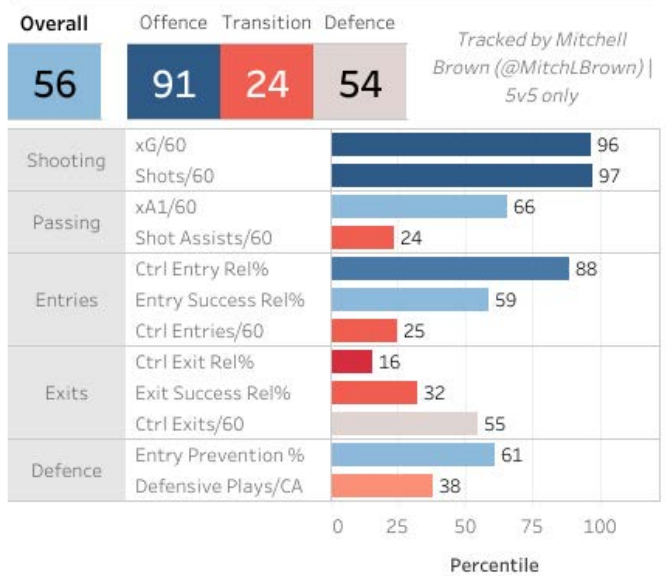
David Spacek, a 19-year-old re-entry defenceman, put up 50 points in his rookie year with the Phoenix, a more than impressive total for a player who barely played last season. He became the No. 1 defenceman of the team, accumulating minutes in all every phase of the game.

While the cohort projection, the one based on draft-year scoring, may paint Spacek's prospects of NHL success in a favourable light, the qualitative projection isn't quite as interesting.

"Mechanically, he's a bit clunky, all in one block, no lower and upper body separation, and his awareness inside many plays is lacking," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in an April 26th game report. "He's also a bit immobile in his puck-moving and offensive game. He can hit the right option with time and space, but I think his scoring this season was more of a product of his top forwards than him driving the play."

The Phoenix defenceman received mostly average grades for his skating, handling, passing, shooting, and physical

Games Tracked: 3 | Minutes Tracked: 55.4



play. His rush defence, his ability to gap up to incoming attackers was often noted as a positive in our game reports, but apart from that, there were no other standout attributes in his game, no real ability that he could leverage to beat the competition for an NHL role.

## Game Reports

David St-Louis: April 26th, 2022

Sherbrooke Phoenix vs Acadie-Bathurst Titan - QMJHL

Spacek's rush defence has improved over the course of the season, but it's the only positive element I got from this game.

Mechanically, he's a bit clunky, all in one block, no lower and upper body separation, and his awareness inside many plays is lacking. He's also a bit immobile in his puck-moving and offensive game. He can hit the right option with time



and space, but I think his scoring this season was more of a product of his top forwards than him driving the play.

**Marek Novotný:** April 3rd, 2022

Sherbrooke Phoenix vs. Quebec Remparts - QMJHL

I didn't really like David Spacek's performance against Quebec. Although he is quite offensively involved, there was nothing groundbreaking. Perhaps the only positive are the personal battles along the boards, where he was able to outmuscle his opponents in most cases. His ability to find passing lanes didn't seem good to me, he had problems with it. Also, his quarterbacking role on the power play was not overwhelming. He looked very slow and his reactions on the counter attack were almost nonexistent. He shoots quite often though, his engagement in the offense is not bad, but he gets a lot of help from his teammates.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Sherbrooke Phoenix vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Spacek had a couple of moments offensively that suggest that he could get some points at the professional level. Uses space before shooting and turned a shot into a pass for a deflection from the point. Some weakside activation but mostly

compresses the zone by staying atop the circles. Everywhere else, there's a ton of work that needs to be done. He's a passive rush defender who gets overwhelmed by anything that isn't a single-speed, straight-line 1-on-1 rush. Breakouts are simplistic and his more complex plays are usually just failed handling sequences or aerial passes to forward on the other side of the rink. Nothing too interesting. Don't see how he makes our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 10th, 2022

Sherbrooke Phoenix vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Spacek does some stuff on the powerplay, but it rarely translates to 5-on-5. Sometimes, he uses space before shooting and gets open at the top of the circle. For the most part, he's just a stationary shooter. There's some rush defence ability, but he's easily beaten as soon as the attacker has built up speed or Spacek doesn't have support. Don't think it translates with him to the next level. Threw a big hit. That might count for something if he uses the physical game to disrupt the cycle instead of chasing. Breakouts were awful. He throws the puck away constantly with a combination of dump-outs, poor retrievals, and no-chance flip passes. Incoming pressure, back pressure, side pressure – doesn't matter, he doesn't read



Hickling Images // Dan Hickling



it, let alone manage and manipulate. Inconsistent scanning with and without the puck. Doesn't look like a draft pick.

**Marek Novotný:** March 9th, 2022

Sherbrooke Phoenix vs. Moncton Wildcats- QMJHL

I have to start by saying that this was one of David Spacek's better games, but overall it hasn't changed my view and I'm more inclined to say that Spacek is not a draft pick. As far as positives go, David Spacek was pretty calm and sent some nice passes in his quarterbacking role on the power play. The other positive, which is a repeating one, is his shot, which can get through traffic. But in the end, his defensive work is very poor, he has bad mobility, often looks lost, and offensive players get past him pretty easily. He's been able to protect the puck in certain moments, but the puck protection is not very good with his poor puck control. David Spacek for me is not a pick at this point.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 20th, 2022

Québec Remparts vs. Sherbrooke Phoenix - QMJHL

Spacek did two things well in this game: defend the rush and extending offensive zone with pinches. He's not an explosive, proactive defender, but he grabbed a couple of stops in single-variable face-to-face situations. With the puck, he's a shooter, and a poor one at that. He doesn't open up lanes or create opportunities to pass. Better on the powerplay, where he manages space and delivers pucks to shooters with additional space. Up-the-boards on breakouts, lacking patience and awareness. Doesn't scan retrievals and certainly doesn't read pressure. Defensive coverage is mostly late reads and missed assignments. Don't see a pick here.

**David St-Louis:** February 16th, 2022

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Sherbrooke Phoenix - QMJHL

Spacek's skating is a bit of a problem, and as he's older, it's a bigger consideration than for some others. He has decent speed at this level, but he strides hunched over and to the back, which limits his total output. His handling and passing and shooting aren't all that impressive either. And I have some doubts about his offensive awareness, his ability to read lanes, let alone anticipate them...I'm not thinking that he will be on our board.

**Marek Novotný:** December 27th, 2021

Canada vs. Czech Republic - WJC

I don't have a good feeling about David Spacek. His defensive work wasn't good at all, he looked very slow and disengaged. It's true that he made some important defensive moves in the third period, but otherwise it wasn't very good. What he's definitely good at is one-on-one battles at the boards. He was also part of the PP/PK units. When he was under pressure he made a few mistakes. He definitely didn't look like a pick.

**David St-Louis:** November 26th, 2021

Sherbrooke Phoenix vs. Victoriaville Tigres - QMJHL

Quiet performance from Spacek. Tools look average all around, but there is a smoothness to how he handles in movement. He really needs to scan for his shooting lanes. He constantly fired at bodies on the powerplay in the offensive zone. It's pretty clear at this point of the season that Spacek's production comes from his usage and teammates. He's not creating, only participating.

# JACK SPARKES

D | ST. MICHAEL'S BUZZERS

HEIGHT 6'8" D.O.B. OCT. 20, 2003  
 WEIGHT 234 SHOOTS RIGHT



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OJHL	37	5	7	12

## Scouting Report

The main selling point to Jack Sparkes' game is his tools. Few 6-foot-8 defencemen can skate as smoothly as he does, even if there isn't a lot of speed there just yet. And that's going to almost certainly make him a pick at this year's draft.

For Sparkes's grace as a skater, he's not especially explosive. Not yet anyway. He can lower himself in an athletic position and carry the puck up-ice, moving it around sticks to get to the offensive zone and he can defend the opposition's rush with the same relative fluidity, but he's not a burner out there, by any means.

Now, granted, the OJHL didn't offer much of a challenge last season, and it's the wildcard in his projection.

As an October-born, physical player with unmatched measurables, Sparkes was supposed to dominate in his draft year. That was the baseline expectation. And to his credit,

the Michigan State-committed defender met the challenge in many phases of the game – wall play, at the net-front, and at the offensive blue line with his hard slap shot.

Where he left our staff wanting, though, was with his ability to consistently and efficiently drive play. The slower pace of the OJHL suited him, but that's not exactly a good thing. Sparkes didn't really display the ability to quickly process offensive advantages, passing lanes, and opposing puck exchanges. Defensively, his timing was often off on hits and poke-checks.

Still, there's going to be a market for Sparkes' services in this draft. A team will bank that a four-year NCAA career will improve his reads, speed of play, and shutdown ability. It's the role he's best suited to in a professional environment.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** April 14th, 2022

North York vs. St. Michael's - OJHL

If you draft Sparkes, it's based on tools only. He's a 6'8", mechanically sound skater, to an extent, who achieves good knee-bend and ankle flexion, who is stable on skate, and capable of pinning attackers. He has an offensive side to his game, but the execution is relatively poor, which doesn't bode well for his future. He's one of the older players in the draft and playing at a low caliber of play. He should be dominating. He projects more as a shutdown defenceman. The technical ability at his size is interesting.

**David St-Louis:** March 25th, 2022

St. Michael's vs Mississauga - OJHL

Whoever drafts Sparkes, and he will get drafted, at 6'8",

will have his work cut out for him. Sparkes is relatively smooth for such a long-limbed player. He can fold on his skates, showing decent posture.. His handling skills could get to close to NHL average at some point, but it's the reads and the timing that are the problem. I think Sparkes missed all of his hits this game; attackers easily moved around him as he telegraphed them. His puck-moving sequences were mostly improvisations, although I liked the occasional scanning and stretch passes across the ice. Sparkes's faced about the right competition for his processing this season. His development will be a slow affair, but ti's fine because he's heading the NCAA route.



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# COLE SPICER

F | U.S. NATIONAL U18 TEAM

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. MAR. 13, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS LEFT

17%	13%	3%	1.11
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USDP	58	20	19	39
USHL	26	10	6	16
WJC-18	6	3	2	5

> Committed to Univ. of Minnesota-Duluth

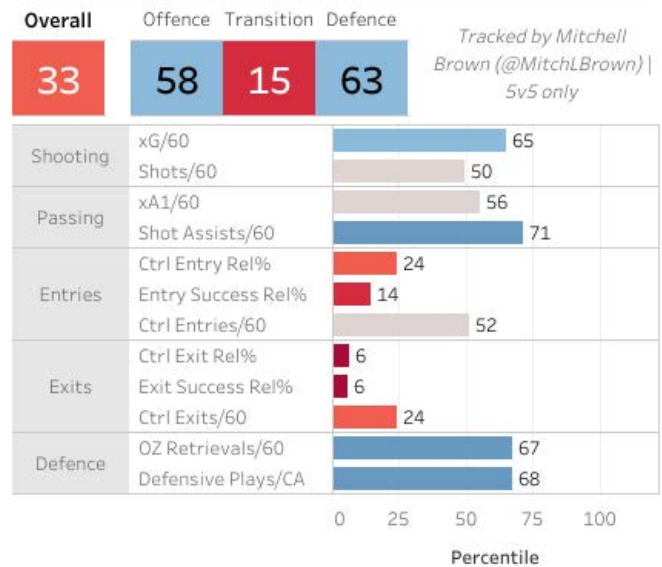
## Scouting Report

When Cole Spicer had the opportunity to prove his worth in a top-six role with the USNTDP last season, he looked up to the task. We started to see flashes of vision and shooting ability in the offensive zone that were otherwise absent. Mostly, though, Spicer was a checking forward last season; a player who did his best work away from the puck at both ends of the ice.

His physicality, engagement, and knack for stealing pucks earned him above-average defensive grades with the data set that Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown accumulated over the season. While most players his age tend to cut their defensive routes a couple of steps short, in hope of capitalizing on a quick breakout pass, Spicer goes all the way. He finishes checks, pins players to the board, and wins the puck back.

“Spicer’s a dependable forechecker,” wrote Mitch Brown, Elite Prospects Director of North American Scouting, in a December 18th, 2021 report “When not first on pucks, he has a few tricks (trap feet, reach arounds, etc.) to win pucks from a disadvantage. A knack for getting steals both on pursuit and dipping in. Plays a simple game with the puck:

Games Tracked: 13 | Minutes Tracked: 148.3



pass and relocate.” Spicer takes advantage of the mistakes of the opposition. He doesn’t create them. He could find a role doing the same thing on an NHL fourth-line in a few years. For Spicer to ascend to a role further up the depth chart, he will need to focus intensely on the development of his technical abilities.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

I think had more notes on Spicer from this game than in all of my other viewings combined. With Nazar and Gauthier leaving the game, he got minutes. He used them well. Scored with a wrister off the pass, generating the downforce with distance between his feet while keeping his chest up and hands in front. Fired off an in-stride wrister that showed a lack of awareness – a better play cuts to the middle and gets a better look. Still, he has shooting ability. Turned an interception into a chance by getting open for a return pass, and quickly identifying the next play. The skating remains a question mark, as he lacks lower body flexion, further hindered by short, wide strides that prevent him from finding separation. Forechecking and defence are both strengths for this level. He's a late-round candidate. I think a team might go a bit early, and could be rewarded with a solid fourth-liner.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Spicer's a forechecker with a tiny bit of creativity in moments. He engages the puck carrier, coming across the hips. Gets the odd steal and constantly forces rushed decisions. With the puck, he's usually a straight-line attacker who struggles to use his teammates and drive play. Off-puck, he finds space around the slot and gets ready for a shot. Nothing too interesting otherwise. Could be a breakout candidate, but I don't think he's a pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Spicer played with Howard and Nazar, and made the most of it. He brought the usual work rate, but also showed more skill than normal. He took more of a playmaking role, showing more vision and skill. He used crossovers to change the angle on the defender, tried to pass to the inside. He failed all of them, but he's not making those plays normally. In general, he seems to play to the level of his linemates. When he's higher in the lineup, he shows some interesting off-puck, shooting, and playmaking ideas. When he's lower, he's mostly a chip-and-chase, net-front guy. He could be the breakout candidate on this team. He could be a late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 8th, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Spicer played with Moore and Leonard, and put together a solid performance. The shooting skill grabbed him a goal at the top of the slot. Couldn't fire immediately off the pass, but didn't plant his outside leg, either. He returned it, pushed

off, and fired. Elbow up and hands pushed out from his hip. Nearly set up a goal by toe-dragging around a defender (using his outside skate to prevent the poke check), and then making a near-perfect pass that his teammate missed. Oh well. It's those flashes that keep me interested. After all, he's a simple player most of the time. But there's clearly more skill in here. He could be an interesting mid-to-late round pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 18th, 2021

Youngstown Phantoms vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Spicer's a dependable forechecker. When not first on pucks, he has a few tricks (trap feet, reach arounds, etc.) to win pucks from a disadvantage. A knack for getting steals both on pursuit and dipping in. Plays a simple game with the puck: pass and relocate. No advanced ideas in either facet. A between-checks dash to the inside lane set up a scoring chance, and he effectively moved the puck to open teammates in OZP. No notable deception, pace, or creativity, but he scans regularly and finds teammates from the boards. Moments where he looks like a draft pick are becoming more regular, but I fear the skill just isn't quite high enough.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Spicer's reliable. He always plays the same game: forecheck, win battles, get open. He had a chance early on, but his lack of individual skill resulted in a quiet performance overall. Runs himself out of space with the puck and doesn't have the passing skill or vision to offset to the handling limitations. Finishes his off-puck routes, but lacks the timing to make the most of them. Not sure he's a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Spicer was the beneficiary of playing with Perreault in this game. He hung out in space, received pucks, and hammered them at the net. Capable shooter under pressure, even if he's not consistently sealing off pressure beforehand. Finishes his off-puck routes. Other than shooting, no part of his game looked above average. He deferred regularly, only connected with easy plays, and wasn't much of a factor defensively. Not convinced he's a draft pick, but the shooting game gives me pause.

**David St-Louis:** October 29th, 2021


Chicago Steel vs. USNTDP U18s - NCAA

Spicer mostly solo created in this game. Not that he didn't use teammates, but he was the guy breaking the puck out, carrying through, and speeding past defenders to fire on

net. He took advantage of mistakes from the opposition, and broke a couple of plays himself, to then launch these rush attacks. I liked a few off-puck offensive moments from him. Spicer can find space. His teammates didn't connect with him, however. The tools, skating and handling and maybe even passing, looked above-average in this game.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** October 23rd, 2021

Cornell Big Red vs. USNTDP U18s - NCAA

I really didn't see much of anything in Spicer's game through this one. He works hard, I'll give him that, there were some signs of shiftiness in the offensive zone, mostly tight turns to try to evade pressure down low, but he didn't show the skill to actually drive play towards the net beyond a few flings towards the net. He makes himself easy to defend off the rush by taking slow, outside routes; he doesn't have the skill to get inside and get high-quality chances. Spicer was a little bit better in his own zone because of his commitment to playing physical, which was important in a game against an older Cornell roster. He works hard there's no denying that, but right now, he's not a pick. 

"While most players his age tend to cut their defensive routes a couple of steps short, in hope of capitalizing on a quick breakout pass, Spicer goes all the way. He finishes checks, pins players to the board, and wins the puck back."

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Rank



Grade



Skating



Transitions



Hands



Tracking



Post



Depth

# JAN SPUNAR

G | HC OLOMOUC U20

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. MAY 30, 2004  
WEIGHT 185 CATCHES LEFT

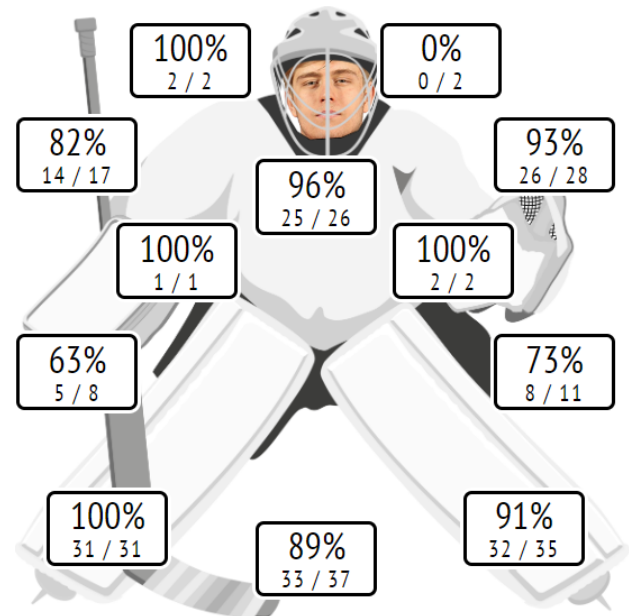
LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
Czechia U20	31	2.57	.911	3
WJC-18	2	3.45	.844	-

## Scouting Report

It's not often that the first thing that comes to mind when evaluating a draft-eligible goaltender is that he needs to bulk up, but that's exactly the case for Czech netminder Jan Spunar. It's a glaring, potentially fatal flaw in his game that needs to be addressed.

Unlike the lion's share of his fellow Czech-developed goaltending prospects, Spunar thrives spatially and anticipates plays well. It's what happens when opponents try to score gritty goals by putting pressure on him in and around the crease that's the problem; while he gets set incredibly well for first looks, he's far too easy to knock off kilter by taking up space around him. That might be why he's thrived so handily at the U20 level back home, but struggled in international play at the U18 World Juniors; even though he's great at anticipating what his opponent is going to do, he's clearly not comfortable yet battling for space in his crease.

He's not quite agile enough to throw caution to the wind and shirk technique to make desperation saves when he's



edged out of position, to boot – so he'll have to take significant strides in this area, or he'll never quite pan out the way an NHL team would want him to.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# BRADY STONEHOUSE

RW | OTTAWA 6'7" S

HEIGHT 5'9"

D.O.B. AUG. 6, 2004

WEIGHT 183

SHOOTS LEFT

14%

2022 XLS

9%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

3%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

1.05

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	66	41	38	79

## Scouting Report

This year's OHL class isn't short on physical and intriguingly skilled prospects. Brady Stonehouse matches the description perfectly, and he very well could become the best of the bunch.

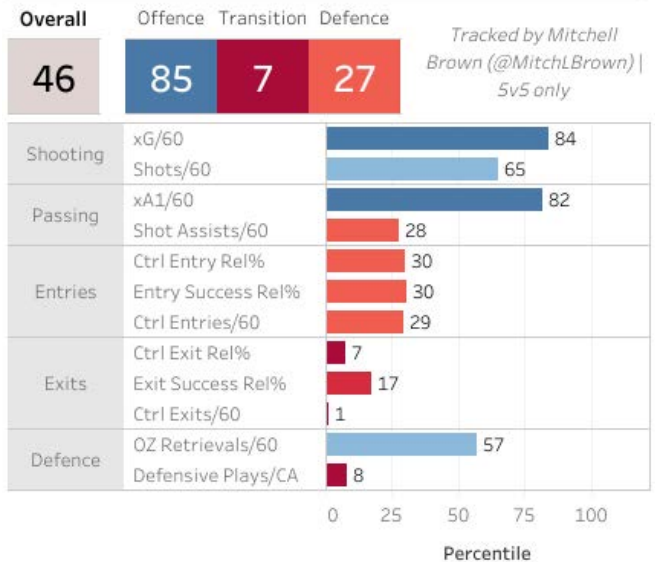
"Physical, pesky, and determined without the puck - Stonehouse consistently makes an impact when he steps on the ice," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a January game report.

If he's first on the puck, he establishes body positioning and keeps the defender on his back. If he's second, he traps the feet of the puck carrier - if they're lucky, because he's usually looking to squish them into the boards. Non-stop pressure on the forecheck makes disruptive on his worst days, and a puck-thieving force on his best.

The growth of Stonehouse's skill level will determine just how far he'll play his game in the professional ranks. Right now, he plays a junior-style straight-line, single-speed puck carrying game that forces him into dump-ins and turnovers. Infrequent scanning prevents him from finding teammates to better his odds in transition. From a mechanical level, he has "classic hands and feet in rhythm - push puck, take stride, repeat - with limited crossover use," according to Brown. Away from the puck, he's usually planted in front of the net.

But when Stonehouse rose to the 67's top line with Flames'

Games Tracked: 10 | Minutes Tracked: 121.3



prospect Jack Beck, his skill level looked higher. He started finding pockets of space at the far post or pushing off defenders into the slot. Most encouraging, he showed playmaking ability from areas where he normally shoots or initiates the cycle.

Those flashes hold the key to Stonehouse's development. Increasing their frequency and building upon them, and he could become a fourth-liner with a rare combination of relentless physicality and skill.



**Mitchell Brown:** April 16th, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

Brady Stonehouse threw a massive hit in the first period. That's going to be game at the next level. He runs into players, wins battles, and gets to the net. With the puck, his game is too simple to make an impact. He skates straight at pressure and then either dumps the puck or gets it poked off his stick. No directional changes. And since it's not planned, his odds of retrieving the puck aren't high. He doesn't spot teammates on the inside or cross-ice, which limits his ability to offset the puck skills and rush patterns. In the offensive zone, he makes the simple play, even if a higher-value one is accessible. Some off-puck ability around the net. Effort helps him offset the skill limitations now, but it will only take him so far. Not a pick this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

Some playmaking from Stonehouse in this one. He set up a goal by waiting a split-second and passing to the middle lane driver. Connected with a similar play earlier in the game. He still does the same things: straight-line, single-speed rushes down the boards until he runs out of space. But that he has some vision within this limitation is a positive sign. Limited shooter or off-puck instincts in this game. The forechecking and energy are admirable. But I still don't see enough to bring him to the NHL in any capacity beyond depth.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Stonehouse capitalized on a rebound for a goal. Off-puck offence is mostly standing around the net or getting behind defenders. Nothing advanced, but this is the OHL – it stands out. Better timing and adjusting route/speed will help him bring this to the professional level. With the puck, there's no nuance to his game. It's all straight-line, single-speed rushes without any foresight or purpose. He throws the puck away constantly. Doesn't scan so he doesn't see better options. And he's not much of distributed in the offensive zone. He's a solid player, but he's unlikely to factor into our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

This game made me doubt everything I've thought about Stonehouse. Well, most of it. He got moved to Jack Beck's line, and started setting up his teammates. Connected with a one-touch pass off a retrieval for a goal. Then made the extra pass for a better look – he normally shoots that puck. Kept the transition touches to minimum, passing and getting

open off-puck. Outraced a defender for a high-danger chance and grabbed a rebound later in the game. Nothing complex, but if this playmaking is legitimate, perhaps he has NHL upside after all.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 16th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Stonehouse's game is admirable. The energy, pace, and physicality all suggest a capable professional player. The puck skills are limited. Most players are straight-line, single-speed puck carriers at this stage, but he's particularly limited when handling. He's not easily pushed to the perimeter; he's locked there. He can't change directions, push the inside, or deceive defenders. But he doesn't have the place-and-chase game to offset it. Playmaking didn't have any flashes in this game; nor did the off-puck offence. He's probably not an NHL draft pick at this point.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 23rd, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Stonehouse is a checker. Nothing playmaking-wise. And he's not even a place-and-chase player in transition; he's mindless dump-in or poorly throughout entry attempt player. But the potential to become a capable pro isn't hard to see. If he's not first on pucks, he attacks the opposing player's feet and pins them to the boards. He makes timed movements into the slot with the play around him, positioning himself for rebounds and deflections. And he's always a factor in the defensive zone. The puck skills are likely average-to-below-average. His game depends on having skilled linemates around him. I don't see an NHL draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 4th, 2022

Ottawa 67's vs. Niagara IceDogs - OHL

A much better playmaking performance from Stonehouse, enough to put him on my radar for the board. He turned a forecheck steal into a HD chance from behind the net, and spun a couple of pucks from the boards to the inside lane. He has mechanical limitations, and he's not particularly creative otherwise. A straight-line attacker. I like his physicality and DZC. He understands how to eliminate threats and he's a non-stop participator in after-whistle skirmishes. Perhaps a draft pick, but he's probably a fourth-liner at the next level.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Ottawa 67's - OHL

Physical, pesky, and determined without the puck. Stonehouse consistently makes an impact when he steps on the ice. He moves off-puck to become a passing option. Even if he's



not getting the puck, he understands that drawing defensive attention creates options for his teammates. Once he gets the puck, his game weakens. There's the classic hands and feet in rhythm - push puck, take stride, repeat. Limited crossover use. He uses his eyes to throw off defenders, but his chest, feet, and puck positioning mean that only poor defenders fall for it. Mostly just gained the zone and fired because his skill limitations prevented him from creating space. One drop pass after an intelligent off-puck route in transition. Need to see more playmaking ability. He'll get picked, but likely won't end up on our board.

**EP Rinkside Staff:** October 10th, 2021

Ottawa 67s vs. Kingston Frontenacs - OHL

I liked Stonehouse a lot in this - thought he was one of

Ottawa's best players. He was tied for most shots with 5 and his line generated 13 of the team's 23 scoring chances. Every time he was on the ice, with the exception of the penalty kill, the puck was in the Kingston zone. He made a great play to get a quick shot off in the first period and followed the play to the net, resulting in Ottawa's first goal. On the powerplay, he won the battle to get the puck loose, leading to a second goal for Ottawa. He follows up on plays and drives hard to the inside using crossovers to manipulate opponents on entry. Defensively, there is work to be done. He can get lazy in the DZ, swinging his stick with no purpose and circling without getting himself in lanes. On the PK, he was poor at closing opponents down in transition, but was better in DZ coverage. Based on some of his reads, I question how well he sees the game and if his success is a product of his work ethic. P



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# SANTERI SULKU

C/W | JOKERIT U20

HEIGHT 6' 4"

D.O.B. JUN. 13, 2004

WEIGHT 187

SHOOTS LEFT

24%

2022 XLS

15%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

6%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s.	35	13	19	32

## Scouting Report

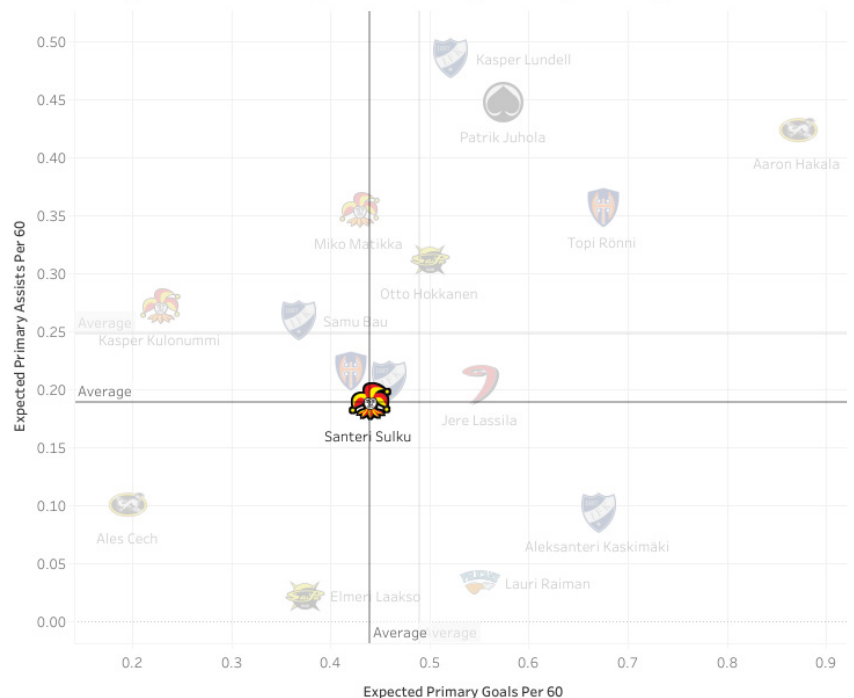
One quick glance at Santeri Sulku's Elite Prospects player page, and two things will immediately get your attention – his 6-foot-4, 187-pound build, and his June 13 birthday. Both of which are signs that this prospect is further behind in his development than many of his peers, younger and yet to fill out his considerable frame.

Another way of putting it is that Sulku has a lot of runway in front of him, and that his physical skills could improve a fair bit in the coming years. The question is whether they will improve to the degree necessary for the Finnish winger to carve out a lengthy, productive career in the NHL.

As currently constructed, Sulku is more of a low-paced attacker who tries to slow down the rhythm of the game to match with his lesser ability as a skater. His defensive impact is relatively low and he lacks the small-area skills – the puck protection and the finer handling ability – to create from the walls. His open-ice playmaking game is probably his best asset.

“He added an impressive primary assist off the rush, hitting a teammate on the back post with a hard pass after kind of faking a shot first – good stuff.” Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen wrote in a September game

U20 SM-sarja 2021–2022: Expected Primary Points (5v5 only)



report. “Other than that, he wasn’t very noticeable. He had some skill in open ice, but what stuck out the most was his rather low motor and a very upright skating stride. He was making most of his play attempts from a glide, too.”

While we do recognize that Sulku’s game could take significant steps forward in the next few years, the odds are against him and he will require a lot of focused development to beat them.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 26th, 2022

Jokerit vs. Lukko - U20 SM-sarja

Not a whole lot to write about Sulku's performance in this playoff game. He played somewhat limited minutes, again on the wing, and only had so many notable puck touches. Probably the most impressive part was his ability to create entries with his passing, showing solid handling skill combined with threatening hook passes to move defender's sticks out of the way of the intended lane. Sulku has shown flashes of offensive ability this season and he's put up very solid point totals, but he lacks the skills to truly be a creator at 5-on-5, with big percentages of his points coming on PP. His skating projects as below-average and his pace is still rather low, though maybe a bit higher compared to the start of the season. Lack of off-puck value might turn against him regarding the U18s selections.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 11st, 2022

Jokerit vs. Pelicans - U20 SM-sarja

Contrary to my previous viewings, Sulku was playing center in this one, and actually looked better than in most of my viewings of him as a winger. Not sure if it was because of the change of position, but he was having more impact, especially off-puck, dropping down low in the NZ trap and intercepting a few plays, also throwing his body around a bit more often than previously. He also made one of the best plays he's made this season, stealing the puck near DZ blue line, accelerating into a 2v1 and finishing with a well-executed inside-leg wrister (pretty close to an in-stride one, too). Interesting to see if he continues as a center.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 18th, 2022

Jokerit vs. TPS - U20 SM-sarja

Very bland showing from Sulku in this one. Just no offence whatsoever from his line, I'm not sure if they even managed to get off a single shot attempt at 5-on-5. Sulku's transition attempts were mostly cut off as he doesn't have the skating chops or puck protection skill to really be a primary playdriver. Even if his passing skills are pretty solid, he does everything from glide. Defensively he's not much of a factor either, mostly staying stationary high near the point. He doesn't engage physically and is instead contempt at just reaching and poking with his stick even when he has a breakup opportunity.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 12th, 2021

U18 Five Nations, Switzerland

Sulku started the tournament as the 13th forward but worked his way up the line and got more minutes as the event progressed. Funny thing was that he started the tournament at PP1 even though he didn't play much at 5-on-5. I liked what Sulku brought to the table with the puck for the most part. He was probably the best player in the bottom-six at creating and making plays off the rush and in transition, making multiple good dishes across the ice to his linemates who had speed. He doesn't play with a ton of pace and I haven't seen him making tons of one-touch plays, though. He played net-front on the power play, which is different from his usual spot on the half wall with his U20 team. I'm not sure if he's a pick, but there were at least some encouraging signs at this event.

**"Sulku is more of a low-paced attacker who tries to slow down the rhythm of the game to match with his lesser ability as a skater. His defensive impact is relatively low and he lacks the small-area skills – the puck protection and the finer handling ability – to create from the walls."**

**Lassi Alanen:** October 30th, 2021

Jokerit vs. HPK - U20 SM-sarja

Sulku found his way to the scoresheet, receiving the loose puck at the slot right after faceoff and quickly firing it far side to score. I'm very skeptical of Sulku's playdriving ability. He's got a rather low work rate, below-average skating stride (very hunched over back, ugly tilt at the hips, endurance seemed a bit of an issue on longer shifts) and doesn't make plays while moving. He did get a few scoring chances by receiving the puck at the slot, but that's about it. One good hustle on the forecheck to create a turnover. Very puck-focused in defensive zone, not a whole lot of scanning going on.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 29th, 2021

Tappara vs. Jokerit - U20 SM-sarja

Sulku had some good flashes in this one. He had some nice moments in transition - even if his skating is not that good - and he was able to make some clever passes off the rush and from behind the net. He's got passing skill, too, using slips and passes from below the defender's stick. There were some nice off-puck offence attempts, too, trying to drive at the hips and establish body position as the net-driving forward off the rush. Projection is tricky, but he's got some intriguing qualities.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 8th, 2021


Jokerit vs. JYP - U20 SM-sarja

Hard to say how projectable Sulku's game is to the next level.

He was skating on the second line with NJD third-rounder Samu Salminen and had some moments offensively when he got to play at his pace. Sulku makes most of his plays from the glide, where he's able to make some creative feeds from the perimeter. He played on the top power play and on the right flank, notably completely whiffing on two good one-timer opportunities (a coincidence or not, but didn't leave you very comfortable with his one-timers). He's lanky with good reach and can make some plays, but I haven't seen much in terms of getting inside or making plays in-stride.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 26th, 2021

Jokerit vs. KOOVEE - U20 SM-sarja

Sulku was skating on Jokerit's second line and saw ice time on the second PP unit where he played on the left flank. He looked very mediocre in this one. He added an impressive primary assist off the rush, hitting a teammate on the back post with a hard pass after kind of faking a shot first -- good stuff. Other than that, he wasn't very noticeable. He had some skill in open ice, but what stuck out the most was his rather low motor and a very upright skating stride. He was making most of his play attempts from a glide, too. Defensive efforts could have been greater and he didn't win many puck battles. Sulku wasn't named to the Hlinka roster after being a top-six contributor with the national team two years ago. 

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Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# JIMI SUOMI

D | TPS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. MAR.1,2003  
WEIGHT 165 SHOOTS LEFT

0%

2022 XLS

2%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

2%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
U20 SM-s.	12	5	10	15
Liiga	30	1	5	6

## Scouting Report

This is Finnish defenceman Jimi Suomi's second year of draft-eligibility, and he may well have progressed enough this season to make it his last one.

His skating was already a high-end tool, but Suomi managed to add another gear over last season. He would carve the ice in the U20 SM-Sarja last season with crossover-heavy strides, outspeeding and outmanoeuvring opponents between the blue lines and into the offensive zone.

"Suomi was skating on TPS' second defensive pairing in the first quarterfinal match against Tappara in the U20 league playoffs," Elite Prospects Dir. of European Scouting Lassi Alanen noted in a March game report. "[Suomi is] logging big minutes at even-strength and both special teams and

basically playing every other shift at the end when TPS was trying to protect their lead."

His high-end mobility coupled with his deceptive passing often in the form of head and body fakes was enough to earn him a promotion to Liiga this season.

There are signs of progress in his defensive game – more urgency and effort foremost among them – but that part of his profile is still a relative weakness for him. He continues to miss switches in coverage and opponents sneaking around him. He has to develop a better engaging ability, more physical tools, and learn to use his skating to close gaps faster if he wants to earn a role in the top league at some point.

## Game Reports

**Lassi Alanen:** March 24th, 2022

TPS vs. Tappara - U20 SM-sarja

Suomi was skating on TPS' second defensive pairing in the first quarterfinal match against Tappara in the U20 league playoffs, logging big minutes at even-strength and both special teams and basically playing every other shift at the end when TPS was trying to protect their lead. Skating continues to be Suomi's most exciting tool. His stride is effortless and added strength has made him more explosive and consistent. He can skate lapses in OZ from time to time. He could be more assertive on retrievals. He sometimes lets the forward get to the puck first even

when he has the advantage, preferring to just try to attack the forward afterwards. Defensively, he looked fine for the most part, looking a bit more engaged compared to last season. He was a big factor on Tappara's opening goal by going to change right as there was a turnover.

**Lassi Alanen:** March 2nd 2022

JYP vs. TPS - Liiga

Not a good showing from Suomi here, only playing under nine minutes, all at even-strength. Skating remains very projectable, though he still lacks lower-body strength to have that extra gear against players at this level. He was deferred

to quite often on the breakouts and the results were mixed. There was the first shift where he made a really good, clean play by picking up the puck in corner, making a move on the first forechecker and a simple pass before the second one could reach him. Other times he mishandled or panicked under pressure, throwing pucks to the middle without scanning on entries or just failing to execute a rather simple outlet pass. The puck seemed to burn on his stick quite a bit. Gap control was an issue, both as on-puck and off-puck rush defender. He doesn't seem to have that much trust in his ability to kill plays, so he just plays passively and concedes quite a bit of space, hoping to get his stick in the way in the last second if the puck-carrier tries to shoot.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 22nd, 2022

TPS vs. Ilves - U20 SM-sarja

This was a better viewing in Liiga action for Suomi. He didn't get to play a ton, but showed a lot of pretty intriguing stuff. His skating remains a plus-level tool even at this level. He's mobile, elusive, has a good two-step acceleration and close to ideal skating form and posture. Leveraged those things a few times in transition, activating into play aggressively on the weak side and even got some puck touches as of result. Another time he made an OZ activation from the point and got a decent scoring chance by receiving the puck near the faceoff dot and shooting in one motion. Gap control looked a bit better. His DZ reads do still need work and sometimes he does make odd choices on retrievals and breakouts. Panic threshold seems a lot lower compared to when he plays at the U20 level, maybe it'll raise in time in Liiga, too. I would get why a team would pick him up in the sixth or seventh round as an overager, but the NHL odds are still pretty slim. There's upside to make it a sensible bet.

**Lassi Alanen:** February 7th, 2022

TPS vs. HIFK - U20 SM-sarja

Suomi continues to show intriguing things even at the Liiga level. His skating overall is still clearly the biggest selling point, allowing him to consistently activate into play and recover back on defence in time. Once he gets more comfortable he should have the mobility to play tight gap on entry defence and make defensive plays with his skating, too. In this game, Suomi was very active at getting up in the play in the OZ. He lacks the high-end vision or shot to take advantage of those activations to the max, but we've seen more of those things at the U20 level this season. Defensively he can be a bit lost at times and HIFK was able to score once with him on the ice by just ramming to the net-front and hammering in a rebound. But there were also some better reads where

he was able to kill plays with his stick and position in a favourable manner.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 16th, 2021

TPS vs. JYP - U20 SM-sarja

Suomi was back with the U20 team, logging big minutes on top pairing and top power play in their 6-1 win over JYP. Suomi's skating and mobility look just as good, probably even slightly better compared to last season. His movement is effortless and his utilization of crossovers is great. He was strong on retrievals, being able to change directions quickly and gather information with quick shoulder checks. He also scored a fantastic goal late in the game, receiving the puck in full motion at the point, beating the last defender wide before going bar-down with a backhand shot -- highlight reel stuff. Defensively, he can still be a bit hit and miss, but as an offensive defenceman, he's one of the best at the league and it isn't surprising that he's already had some success in Liiga, too.

**Lassi Alanen:** May 6th, 2021

Finland vs. Russia - U18 WJC

Suomi had some bad moments in this one. In the first period, he read the situation in the neutral zone completely wrong and got caught stationary defending the blue line, resulting in a goal against. He also turned the puck over in the third period in the defensive zone, causing another goal against. He was also on the ice for a third 5-on-5 goal against, though that one wasn't necessarily his fault. Suomi's defensive zone play hasn't been ideal in this tournament. His gaps aren't consistent, he can't really stop cycles and he gets outmuscled in front of the net. His puck-moving was mostly good, though he occasionally skated into pressure and couldn't problem-solve his way out of it. Suomi's OZ play is his best asset and he was doing fine quarterbacking the top power play unit. He can throw the occasional cross-ice feed and has solid deception in the way that he skates.

**Lassi Alanen:** November 22nd, 2020

KalPa vs. Jokerit - U20 SM-sarja

This game was a big mixed bag. Suomi has good moments in almost every game. He's an effortless skater especially going forwards, with good edgework and linear crossover usage in the neutral zone. How he uses that skating ability is a bit dodgy at times. He made one excellent zone entry through the NZ trap that KalPa had set up, but then lost the puck after bad handling. Another time he tried to dangle his way through the defender's legs, which doesn't work that often even at this level and it certainly won't at the next one.

Suomi made one perfect no-look breakout pass, looking to his outlet target and then going with the middle option instead. He doesn't scan enough, though, which results in a lot of missed passes, or he makes a soft and easily-readable pass for forecheckers to intercept. Defensively, he doesn't scan enough and has obvious physical limitations in front of the net and in corners. Offensively, he can activate from time to time and has decent elusiveness at the point, but none of his moves really worked as he lacks the finesse and instincts to be a real OZ creator, at least based on what I've been able to see this season.

**Lassi Alanen:** October 23rd, 2020

Lukko vs. Jokerit - U20 SM-sarja

I have some serious reservations about Suomi's future as a prospect. He's just a mess defensively. His gaps in the neutral zone are way too big, meaning he retrieves way too quickly and way too much and basically gives the puck carrier as much space as he needs. In the defensive zone, he's just shadowing guys and trying to block passing lanes by placing the shaft of the stick to the ice, which is most of the time not very optimal. He doesn't pre-scan when he's receiving the puck from his partner, which means that he's not equipped to handle the forechecker, which results in turnovers and bad decisions with the puck. He pivoted the wrong way multiple times, which gave away extra space that he didn't seem very eager to gain back. Bad defensive skills and lack of size and strength combined with low effort -- not a good combo. Suomi's skating is his biggest strength and his usage of crossovers is especially noteworthy. His rush patterns were not ideal, though, as he went into pressure and tried to deke his way through it. He's got so many flaws in his game that I don't think I'd consider drafting him.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 19th, 2020

HIFK vs. Jokerit - U20 SM-sarja

Suomi logged a secondary assist and over 15 minutes of ice time in Jokerit's shootout loss against HIFK. Suomi had some good moments with the puck, spinning away from the forechecker and rushing the puck up the ice for a rush shot or sending an accurate stretch pass that resulted in a three-on-one situation. Aside from those moments, there were a lot of mistakes. He turned the puck over a ton with inaccurate

passes, either to a badly-positioned teammate (you shouldn't pass if your linemate isn't ready to receive the puck) or just missing the target altogether. Suomi's 5-foot-10 and 152 pounds (probably not too far off) frame really causes some trouble defensively from time to time where he just isn't physically able to stop cycles or compete along the boards and the size overall is a concern regarding his NHL odds.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 12nd, 2020

Jokerit vs. TPS - U20 SM-sarja

Suomi was skating on Jokerit's third pairing in their 5-4 win over TPS in the U20 action, getting to run the second power play unit. Suomi's rush defence didn't impress. He wasn't maintaining a proper gap when he was targeted off the rush and just gave away space for forwards to enter a zone and set up their shot. That's where he should be looking to close up space because he's got a major strength disadvantage once the opposition gets set up in the offensive zone. Suomi's offensive game was more limited than in my previous viewings, not recording any shots or shot assists at 5-on-5 and only a few on PP. He didn't make that many mistakes with the puck, but wasn't noticeable either. There was one bad turnover, though, where tried to be too cute with the puck and fell.

**Lassi Alanen:** September 11st, 2020

Jokerit vs. Ässät - U20 SM-sarja

Suomi was supposed to join Chicago Steel in the USHL for this season, but given the pandemic, he's at least starting his draft-eligible campaign with Jokerit in the U20 league. Suomi scored his first goal of the season with a slapshot from on top of the circle off the rush as the puck was left uncontested after an interception. Suomi's skating is his standout ability. He maneuvers well in tight, makes quick turns to evade forecheck, and uses crossovers to generate speed. I liked Suomi's play on the breakout for the most part. He knew when to give a quick pass and when to retrieve for a slower play. There were a couple of big blunders with the puck, most noticeably on the power play where he lost the puck as he was trying to shoot, resulting in a two-on-one attack for Ässät. The defensive side is the weakest part of Suomi's game, but he wasn't exploited in that department too much in this one. Some of his reads were overly-aggressive and his positioning needs some honing.





Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# ALEXANDER SUVOROV

F | METALLURG ZHLOBIN

HEIGHT 5'9"

D.O.B. NOV. 30, 2002

WEIGHT 165

SHOOTS LEFT

4%

2022 XLS

3%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

1%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
KHL	34	3	3	6
Belarus	13	9	5	14

## Scouting Report

Alexander Suvorov is at his best when he's the last link in his team's offensive chain; when his teammates rush the puck up-ice and allow him to attack a pocket of space to get a pass and fire it on net.

"Offensively, he is always working to find space," wrote Dylan Griffing, Elite Prospects Russia regional scout, in a December 20th, 2021 game report. "His movement and patterns allow him to sneak around the zone and find soft ice to wait for a pass and go to work. He is very dynamic and has a ton of skill, plus a killer shot."

Suvorov's off-puck sense, anticipation of the movements

of teammates and defenders, and his ability to support or prevent them stood out to us this season, as did his shot. Suvorov could earn a career in the KHL as a complementary scorer. He has well enough speed to close on professional opponents defensively and escape them up-ice on the rush.

Suvorov's puckhandling earned an above-average grade, but his passing game left more to be desired this season, both in terms of precision and selection. Suvorov often sent the puck in closed lanes, making us question his decision-making and awareness alike. His lack of physical play also hurt his NHL projection.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** March 12th, 2022

MHK Dynamo St. Petersburg vs. Dynamo SPb - MHL

Like Mitch Brown sometimes says, this is a performance that makes me want to shake Davydov's hand. He puts in the effort, offensively and defensively, running his routes at full speed to assist teammates and try his best to shutdown the opposition. I like the engagement, but the skill, not so much. He struggles to make and link plays at this level. The skating is probably his best attribute.

**Dylan Griffing:** December 26th, 2021

SKA-1946 St. Petersburg vs. MHK Dynamo St. Petersburg - MHL

Davydov looks to be a solid two-way player at this level. His application of heavy back-pressure, defensive zone scanning,

and pure speed make him an effective turnover creator, then he uses that speed to turn the other way and drive offense. Hands and patience let him wait for lanes to open, then he used his vision and passing to attack them and he created a handful of chances for his team in this one. Skates quick, but kicks his feet back hard, struggles controlling his weight, and lacks consistency in his strides.

**Dylan Griffing:** December 12th, 2021


MHK Dynamo St. Petersburg vs. SKA-Varyagi - MHL

It's clear that Davydov's offensive game is a major work in progress. He has an over-reliance on trying to burn defenders on the outside lane using his speed and no real other dimension is present. There was a lot of volume, high

danger passing in this one. Rushing himself to make a pass rather than scanning his options and realizing that there's absolutely nobody in the slot to receive the pass in question. This happened quite a few times, looking off open players at the point or behind the net to hurl a pass into a dangerous area where he had no teammates available. Clearly some tunnel vision involved, watching him try to pass through and shoot through defenders who were down on one knee to block the lane was hard to watch. That said, his play away from the puck was promising. His speed is a weapon on defense; heavy back-pressure, closing down space, and supporting his defenders. Really effective on the forecheck, as well, and it really comes down to how he anticipates plays and comes at the puck carrier with his full pace. I don't think the upside with Davydov is special, probably just a checking line, two-way centerman, but he has shown that his offensive toolkit isn't too shabby, this was just a rough game on that side of things.

**Dylan Griffing:** September 6th, 2021

MHK Dynamo St. Petersburg vs. Krylya Sovetov - MHL

It's a real tale of two halves with Daniil Davydov. Off the puck, he is hyper aggressive and always ready to throw the body. Despite being listed at 5'11" 157, he can really take down his target. Offensively, he becomes a more controlled player and much less aggressive. He can cut through the neutral zone like butter, but he has an overreliance on taking the outside lane and skating into the corner. He lacks the stickhandling and deception to be able to take players on 1v1, so he detours to less dangerous areas of the ice. However, he is a really smart passer and was finding teammates the slot with accurate passes from the flanks. He has good close quarters stickhandling and the physicality to play with pressure. Above average skater with fluid strides and good footwork, but didn't see much explosiveness. 

**"Suvorov's puckhandling earned an above-average grade, but his passing game left more to be desired this season, both in terms of precision and selection. Suvorev often sent the puck in closed lanes, making us question his decision-making and awareness alike. His lack of physical play also hurt his NHL projection."**



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# ALEXANDER SUZDALEV

LW | HV71 J20

HEIGHT 5'9"

D.O.B. NOV. 30, 2002

WEIGHT 165

SHOOTS LEFT

10%

2022 XLS

8%

3Y REGR. bXLS

7%

3Y REGR. iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J20 Nat.	45	15	36	51
Allsv.	5	0	0	0
WJC-18	6	0	0	0

## Scouting Report

Alexander Suzdalev built his game around his handling skills. He can smoothly catch pucks, handle them, and connect with his teammates through and around defenders, on his backhand and forehand alike. His deceptive feeds have made him an effective power play quarterback for HV71's junior teams this season.

The Russian-born Swedish winger's game, however, is a bit behind the curve in other areas. His 1-on-1 dangles and creative passes attempt may have worked well enough at the J18 and J20 levels, but they won't translate all that well to

Sweden's professional leagues without modifications.

Suzdalev makes far too many of his plays from a glide. In his time playing in the HockeyAllsvenskan, the faster defensive pressure was like a shock to his system at times. It forced him into poor choices of plays.

He will have to improve his defensive reads, effort, and pace of play to earn a top-six role in the HockeyAllsvenskan next season and improve his projection to the NHL. Some work on his skating stride and little added tolerance for physical play wouldn't hurt either.

## Game Reports

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 8th, 2022

HV71 U18 vs. Rögle BK U18 - J18 Final four

Suzdalev played a disappointing low pace game at this level. He showcases his skills mostly on the power play.

He skates fast with good control but tends to slow down the play rather than push it. He controls the puck and can be a step ahead of his opponents. His passing play and puck skills are elite. Still, you would think he would dominate more at this level.

**David St-Louis:** April 8th, 2022

HV71 U18 vs. Rögle BK U18 - J18 Final four

Suzdalev seems like a vanilla skill guy to me at this point. He has the abilities, the handling especially, to beat opponents one-on-one and slip pucks through and around them, but I

see more of a player who will perform with those skills at lower levels than in the pro game due to some poor setups, issues of angle and timing and vision. The pace of his game is relatively low, too, and this leads to him not getting a lot of pucks to work with.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 9th, 2022

HV71 U20 vs. Luleå U20 - J20 Nationell

Suzdalev's puck skills stand out. He controls the puck impressively in his own space and has many different moves. He can be creative and smooth in tight spaces. I would like to see him create more space and drive more play though. He had a good game with many shots, a couple of points and played big minutes but still I want to see him use his tools to more effect.

He tends to play a bit too much on the outside and his passing is good and precise but his puck touch could be smoother. In his passing game he does not seem to pass the puck with such ease and quickness as an elite offensive player does.

He is a smart player with the puck with many tools to use. His skating technique looks solid but with a shorter stride and he has good size. His balance is very strong and he can cover the puck well. He is agile and can shift pace both with speed but mostly with his hands.

His production at junior level is good but not as fantastic as some of his best moves could make you think. He is lacking a motor to compete and create and his physical and defensive play could be a problem. His tools make him interesting long term if he can work on his weaknesses. For the draft, he is closer to the fourth round than the first round in my opinion. I can see upside but also many red flags.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** December 27th, 2021

Västervik vs. HV71 - Allsvenskan

Suzdalev can handle the pace in Allsvenskan well. He plays at the pace of the game without using a lot of energy. He also looks agile on the ice. When he is gaining speed his stride is short in his first steps but his knee-bend and ankle flexion are good.

Suzdalev has strong puck control close to his body and further out. He looked poised and calm with the puck. He could not control the pace with the puck and got stressed when he was checked. His puck skills did not stand out on this level and was not able to create space.

Suzdalev reads the game fairly well but his defensive instincts are not strong. He is not a strong forechecker and does not look to be aware of danger in his own end. With the puck on his stick, he looks more aware of options and you can see how wants to play and that he has a creative mind.

A big weakness is his lack of physical play and competitiveness. He shies away from physical battles and plays with a comfortable gap defensively. I rarely see urgency in his game.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** November 10th, 2021

USA U18 vs. Sweden U18 - U18 5-nations


Alexander played on the second line and had a lot of ice

time on the power play. He had a primary assist in the game but also some bad plays on goals against. He started the game badly and had a tough time with the checking pressure from the US players early on but adapted during the game and played better.

Alexander lacks natural explosiveness but his stride is very effective and economical. He skates well with a low muscle tone and will be able to play his game at higher levels as well. He can control the play at a high pace without using much energy. Because of the lack of explosiveness his game does not shift pace as much. His game is mostly at the same pace all the time. His balance and agility are strong assets and he can cover the puck well.

Suzdalev has elite puck skills. He controls the puck well, he shoots it well and his passing is also a strong note. He is more of a playmaker than a shooter on the power play. He is strong on the puck and controls it well both close to his body and with range. Suzdalev sees the game well, especially offensively. He can control the pace and give himself the time he needs to be creative. Early in this game, his time with the puck got constrained when he got checked hard and he made bad plays. This was his first international game of the season but as the game went on he handled that checking game better and better. He showed that he can adapt when needed to and that is a rare gift to have.

Suzdalev has good size but could compete better and use his size better without the puck. He is not a strong checker and he rarely engages physically to win the puck. He uses his size mostly to play with reach and to cover the puck well when he has it. He has strong balance and is hard to knock off the puck in those situations.

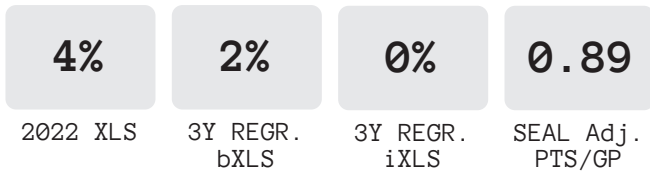
All in all, Suzdalev is an offensive winger who is creative and strong on the puck. He has impressive vision and can adapt his play when he gets himself into trouble. He is limited to a top 6 role and I would like to see him produce more points. I think he needs to improve his explosiveness and competitiveness to do so and to be a safer bet in the draft. Those are both assets which usually are hard for players to improve at this age. Either you usually have them or you do not. The offensive ceiling is still high and for me, Suzdalev, is a late first round talent at this time. The skills and vision suggests that he even might be a top pick but the holes in his game makes him a big gamble that high. 



# GABRIEL SZTURC

C | KELOWNA ROCKETS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. SEP. 24, 2003  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	67	16	25	41

## Scouting Report

Moving from the top-two professional leagues in Czechia to the WHL was mostly successful for Gabriel Szturc. His attention to detail in three zones made him an impactful player, even if the point totals never took off.

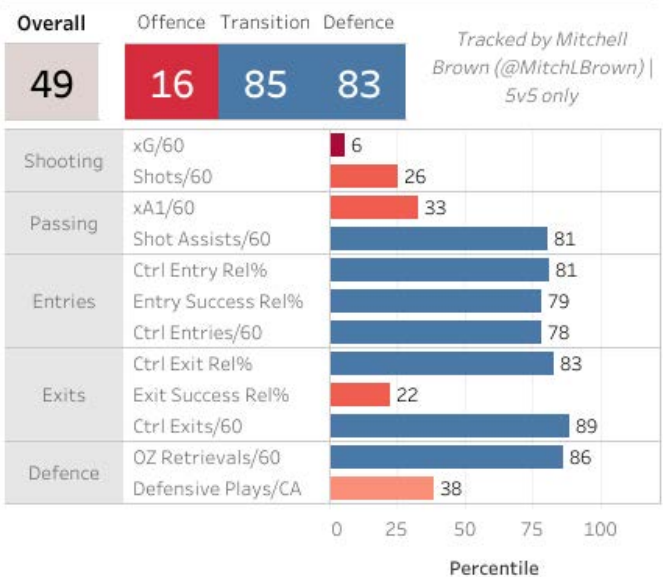
That detail-focused game appears when Szturc is away from the puck. "His off-puck positioning, soft-area identification and occupation are strong," Elite Prospects crossover scout Daniel Gee wrote in an end-of-season report. When the puck's in enemy hands, he eliminates off-puck threats, applies non-stop pressure, and anticipates passes.

After winning possession, Szturc usually knows the next play. If nothing's open, he cuts back along the boards until a low-risk option appears.

The off-puck instincts also serve Szturc's shot - his best tool. He pushes his hands away from his body, elevates his elbow, and creates downforce by dropping his centre of gravity to the ice. That also allows him to occasionally pull pucks around defenders and shoot in one motion.

The rest of Szturc's tools project as below-average to the

Games Tracked: 4 | Minutes Tracked: 64.6



NHL, lacking the quickness, handling, and passing skill to make the most of his brain. Still, he could become a useful depth piece down the line.

## Game Reports

Daniel Gee: April 6th, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

One of the stronger viewings of Szturc this season, who put up a pretty commendable performance in sustained pressure.

Szturc was first on a lot of puck retrieval plays, upping his pace and crashing the boards. Legit forechecking nuisance.

Has the pre-scanning habits to map teammate positionings out of these retrievals. On one second period sequence he centred a pass from behind the net for a chance. He took pucks off the wall and into the slot better than I have seen previously; on one shift he reversed on the near boards to shake off a defender, taking a sharp route to the crease.

He was able to pull the puck to his forehand, but his sharp angle shot was saved. Another development in this viewing was the presence of his shot -- in the past it honestly looked below average. In the third, he sniped a goal top shelf on a powerplay. Mechanics were shockingly good -- arms unlocked from body, weight-transfer, and a quick release -- seriously impressive. He wasn't involved much transitionally in this game. He struggled with pass receptions at times and really just chased dumped pucks.

Hit-and-miss defensively in this one. Szturc wasn't able to contain opponents on the wall physically -- his biggest deficiency in his own zone. He did have a couple of solid rotational plays and clears on the penalty kill. Absolutely destroyed a Cougar rush covering as a defender -- angled the puck carrier perfectly. Not enough here individual skill here to be a pick for our board -- I struggle to see a lot of translatability here.

**Daniel Gee:** April 5th, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Here's the thing about Szturc -- he played fine in this game, constantly pushing positive sequences on all his shifts, but he is so low-event that he's hard to evaluate. Responsible and aggressive defending -- an active scanner who always occupies high-danger lanes, pressures puck carriers, and causes opponents grief. On one penalty killing shift Szturc stripped an F1, looped back and then pressured the entry on the backcheck to kill the control and get the clear.

He had limited puck touches transitionally -- the best was a layered arial pass to Crisittall. Has some ability to one-touch transitionally -- but this was a common theme among Kelowna's roster. Rush patterns were weak; on one second period carry he veered wide and was stood up easily on the entry -- question his ability to beat opponents 1-on-1 (is it even something that enters his mind). Skating seems average but he is missing a separation gear. He created more during sustained pressure shifts. High-end forechecker in this viewing; constantly beat out defenders on retrievals and facilitated the low-to-high cycle. Patterns as a slot occupier off-puck -- likes to plant and spin-off into screen opportunities when the puck returns to the point. Motor was really high. Szturc was part of a really quick one-touch sequence that led to a high-danger chance in the first -- mention this because it took a high level of processing and execution to pull off.

Doesn't seem to have enough individual tools as he stands. Not a whole lot of separating aspects of his game. Probably not a pick, but I wouldn't be surprised if others thought he could make it in a depth role. He really didn't get many minutes late with the game tied -- Flamand took his spot on a line with Crisittall.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 26th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Szturc made a couple of plays along the boards to extend the cycle, but never to end it. He wins races for loose pucks, cuts back away from pressure, then sends the puck back down low. He's a straight-forward offensive player without a ton of nuance or creativity. Missed opportunities to take the middle, delay, and manipulate incoming pressure. Didn't look like a draft pick in this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 18th, 2022

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Szturc looks like a checker, solely. He doesn't have much skill, although some of his ideas are solid, like using the middle on breakouts or hitting teammates on the inside instead of cycling. But he can't handle the puck and move at the same time. Takes low-percentage shots and can't adapt puck positioning to make better plays. Maybe there's more here, hidden in his role. But I like the forechecking, backcheck, and general defensive awareness. He anticipates switches off coverage, proactively supports down low, and reads the attackers to figure out their intentions. Nothing that suggests a player on our board, but maybe he's a worthwhile invest in the late-rounds for a team.

**Marek Novotný:** March 6th, 2022

Vancouver Giants vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Great start to the game with a breakaway goal. Szturc was a completely different player in this one. He was more aggressive, tried to be more involved in all three zones and made some defensive effort as well. The Czech forward was part of both special units, showed some smooth puck handling and found ways to get out of tight areas by sneaking along the boards or finding a passing line. Puck protection was also solid - one-handed - demonstrated some strength with it. He was in a role of a playmaker/offense driver. If he was able to keep performances like that, he would be a nice pick in the late rounds.

**Marek Novotný:** February 21st, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs Tri-City Americans - WHL

Szturc's performance is changing like a weather. This time he had a bad game and didn't look like a pick for me. He was great at faceoffs, showed some ability of entering the zone with speed and then protected the puck with some manoeuvring in the offensive zone. He tried to find his linemates in dangerous scoring positions, but wasn't able to do so.

**Daniel Gee:** February 18th, 2022

Kelowna Rockets vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Came away more conflicted than anything from this viewing. Szturc had a fairly low event game as the third-line centre, profiling as more of a checker than anything in this viewing.

Like clockwork, Szturc was drilling Cougar defenders on every retrieval, some shifts going out of his way to get 2-or-3 hits in before vacating the offensive zone. His forechecking was impactful, pinning and disrupting breakouts below the goal line. Some flashes of ability in the third. First he worked a heavy weight-shift drive end-to-end, one arm shielding defenders away from the puck, and finally getting a top-shelf placed shot off in-stride. In sustained offensive pressure Szturc was more inefficient than anything. On a powerplay he attempted to set up a jam play two-plus times, each leading to the lane being blocked and a scramble for the retrieval -- just a weird sequence of events. Is this a product of some coaching direction or a lack of creativity/poor decision making? Regardless, Cristall and Szturc looked awkward together.

A fairly proactive defender, but Szturc didn't have a tonne of minutes in this one. Stride has some limitations. He bobs heavily in the crossover. Didn't really look like a pick in this one.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 16th, 2022

Prince George Cougars vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

The only notable part of this performance was Szturc's board game. He mostly times his cutbacks with pressure, and then makes a quick pass. Moments where he makes a play off the boards to the middle were frequent, but he missed additional opportunities by preferring to extend the cycle. A couple of plays off the backhand were the standouts. Otherwise, his game lacks skill, pace, and nuance. Don't see NHL skill.

**Marek Novotny:** November 27th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Tremendous start to the game. Szturc scored an opening goal in just 6 seconds. He showed some solid maneuvering with the puck, especially in the offensive zone where he played with high pace, setting up his teammates with nice passes. Overall his passing game was perfect. He also entered the offensive zone quite smoothly couple of times and showed some nice hands with a great attempt with a wraparound. Although he was part of the PK unit, his defensive game wasn't good, there were only some good defensive moments when his team was locked in their own zone, but his approach to defend his opponents in all three zones wasn't good. Szturc was also part of the PP unit and had 5 shots on net, which

was almost a maximum from the season so far (he had 6 against Prince George Cougars on November 12th).

**Daniel Gee:** November 13th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Szturc saw a sizable amount of opportunity in this game, skating on shifts with Kelowna's top line, killing penalties, and a bumper feature on the second power play.

Shifty through the use of weight-shifts and quick edge-to-edge maneuvers, Szturc was seemingly involved in every possession, and relatively dangerous at that. The Czech-born centre converted winger put together a fairly impressive passing performance among other habits in this game. In transition, he was particularly good at stretching passes cross-ice, through layering, hitting linemates Dach and Novak on the regular. On one shift in the second, he took a Dach pass in transition, worked down the left-wing and facilitated a pass back to Dach who drove the crease, flubbing the initial attempt on net. He effectively blended hip-pivots into slip passes constantly. Really clean transition player. Szturc's off-puck positioning, soft-area identification and occupation was strong as well. On one shift he executed a tip-in, ducking a check -- from there he activated into the slot and just missed a big-roubound by a fraction of a second. Not convinced Szturc has a projectable shot; he had nullified a dangerous shot off the left-hand circle, with a weak attempt into Brennan's crest. In sustained pressure Szturc mainly planted as a bumper or net-front screen per the Rockets system. Took an enormous amount of punishment but effectively fought through it all game. In the first on a powerplay, he was able to win a huge retrieval down low, shifting back into the bumper and jumping on a loose puck that he backhanded on net. On a subsequent man-advantage, Szturc failed to score on a hash-mark shot with limited pressure -- really need a better read on his mechanics but placement was an issue again. Another interesting shift occurred in the second; Szturc rolled out of the near-corner with the puck, checked as he passed through the crease. He then re-established slot positioning just redirecting a shot wide.

Executes plays quickly; pace is higher than most on the ice. Reads pressure off back well -- executed a wonderful spin out of pressure after he recovered a puck. In the defensive zone there are some mental-mapping habits -- shoulder peaking and tracking. Some light resistance such as stick lifts and interference plays in the slot. More of a high-slot lane clogger in his penalty kill sequences. Not sure if he's a pick but he's interesting at least.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense

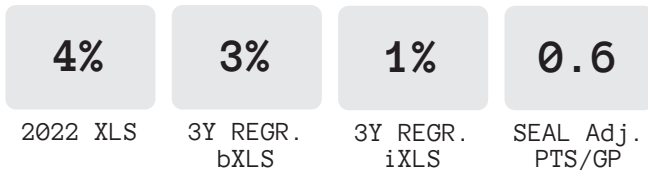


Physical

# RYDER THOMPSON

D | PORTLAND WINTERHAWKS

HEIGHT 5'11" D.O.B. JUN. 18, 2004  
WEIGHT 176 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	58	1	17	18

## Scouting Report

As with many of Portland's 2022 draft eligibles, Ryder Thompson showed enough ability in a limited role to believe he's primed for a breakout with more minutes.

Thompson's best moments occur on the breakout. He waits for forechecking pressure to arrive, then cuts back in the opposite direction. After escaping, he looks to the inside and cross-ice for options.

While most of Thompson's offensive touches result in D-to-D passes or simple plays, he shows flashes of what could be. He fakes shots on pass receptions before distribution, slips pucks through defenders when activating, and uses the occasional give-and-go to beat a defender while activating.

Throughout the season, Thompson's defence improved. "Did a solid job staying ahead of the rush attackers, keeping his feet steady, and forcing outside shots," Elite Prospects crossover scout Daniel Gee wrote in a late-season game report. Translating those habits, while improving his scanning frequency and body positioning should tighten up his defensive zone coverage.

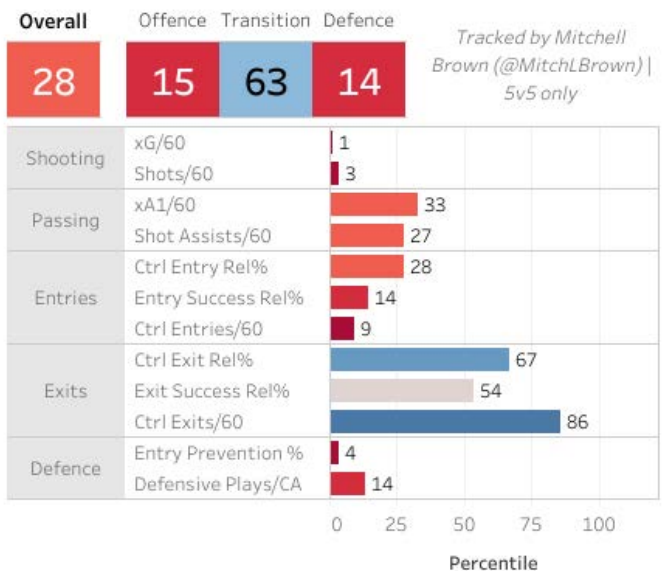
## Game Reports

Daniel Gee: April 27th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Thompson was thrust into a primary penalty killing role in this viewing. He lost too many physical battles on the boards and puck retrievals were an adventure to say the least. Secondary threat identification and lost coverages hurt

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 103.3



While his game lacked the refinement and dimensions necessary to justify a ranking, Thompson's elusiveness and flashes of deception generate optimism for his WHL and, eventually, professional future.

him on a first period slot chance against -- just far too late to tie up the stick. While he does shoulder-peak often, he can become entranced by the puck -- on one crease jam play he waited on the outside, not contributing to the battle. Thompson was better transitionally. In the first he started the game with an angle-off using some teammate support to



offset poor body positioning. His stick is a bit too passive in sequences but he occupied lanes well. In the third, he had a massive block, but missed a couple poke checks later in the sequence allowing an inside activation. Beat badly on a spin-deke while pushing aggression on an entry.

Not much offensively in this one. He misplayed pucks in poor times. On one scanned retrieval, he had a board-out option, waited too long, and was stripped of the puck. This game was rough for him in totality -- not a pick for our board.

**Daniel Gee:** April 26th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Thompson's edge-work is definitely flashy, especially as he crosses over transitionally, but he just didn't do a whole lot in this game, a performance devoid of offence, notable transitional plays, or consistency in his own end.

Thompson's transitional defending was probably the strongest part of his game in the viewing; did a solid job staying ahead of the rush attackers, keeping his feet steady, and forcing outside shots. Showed some major indecision on pinch/aggressive blue line activations -- had to be bailed out by a teammate on one first period play. In sustained pressure he lacks scanning habits and struggles to contain opponents on the perimeter. He's hyper focused on keeping his stick in lanes -- at least in this game.

Had multiple turnovers transitionally -- egregiously bad sequences. In the second period, Thompson tried to handle out of pressure down-low, turning the puck over multiple times. No protection habits or ability to escape. Just panicked decision making. For instance in the third period, he corralled a rebound, had time to escape, but just jettisoned the puck forward. The puck was intercepted and created more pressure. Not a pick for our board in my opinion. Looked worse in this game than previous viewings earlier in the year.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

When the Cougars backed off into the neutral zone trap, Thompson came to life. He delayed, changed course, and built the play effectively. With pressure, he's a cutback. He doesn't get enough flexion so he loses his momentum through the turn. That's his best problem-solving skill, so when pressure arrives, he gives the puck away. He's a solid rush defender but not an overly proactive or aware in-zone defender. Zero offence. I don't see NHL upside.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 11th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Seattle Thunderbirds - WHL

Zero puck plays from Thompson in this game. More

activation and better support will help him get touches. Right now, he passes and then plants his feet. Still, he didn't get many opportunities to touch the puck. Defence was the only notable part, mostly by getting untranslatable reaching stops in the neutral zone. Didn't look like a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

Finally, a game where Thompson had some plays. All the same critiques apply: pivoting, gap control, retrievals, and offensive creativity. But, he did things. He had several slick transition plays, usually by baiting the F1 to the outside before slipping a pass through them to the inside lane. Deception combined with timing. Lacks a bit of pace and in-motion skills, but trying to create advantages up the ice is a great start. Elsewhere, he's too simple with the puck. Lacks deceptiveness on retrievals (and body positioning sometimes). He makes simple offence plays -- D-to-D pass, point shot -- without any greater underlying purpose, such as building the offence. Didn't see the upside in this outing, but he could become a transition specialist.

**Daniel Gee:** February 25th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs Prince George Cougars - WHL

Thompson played a lot in this game, and while this game was pretty out of reach mid-way through the second, he was strong in this effort against the Cougars.

Multiple heads up outlets -- sometimes across two lines highlighted his transitional play. Thompson pushed some nifty lateral shuffles to open up seams and feed the middle of the ice. In sustained pressure, he was activating practically every shift. His best shift was at the end of the third; Thompson activated lower off the right-wing, reading a Nguyen cutback on the near boards. He ended up getting a couple of chances in the crease. In general he was picking good times to pinch, working in off the weak side, even forechecking below the goal line -- it was unstructured, aggressive, but impactful.

Limited defending in this effort, but there were some troubling transitional sequences. Thompson had an awful play to start the game where he let a puck carrier walk around him -- pivot was slot, no physicality or resistance. As the game went on, he contained the centre lane well. In the first he rejected an uncontrolled dump out and used eyeline manipulation to start a counter attack. When he is gapped up, his feet are stable. Has some plus lateral ability and can stop-and-start on a dime. His best work was on the penalty kill. Big time scanning sequences and shifts into shooting lanes led to some impactful blocks. Screens his goaltender consistently, however, always jumping into sightlines as shots

are released -- led to a Cougars goal. Not sure he is a pick based off this viewing.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 22nd, 2022

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Portland Winterhawks - WHL

Quiet outing, and not in the good way. Thompson conceded the zone too easily a couple of times, and his off-puck gap controls stands out as particularly inconsistent compared to his teammates. Wanders a lot in the neutral zone and lets threats slip behind him. Deferred constantly in transition, but he didn't throw the puck away. Struggled to maintain body positioning and win races for retrievals. Didn't see draftable qualities, but perhaps it's the role.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 8th, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Thompson showed off a bunch of skills in this game: activation, edge work, passing, and some deception. Faked a shot on pass reception, before passing down the boards for an assist. On retrievals, he showed patience and awareness, cutting away from pressure and using the middle. Threw

the puck away in transition a couple of times, but followed up, recovered possession, and used a give-and-go to gain the zone. Even showed some playmaking from activation with slip passes. Best sequence saw him activate down the middle in offensive zone play, but he bobbled the puck. The hands look like a potential limiter, but he showed some ideas, skating skills, and projectable qualities. Doesn't look like a candidate for our board, but could be a late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 1st, 2022

Portland Winterhawks vs. Everett Silvertips - WHL

I didn't see any draftable qualities from Thompson in this game. He's a relatively basic, nondescript defender, which isn't necessarily bad, but he doesn't have the tools of Ryan McCreary last year. He doesn't load his pivots, which compounds with his tendency to wander in the NZ. There's the odd well-timed close out in the DZ or cross-ice breakout pass, but he lacks mechanics, pace, and deceptiveness. In a wide-open game like this one, it would've been nice to see Thompson activate and try to create something. He had one pass into the slot. That was it. Need to see more from him.

EP





Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# MIGUËL TOURIGNY

D | ACADIE-BATHURST TITAN

HEIGHT 5'8"

D.O.B. FEB. 9, 2002

WEIGHT 172

SHOOTS RIGHT

28%

2022 XLS

23%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

23%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	65	31	49	80

## Scouting Report

You simply have to appreciate the role that Miguel Tourigny has carved out for himself in the QMJHL. He's one of the best goal-scoring defencemen in recent memory and his trademark plays are quite unique to his game.

"Tourigny is basically a forward on the ice, always activating, always running deeper than most of his forwards," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in a March 23rd report. "He relies on speed and his long stick to beat opponents wide and keep the puck out of their reach to attack."

Tourigny can skate down the wing, past defenders, and release from the faceoff circle, leveraging his speed and that

long stick to elevate the puck above the shoulders of goalies. His constant activations make him hard to deal with on the ice. The opposition always has to be on the lookout for him, as a wrong move could lead to another one of his rushes.

Defensively, Tourigny makes his greatest impact in transition. His four-way mobility and poke-checking skill allow him to eliminate attacks before they get to his zone, where he's at a disadvantage due to his 5-foot-8 build.

The entertainment factor is exceptionally high with Tourigny, but it's unlikely that his hero-puck style of play will translate to the NHL.

## Game Reports

**David St-Louis:** March 23rd, 2021

Blainville-B. Armada vs Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

I underestimated Tourigny's agility in my previous viewings. He can really dangle around forecheckers, and not just one, but two and even three sometimes. He switches his weight, explodes off his outside edge, while pushing the puck into space, away from the reach of the opposition. That is projectable somewhat to the NHL; I want to see more when he has his back turned to the play, when he faces hard, physical pressure.

Far from me to overvalue size, but I still doubt Tourigny's skill translatability. He really seems to abuse his competition at the Junior level, but his game needs a reform to fit the pros. I could maybe see him become this aggressive,

early-breaking defender, with a rapid passing game to complement. Need more viewings.

**David St-Louis** - March 6th, 2021

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Rimouski Oceanic - QMJHL

Fun, but not projectable. Tourigny is basically a forward on the ice, always activating, always running deeper than most of his forwards. He relies on speed and his long-stick to beat opponents wide and keep the puck out of their reach to attack. He has some deception and moves, but again, his long stick limits his puck maneuverability. Defensively, he can break plays with range...I don't see an NHL defender there. Just a really fun QMJHL one. Few elements of his current game will translate. Maybe a development team could work

with him to time his activation better, change the length of his stick, and make use of his skating even better to shut down play even earlier...Maybe.

**David St-Louis:** February 12th, 2020

Gatineau Olympiques vs Blainville-B. Armada - QMJHL

Tourigny projects as an above-average skater in the professional game. His mobility serves him in his puck-moving -- he attracts forecheckers on the back wall and quickly escapes with a lateral cut and a slight change of speed -- and in his defence off the rush. The rest of his game lags behind, however. He uses a long stick to increase his defensive impact at his height (5'7"), but that long stick seems to be harder to manoeuvre.

The toe of his blade is in the air, and Tourigny seems to always be on the verge of losing the puck. He consistently hits closed passing lanes or misses his feeds (often passing behind his teammate). He is a predictable passer and shooter, too. Overall, Tourigny has a great tool on which to build

his game; he positions himself well, but he still needs skill development.

**David St-Louis:** November 17th, 2019

Blainville-B. Armada vs Drummondville Volitgeurs - QMJHL

In the first period, on the breakout, Tourigny rimmed the puck to his winger and immediately joined the rush, he received a pass mid-ice, skated diagonally in the neutral-zone, entered the offensive end and hit a teammate cross-ice for a backdoor play. Tourigny is a mobile, smaller defenceman. His skating allows him to influence the ice in situations where his lack of length fails him, like off the rush, where he can easily match the footwork or attackers and recover to stay glued to his check if he is shoved away. Tourigny also has a clear attacking mentality with the way he takes a hard stride towards the neutral-zone every time his team gets the puck back. That said, his lack of standout offensive skill on top of his smaller side (vision, one-on-one ability, above-average passing...) doesn't make him an interesting NHL prospect... yet.



**"Defensively, Tourigny makes his greatest impact in transition. His four-way mobility and poke-checking skill allow him to eliminate attacks before they get to his zone, where he's at a disadvantage due to his 5-foot-8 build."**

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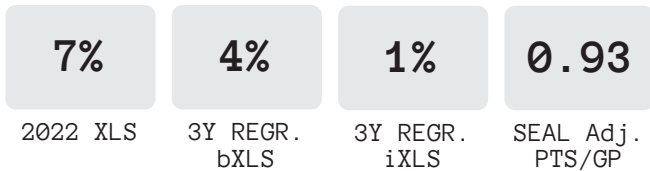
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# ZANDER VECCIA

RW | MISSISSAUGA STEELHEADS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. JUL. 27, 2004  
WEIGHT 174 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	61	10	13	23

## Scouting Report

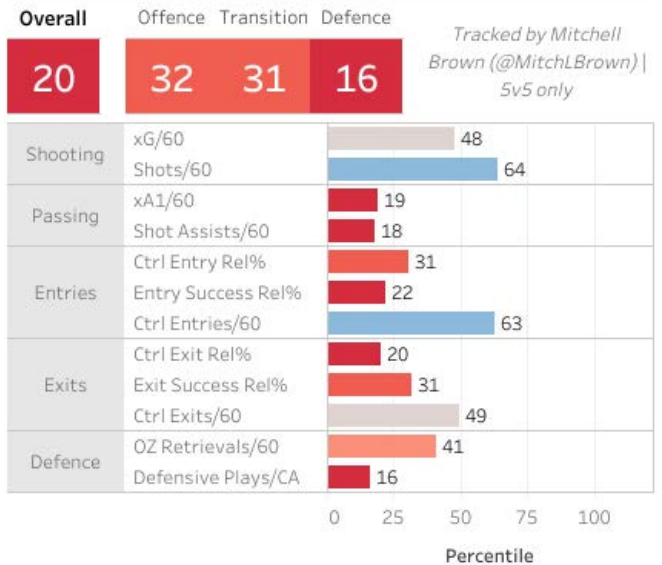
Points weren't easy to come by for Zander Veccia, but his well-roundedness and physical potential endeared his game to our scouting staff.

Here's the core of Veccia's game, as described by Elite Prospects OHL scout Lauren Kelly: "pressuring puck carriers, forcing turnovers, working down low on the forecheck." He's not shy to throw hit or crush players into the end-boards, and he establishes body positioning by getting low and driving his back through the opponent's hands in just about every situation. Where most players just keep their stick in the lane, he anticipates, angles, and mirrors the footwork of the puck carrier to keep shots to the outside and get the odd steal.

Throughout the season, Veccia flashed several NHL skills. Where many players rush the net off-puck, he stops in space. He attacks the middle if possible, and if not, he initiates a give-and-go. Along the boards, moments where he makes a tricky pass through a defender have become more frequent. And his shots as moments where it looks NHL-calibre, especially off the pass.

Right now, Veccia's skating inhibits the consistency of his skills. A lack of lower-body flexion limits his balance and quickness. He struggles to complete his crossovers. And, as

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 97.1



Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown explains, he's often "classic straight-line, single-speed attacker who makes desperation plays if he can't get to the net."

Don't be fooled by the point totals, he has potential. With the right development, he could become an effective depth piece.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 9th, 2022

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Veccia took an awful crosschecking major late in the game that led to Kingston's comeback win. I didn't see a ton of skill from him in this game. Mostly the classic straight-line, single-speed attacker who makes desperation plays if he can't get to the net. His best skill is winning puck battles and gobbling up loose pucks on the forecheck. Crafty pass off one such sequence, but didn't see anything more. Establishing body positioning by getting low and stick in his leg out. Plants himself in front of the net without much awareness of better off-puck practices. He didn't look like a draft pick in this game.

**Lauren Kelly:** April 3rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

I liked Veccia in flashes in this game. Really good on the forecheck, had a great rush that led to the Steelheads' first goal where he drove past defenders and protected the puck on a 1-on-3 situation and managed to get the shot off. Also drew a penalty with his strong play in the slot. Other than that though, there weren't really anymore notable moments - this game morphed into a special teams battle and as a result, Veccia didn't play a lot aside from a couple of stints on the second PP unit.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 24th, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

This was Veccia's first game back from an injury, and he was strong in a checking depth role. Used his speed through the neutral zone to get pucks in deep, would head for the net looking for rebounds and could have scored on three or four occasions parked on the doorstep. Laid a big hit and drew a penalty late driving to the net. Picked up the empty-netter to seal the Steelheads' comeback. He's a really defensively reliable support player right now in the OHL, but I'm not sure if that's enough to warrant a draft pick on him. Does remind me of a Zach Hyman type player, anyhow.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 30th, 2022

Niagara IceDogs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Veccia had a quietly solid game for the Steelheads. Fired four shots on goal, helped his teammates win puck battles, came back in support, and succeeded yet again in a checking role. He bounced back and forth between the second and third lines (the team's lines as a whole were in a blender for most of the game) and didn't seem fazed by the different players he was on the ice with. I'm still unsure of what his long term projection can be, but I believe there's upside with him.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Veccia played on the second line in this game and picked up an assist on the Steelheads' first goal off a give-and-go with Beck. Other than that though, he showed more of the same checking abilities, pressuring puck carriers, forcing turnovers, working down low on the forecheck. His off-puck offence was a lot stronger in this one, reading off plays and getting himself in open spaces to help generate scoring chances. I think with the right linemates, he could be a complementary player in a top-six one day, but there's a long way to go still.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 20th, 2022

Oshawa Generals vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Veccia is an effective bottom-six checker for the Steelheads, challenging puck carriers on the forecheck, good effort levels on backchecks, and forcing turnovers in the neutral and offensive zones. I've still yet to get a strong read on what kind of offensive potential he has, but he protects the puck well on zone entries and down low on the cycle. Looks like a pretty late-round pick at most, at this point.

**Lauren Kelly:** December 17th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Veccia picked up an assist on the first goal. Drove hard to the net on most shifts, was very difficult to force off the puck when he had it, which led to several successful zone entries. Went 1-on-4 in the slot and still got a shot off. He had a good read in the offensive zone to steal the puck and regain possession. I think he's worth a draft pick, but likely a late rounder. Definitely the most effective and consistent player of the Steelheads' bottom six.

**Lauren Kelly:** November 28th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Veccia stood out as a strong puck carrier, especially through the neutral zone. He was especially difficult to force off pucks, especially once he got moving. Mostly carried the puck north-south, didn't show a lot of lateral movement with it or any intent to distribute it. The goal was to get the puck deep into the offensive zone, which he succeeded at. Otherwise, he didn't stand out too much in this viewing. Defensively, his positioning was solid. Not exactly sure how impactful a forward he will end up being at future levels, especially when it comes to generating offense, but I could see a team taking a flyer on him in a later round.



**Lauren Kelly:** November 13th, 2021

Kingston Frontenacs vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Veccia had really good flashes in this game, especially when he was carrying the puck. He picked up the puck in the neutral zone, took it in wide before walking around Thomas Budnick and cutting across to the net for a scoring chance. He protects the puck well along the boards and is an asset on the forecheck. There was also another nice puck rush and pass across that was deflected out of harm's way before it reached a teammate. His engagement level was good at both ends of the ice and he didn't make too many positional errors, though there was one instance where he circled too wide and left an opponent open in the slot. As good as he is on the forecheck, I'd like to see Veccia try and create chances down low instead of relying on creating off the rush.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 29th, 2021

Barrie Colts vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

This was another solid showing from Veccia, who is developing some great chemistry with Beck. He wasn't as involved in the offense tonight, but he had one great chance where he

corralled a loose puck on the doorstep and was turned aside. I like his engagement level at both ends of the ice and he's a responsible player in his own end, whether it's hunting after loose pucks or using his body to stall the opposing forecheck. Getting in better areas to create offense would be the next thing I'd like to see from him, otherwise I think he's looking more like a mid-round pick.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 24th, 2021

Mississauga Steelheads vs. Hamilton Bulldogs - OHL

Veccia delivered a great pass to Owen Beck from his knees on the first goal, which was his first point of the season. He was defensively responsible and proactive in his own end, which helped him be an effective penalty killer. He's a bit of a slower skater when it comes to his acceleration (especially compared to Beck on the same line), but Veccia still moves around the ice pretty efficiently. He and Beck were driving the Steelheads offense consistently all game long, firing shots on goal and not being afraid to drive hard to the net. Veccia also showed he has a dangerous release on a shot that rang iron. He's definitely a player I'm excited to see more of this season.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# ANTONIN VERREAUULT

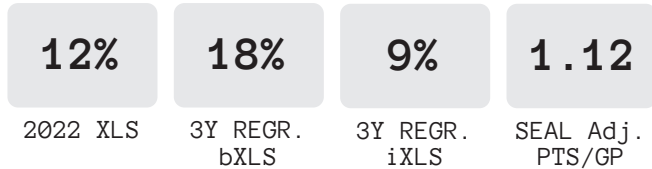
LW | GATINEAU OLYMPIQUES

HEIGHT 5'8"

D.O.B. JUL . 28, 2004

WEIGHT 163

SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	56	14	32	46

## Scouting Report

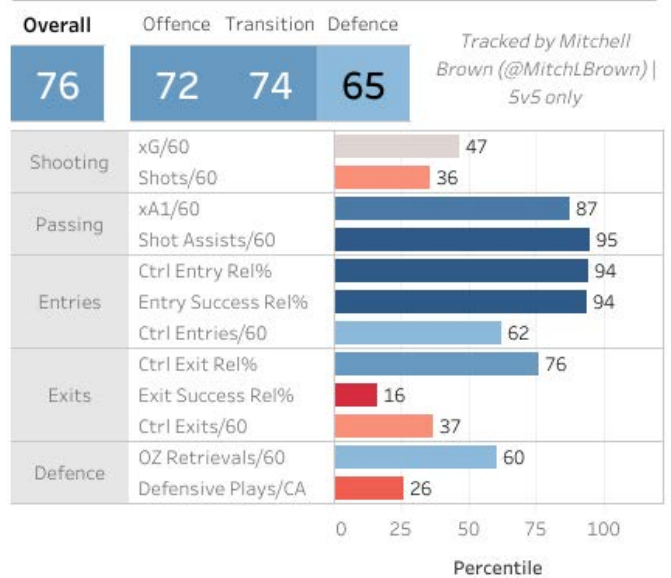
Antonin Verreault should become a great QMJHL scorer in the next two years as his skills continue to develop and as the Gatineau Olympiques's young roster matures alongside him.

The Olympiques winger plays with a lot of pace, a constant speed down the wing that forces defenders to quickly adjust their gap or fall behind. And it's the same in the offensive zone. Verreault is always moving, always probing for gaps in the coverage, with and without the puck. His high level of activity and very quick execution — pucks rarely stay on his stick for long — lead to defensive errors and open up scoring chances.

But Verreault is not a creator. He lacks the kind of deception and manipulation that opens passing and shooting lanes. He simply increases the speed of the game and lets opposing mistakes happen. The issue is that the winger will lose much of his pace advantage at the next levels as the opposition will become smarter and faster, too. And his lack of physical skills won't allow him to win more contested plays.

Some smaller, shiftier players can hear their name called at the draft based on their skill level, but Verreault didn't show us enough of a skill advantage this season to give us confidence that he will be able to retain his game at the next levels.

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 118.6



"We might include him on our board, as he was always a skilled player coming up the ranks — maybe he figures it out — but I just don't see his path to a top-nine NHL role right now," wrote Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis in an April 3rd game report. "He doesn't have a fallback game either."

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 15th, 2022

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL  
The best of the draft-eligibles by a large margin. Twice,

Verreault gained the zone, cut across the front of the defence, then made a backhand pass to the middle-lane driver. Both connected. Along the boards, he slowed down



and waited for his teammates to arrive in space before passing (for the most part). He's far from deceptive but he's slowing down and showing better awareness of his options. Game relies on space that he can't consistently get at this level, but he was better in battles than normal. Some off-puck instincts. Reminds me a lot of Mathew Ward in the WHL: short playmaker that lacks the additional layer of skill to make it work at the next level. While Ward has a more physical game that might help him play a depth role, Verreault's upside is a touch higher because he's more creative and better on the backhand.

**David St-Louis:** April 26th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Not a pick this year for me. The only thing that keeps me watching is his reputation and the occasional flash of skill. His game is really inefficient, a ton of forced plays because he doesn't know how to play inside.

**David St-Louis:** April 3rd, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs Shawinigan Cataractes - QMJHL

I'm not sure Verreault is a pick. The chances of him becoming a useful NHLer are pretty low. He's a playmaker, but not a manipulator. He goes to the right areas away from the puck (attacks the slot, the net) and does so with relatively good timing, but he can't battle for positioning because of his light build. He's not all that clever in his rush patterns. In other words, I don't think he has the skills that make diminutive forwards effective in the NHL and he lacks that special attribute to hold a top-6 role. We might include him on our board, as he was always a skilled player coming up the ranks -- maybe he figures it out -- but I just don't see his path to a top-9 NHL role right now. He doesn't have a fall back game either.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Drummondville V. vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Verreault goes. It's fun. He always tries to beat defenders into lanes. Some moments where he shows more advanced ideas, like making the early pass or cutting across defenders. But he mostly plays an untranslatable game. To be fair, he clearly has the vision and skill to play differently. He has many qualities that should feature more in his game soon, from finding space off-puck to making quick plays off the boards. Not manipulating and he doesn't have any notable tools. I doubt he's a pick this year, but he's worth keeping an eye on.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Blainville-B. Armada - QMJHL

A fun game from Verreault. He's not advanced in what he does, but he has some skill. Adjusts puck positioning before passing into lanes. Comfortable on the backhand. Game defaults to outpace, but when that's not an option, he gears down and finds a different play. Doesn't waste time on the cycle; he looks to the inside immediately. Best when he's coming up from behind the net. And he showed a bit of off-puck instincts in this game. Not necessarily for shooting, but he knows how to get open in multiple ways (weak side, short support, between checks). Inefficient playmaker, as he passes behind his target, doesn't deceive, and misses the best lane. Doubt he makes our board this year, but he's a player to watch going forward.

**David St-Louis:** December 11th, 2021

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Pace. Pace. Pace. Verreault does everything at speed. His feet keep moving at all time and for good reason. If he stops, he's easy to contain and outmuscle. He rushes every play, every pass. His main competitive advantage is his speed and quick execution, but he doesn't manipulate defenders or change speed or link plays together all that well. He abuses poor coverage through his pace. It doesn't help that he's undersized with a short-stick and a lack of physical skills. He battles for pucks and has a high motor, but I'm not sure it's enough.

**David St-Louis:** November 24th 2021

Victoriaville Tigres vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Verreault has been a bit disappointing this season. I don't see many NHL elements in his game. He is light and easy to topple along the boards and he rushes his play, but the skating and the occasional offensive creativity remain interesting. He can make plays in movement, in fact, he makes every play in movement, but the constant rushing in his game reduces the quality of his decisions and the precision of his passes. His effectiveness feels a bit capped in the Junior game, but I think, as he gains confidence, his production will explode in the next two years.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 21st, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Verreault's shot isn't anything notable, but he played like it was. To be fair, I guess he scored on one of his leaving-value-on-the-table plays, but there were a couple more where he could've found a teammate for a better chance. Attacked the inside in the offensive zone, but defaulted

to up-the-boards plays in transition. Game is largely built around out-pacing, but Gatineau's structure is entirely out-pace. Makes me wonder about how different his game looks with a different team. When he's looking to pass, he fakes the shot first, leaves pucks in space, and makes backhand passes. There's upside here. But his style of play masks it.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Drummondville V. - QMJHL

Verreault didn't really look like the Verreault I saw last year. He still plays with pace, but I don't see the same nuance I previously saw, beyond a single slot cut in front of a defender. When he gets a step on a defender, he gets low and skates as fast as he can to the goal line before throwing a pass into traffic. Generates the power on his shots by tipping his shoulders over the puck, rather than with knee bend. Didn't look like a pick in this game.

**David St-Louis:** October 10th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Blainville-B. Armada - QMJHL

Verreault can't handle contact at all. His size and slight frame limit his entire game; he rushes plays before he gets collapsed on, doesn't even attempt to manipulate or leverage plays because he has to find the nearest escape, and when he does get collapsed on, he gives up the puck instantly. He not only lacks strength, but physical skills. He can somewhat connect plays and has the speed to attack open ice, but if there is no play ready for him, he doesn't create anything. This was a poor performance. Verreault either needs to build elusiveness, a better passing game, or those physical skills because right now, he is where plays come to die for his team.

**David St-Louis:** March 20th, 2021

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Calling Verreault effective in this game would be a stretch, but Gatineau as a whole had trouble keeping their heads above water in their match-up against the more talented Armada. He showed a couple of abilities in tight, fast stickhandling and even puck protection skills. He's inside driven and positionally smart and he can use teammates, connect plays. Lots to like, but only in flashes. His skating looks like a 5.5-6 when you factor in his high-pace and his feet constantly moving and his handling is probably a 5.5. Shooting looked below-average; his high-stance wasn't conducive to power.

**David St-Louis:** February 27th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Sherbrooke Phoenix - QMJHL

Many interesting elements in this game for Verreault. His

skating projects as average in terms of stride mechanics (maybe), but I like how he weaves and constantly keeps his feet moving. His stickhandling skills are definitely above-average, not flashy, but very effective. He underhandles, catches pucks softly, and blends those catches into the next play by redirecting the puck to his side. It looks easy.

He finds solutions in tight spaces, establishes body positioning, gets low on his skate to keep it, and establishes that positioning preemptively on pucks he will receive, like that one time Luneau slapped a puck in his direction as Verreault drove the slot. Verreault had the inside lane but the defender on his back could catch him, so the forward moved in the D's recovery lane and got low to prevent him accessing the puck. Great play preparation and sealing techniques. Of course, Verreault is limited by his size, sometimes severely, but he processes the game fast and doesn't give up on plays. He is a collection of great habits and many above-average skills.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 24th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Drummondville V. - QMJHL

There were moments where Verreault's skating looked like an NHL projection. He pushes his knees over toes, engages his hips, and kept his chest up -- it's just really inconsistent. He has some difficulty gaining the zone in this game, but it seemed to more a result of wanting to play a chip-and-chase game rather than turnover issues. His feet move through every action, but he shows the awareness to manipulate defenders. Slowed to hit the through pass after the nearest defender bit and lunged forward. Stays engaged off-puck, which directly led to a scoring chance where he problem-solved pressure, and then maintained possession while falling and got off a shot. He's aggressive in pursuit, especially on the backcheck. Looks like a pretty exciting prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 20th, 2020

Shawinigan Cataractes vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

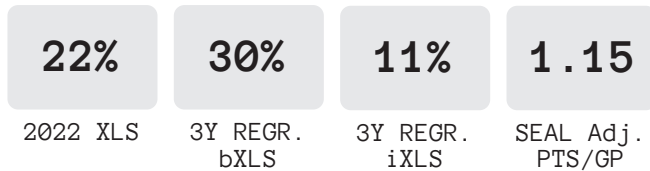
Gatineau's best forward by a healthy margin. Verreault was everywhere in this game, first on loose pucks, swooping down low in defensive zone play, and setting up scoring chances. A dash into the slot for a rebound gave him his goal, while a deceptive pass reception followed by a cross-slot feed for tap-in gave him his assist. His transition decision-making is so advanced for his age, never overhandling the puck, using his teammates, and working plays inside. He works through pressure well. Tiny and an average skater right now, but his stride's mechanically solid -- just needs strength. He has top-six skill, but will the rest of the elements get there?



# MARKUS VIDICEK

C | HALIFAX MOOSEHEADS

HEIGHT 5'10" D.O.B. MAR. 21, 2004  
WEIGHT 154 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	68	18	47	65

## Scouting Report

The fact that we kept Markus Vidicek from our final ranking doesn't mean we don't respect his production. Putting up 65 points in 68 games of QMJHL action is nothing to sneeze at.

The context of that production, though, was such that we couldn't build a case for the Mooseheads winger at the end of our board. For one, he was on one of the QMJHL's highest scoring teams in one of its weakest divisions. For two, we didn't get the sense that he was a driver for his team.

For the most part, our team rated Vidicek's tool as average, but if any one part of his game stood out, it was his playmaking. He was a capable distributor who could pass his way out of trouble, placing pucks in space with accuracy, touch, and timing. The lack of any foresight or planning often limited his effectiveness and it limited our ability to project him as a top-flight playmaker at the next level.

"He is really fixated on making certain plays even if they're suboptimal in his situation or not open at all," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in an April game report. "He's a quick puck distributor at this level and he has some defensive moments."

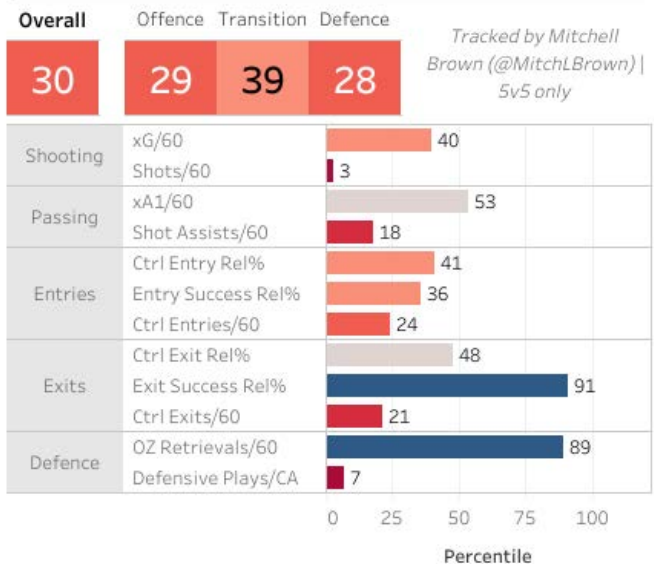
## Game Reports

David St-Louis: April 26th, 2022

Halifax Mooseheads vs. Mocton Wildcats- QMJHL

Vidicek is not an NHL prospect for me. A bunch of inefficiencies in his game -- forced plays, poor decisions with

Games Tracked: 5 | Minutes Tracked: 40.6



Only compounding our concerns about Vidicek's projection is the fact that his physical game has already proved limiting at the QMJHL level. Standing at just 5-foot-10 and weighing only 154 pounds, Vidicek has a long way to go before he's a credible NHL prospect.

the puck -- and I don't see any adaptability. He is really fixed on making certain plays even if they're suboptimal in his situation or not open at all. He's a quick puck distributor at this level and he has some defensive moments.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 10th, 2022

Sherbrooke Phoenix vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Vidicek has tools, some skills, and the read idea on many of his plays. When he's not battling for pucks, he's supporting. With the puck on his stick, he doesn't just shoot immediately, preferring to build the play and try to hit teammates on the inside lane. Many of his reads are quite advanced, like spotting a moving teammate on the other side of the defence. The handling skill sometimes pops under pressure. But he struggles to connect his plays. He doesn't use the handling skill to adjust puck positioning before the pass. He doesn't deceive or delay. He just tries to access lanes straight-up like a classic junior scorer. But because his average pace of operation is average, he struggles to create at this level already. Perhaps his engagement on the defensive end gives him an opportunity, but I'm not sure I see a draft pick here.

**David St-Louis:** February 15th, 2022

Moncton Wildcats vs Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

A quiet performance from Vidicek apart from scoring the game-winner in overtime on a breakaway. He's overly aggressive on defence, taking himself out of position (I do like the effort) and had trouble creating offensively. The only thing that shone in his game was his passing ability, on occasion.

**David St-Louis:** February 8th, 2022

Rimouski Oceanic vs Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

I rarely spot Vidicek on the ice. He barely makes plays and while I can't figure out why he's scoring so much, same for his teammate Jordan Dumais. This is still a bit problematic for his projection. It's not the first game I've had that impression of him. He can make the occasional dangle and I know he played on the penalty kill, but his impact? There wasn't really one.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2021

Moncton Wildcats vs Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

I continue to not see anything interesting in Vidicek's game. He has some one-on-one skill, but what else? I barely have any note on him every time I watch him. Usually, that happens because a player spends games chasing the puck more than making plays. The plays I did manage to evaluate him on, he generally made bad decisions, forcing dangles.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 9th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

Vidicek picked up three points in this game, mostly simple plays. He makes quick plays out of pass receptions, gets to

the net, and occasionally dekes around a player. Found space in the outer slot several times. Doesn't just rush in; he times these movements and gets ready to shoot immediately. Some forechecking and backchecking on this game, impacting the game through anticipation, not physical play. Hardly a factor in transition, where he gets locked to the boards. Didn't see a draft pick in this game.

**Cam Robinson:** December 9th, 2021

Halifax Mooseheads vs Drummondville Voltigeurs

Not a bad showing from Vidicek in this one. He has nice quick handles and was showing a clear brain for processing plays quickly and predicting where the opponents will attack. Set up a nice tic-tac-toe passing play in front for an A2, had a goal at the net front where he quickly went after his faceoff win to collect the rebound, and then set up another netfront goal with a quick cross-slot dish. He clearly shies away from contact and only attacks the middle when he has a clear advantage.

Needs strength and gumption in his overall game - but mostly to improve the power in his stride and give him the courage to fight into the mix more often.

**David St-Louis:** April 2nd, 2021

Halifax Mooseheads vs Cape Breton Eagles - QMJHL

Not much interesting in Vidicek's game or overall skill-set. He can find outlets in tight, but forces a lot of passes due to limited awareness, which is partly derived from his hunched over stride that forces him to expend more energy to get up ice and brings his head down. His skating projects as average...Optimistically. And at his size, this is a big downside. Dumais was the best player on his line by quite the margin. Vidicek was involved defensively, though.

**David St-Louis:** March 14th, 2021

Halifax Mooseheads vs Charlottetown Islanders - QMJHL

Great performance from Vidicek. He is on the smaller side and his skating is about average and he lacks physical skills (avoids battles on the boards, high-stance not conducive to shielding the puck, can't establish positioning and hold it around the net), but his brain is going to make up for it. He passes and repositions, runs the right routes, supports the play with the right timing and prepares plays well, a play-maker above all else who can manipulate speed and routes to create. He scored from a weak slap-shot from above the top of the circles. Not sure how that went in; probably deflected on a stick.



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# SANDIS VILMANIS

F | LULEÅ HF J20

HEIGHT 6'1"

D.O.B. JAN. 23, 2004

WEIGHT 194

SHOOTS LEFT

6%

2022 XLS

4%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

3%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J18 Nat.	3	3	2	5
J20 Nat.	40	18	14	32
WJC-18	4	1	2	3

## Scouting Report

As a staff, we generally don't have an issue with players lowering the tempo if they show above-average hockey sense, an ability to speed it up at the right times, and the skills to make plays under pressure.

But contrary to other, more projectable slower-paced players, Sandis Vilmanis slowed down the game not to create opportunities for himself but to find plays period, an indication that his processing of the game might not be as high as other top forwards in the draft. Defensive pressure made him rush many of his plays with the puck and also away from it, Vilmanis struggled to anticipate the flow of the play and move his feet to the right areas to get open.

## Game Reports

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 21st 2022

Luleå HF vs. AIK - J20 Nationell

Big game for Sandis with two goals and two assists in an 8-2 victory. Sandis looks like a good skater technically but he plays a low paced game. He rarely looks like he is skating at his full speed and is slow to lose pucks and not a strong checker. His puck skills and his shot are his best assets. He handles the puck well in tight areas with strong control close to his body. His wrist shot is dangerous from distance and release is quick and powerful. His lack of smartness drags him down as a player for me. With the puck he can be stressed and without the puck he does position himself well. He can stay covered waiting for a pass instead of moving to open spaces. The instincts do not seem to be there. He has good size and

What plays in the prospect's favor, however, is that he has the tools to solve defences, even professional ones. His handling skills especially ranked above-average on our scale.

"His puck skills and his shot are his best assets," Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin wrote in a game report on January 21st. "He handles the puck well in tight areas with strong control close to his body. His wrist shot is dangerous from distance and release is quick and powerful."

His technical ability could help him connect more plays at higher levels, where options are often more predictable as players follow the system of their teams a lot better. That would do wonders for his projection.

strength but does not use it to his advantage. He plays with gaps in his checking and does compete hard for pucks. For me, he is a no-draft. Even if he has tools with skills and a shot the lack of pace and smarts are big warning flags.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 6th 2021

Luleå HF vs. Skellefteå - J20 Nationell

Sandis played as a winger on the third line. His skating and puck handling at speed stood out the most. He created chances and scored an impressive goal. He is shifty and hard to catch when he twists and turns with the puck. He plays quite individually tough and I would like to see him play the puck more. It is mostly transporting or dumping the puck to chase it for himself. Hockey sense seems average as well as his compete level.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# FABIAN WAGNER

RW | LINKÖPING HC J20

HEIGHT 6'0"

D.O.B. MAY 7, 2004

WEIGHT 176

SHOOTS LEFT

N/A

2022 XLS

N/A

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

N/A

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
J18 Reg.	8	4	10	14
J20 Nat.	43	12	26	38
SHL	8	0	0	0
WJC-18	6	1	0	1

## Scouting Report

Fabian Wagner's game has a significant limitation – his skating. He has trouble folding over his skates, stemming from a lack of ankle flexion and other postural issues. His stance lacks depth and, in turn, explosiveness.

This lack of mobility has forced Wagner to develop his game in other ways. He has learned to move ahead of the play defensively and offensively, often with good timing, and to use his teammates to beat defenders. He's an adaptable passer, who looks for the better play and not just the first one that comes up. Few of his feeds end up intercepted by the other team. There are also some shifts where he becomes not just a sound and precise passer, but a legitimate playmaking threat.

"His best offensive tool is good stickhandling in combination with a good processor," Elite Prospects Swedish regional scout Jimmy Hamrin wrote in a January report. "He controls the puck well and can manipulate his opponents. He often handles the puck far from his body (and opponent) tricking the opponent to go for the puck which creates space behind him."

Wagner's puck management, passing ability, and awareness could earn him a role as a defensive forward, provided he develops his reads even further and enough speed to be able to pressure the opposition into mistakes. His current development trajectory makes it more likely that he will earn a role in the SHL than in the NHL.

## Game Reports

**Jimmy Hamrin:** April 10th, 2022

Djurgården U20 vs Linköpings HC U20 - J20 Final four

Gold medal game. Wagner got a smaller role and centred the third line. That line created a ton though and put up two goals. Not points for Wagner but he played a solid two-way game with a strong defensive performance.

Wagner has some skating flaws and a non-efficient stride. I like how his timing was in this game making his flaw not an issue. He looked fast because he thinks fast. It will not work as well on higher levels but still it is a good way to overcome a weakness. Wagner played a quiet game with good support, strong coverage in his own end was the offensive driver for

his line. His smartness and defensive plays is what is most interesting. Mid to late round option for the draft. He has some big things to overcome if he wants to succeed.

**David St-Louis:** March 3rd

Linköpings HC vs. Sodertalje - J20 Nationell

I overestimated Wagner's skating in my previous viewings. His stance is high and his crossovers, all hopping motions. The speed will be limited at higher levels, but he has some agility moves like heel-to-heel skating to offer. I like Wagner's decisions on the ice. His passing is adaptable (looks for the better option) and his defensive engagement is pretty constant.

He supports teammates well, attacks pockets of space, but when the space closes down on him, when he has a check right in his face, the quality of his plays drop a lot. I see some inception of planning and anticipation in his game, too. The hockey sense could rank above-average, but the mechanical and pace limitations will bring him down.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** January 25th, 2022

Linköpings HC vs. Rögle BK - J20 Nationell

Wagner had a strong game. He plays a big role on the team and is taking on big minutes. His showcase is as a skilled two-way centre that engages well in all three zones. He takes good decisions with and without the puck.

His biggest weakness at this point is his skating. He is at best average with a short stride and lacking ankle flexion. His top speed is okay but he needs distance and energy to get there. He can't drive play with speed and needs to use his brain to be effective, even at this level. He covers the puck well and shows good balance though.

His best offensive tool is good stickhandling in combination with a good processor. He controls the puck well and can manipulate his opponents. He often handles the puck far from his body (and opponent) tricking the opponent to go for the puck which creates space behind him. Wagner also processes the play while he drives with the puck which is a good tool as well. He seems to have various options. This will translate well into higher levels.

Wagner also has a strong defensive game. He forechecks smartly, positions himself defensively and shows both commitment and awareness in his own end. I see him as a future third line centre with a decent offensive game and being reliable defensively. With better skating he could become that third line centre at NHL level. For the draft, the middle rounds are the best place to take a gamble on Wagner.

**David St-Louis:** January 8th, 2022

HV71 vs. Linköpings HC - J20 Nationell

Wagner has skill to offer. He can win entry to the offensive zone by slipping by defenders in a mohawk (open-hip, 10-and-2

skating) and slip pucks under stick. His skating and handling form are projectable enough and he made good decisions with the puck for most of the game. I didn't see an inside game from him, an ability to attack the interior and fight for positioning, but the pace and the reads at speed are sufficient for him to maintain a rushing game at the higher levels. I liked his defensive engagement, too. He backchecked hard a few times to take away options from the opposing team.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** October 21st, 2021

Timrå IK vs. Linköpings HC - SHL

I was not able to provide a full report as he only played 02:21. He looked smart on the ice and skated where the puck was heading. He did not create anything with the puck.

**Jimmy Hamrin:** September 8th, 2021

Linköpings HC vs. Södertälje SK - J20 Nationell

Fabian played as the team's third line centre with ice time on the power play. He had a good game and scored a goal and added an assist as well.

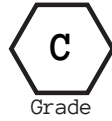
Fabian is an average skater and that is the biggest flaw in his game. He lacks natural explosiveness and although his skating technique is solid he does generate enough speed to have his skating as a weapon.

Fabian has a nice touch with the puck. He controls it with ease and is a good passer of the puck. He has a nice release on his shot as well. He played in the slot on the PP and showed a strong quick stick there and was dangerous.

Fabian reads the game well in all three zones. His hockey sense is his best asset. He moves smart without the puck and finds openings with the puck. He plays a responsible game defensively. He is a good two-way center. He is not elite in his offensive game and he is not a creative player but solid.

Fabian has good balance and competes well. He is not a physical player and needs to get stronger.

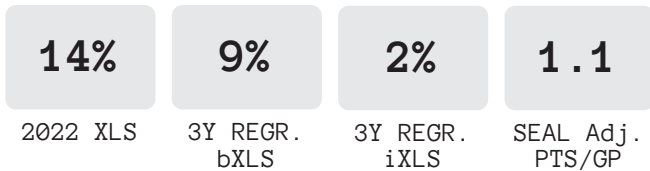
Wagner looks like a decent 3rd line center prospect with his brains as the only above average asset. I would slot him as a middle round prospect for the draft.



# DALYN WAKELY

RW/C | NORTH BAY BATTALION

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. MAR. 5, 2004  
WEIGHT 183 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
OHL	67	20	14	34

## Scouting Report

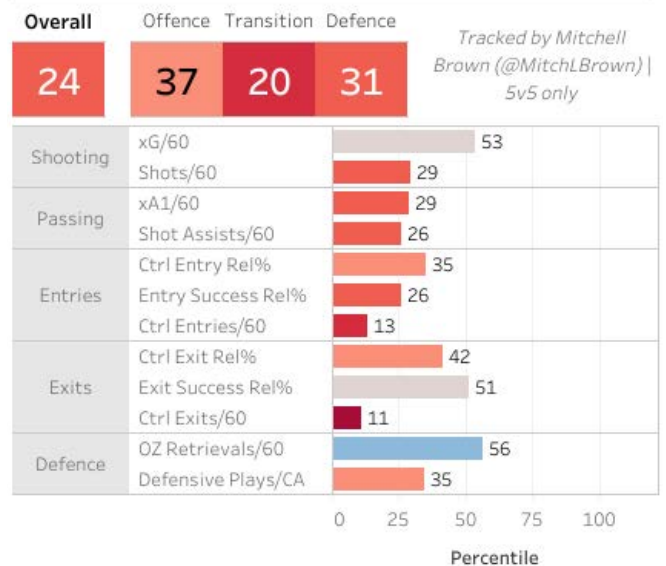
Just two seasons ago, Dalyn Wakely was the leading scorer on a Quinte Red Devils squad that featured 11-eventual OHL draft picks. Among those picks was Owen Beck, whose 39 points looked miniscule compared to Wakely's 72. While Wakely's start to his OHL career wasn't quite as exceptional, he's poised for a breakout next season.

For much of the season, Wakely looked like a generic checker. "Most of his value comes from his anticipation on the forecheck, non-stop pursuit, and overwhelming pressure on the backcheck," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American scouting Mitch Brown wrote in a game report. "He has some details, angling attackers to the outside and pressuring them into poor decisions without taking himself out of position." The puck skills seemed limited, as he relied on simple plays and missed opportunities.

However, there's no denying that Wakely showed NHL skills in these games. Where many players deke, he uses a give-and-go with great success. No matter the situation, he finds a way to become an easy-to-hit passing target. Hand-eye coordination leads to deflections, while across-the-body pass receptions and a fluid shooting motion make him a threat from range.

Then, just as the season was winding down, Wakely had a couple of breakout performances. He started delaying in transition instead of sprinting, allowing his playmaking to

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 91.5



shine. Along the boards, he started cutting back instead of extending the cycle. From there, he drove the net or made quick backhand passes to the inside for chances. Where he previously dumped the puck, he'd reset.

Evaluating Wakely wasn't an easy task, given the large number of quiet performances versus a couple of standout ones. Ultimately, he just missed the cut for the board, but he could make that decision look foolish next season. The skill level flashes third-line-calibre, and he could prove to be a useful checker.



**Mitchell Brown:** May 25th, 2022

Hamilton Bulldogs vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Wakely's solid out there. He's a pretty smart player with the puck, even if he's a bit limited skill-wise. He prefers give-and-gos and quick, short passes. Passes off the boards to the middle on breakouts effectively. He has details: takes pucks across the body into his shooting pocket, stops in space, sprints his routes, and passes under defenders' sticks when possible. I just haven't seen enough skill to justify inclusion on the board, but I think he has breakout potential next season. Add in the defensive value, and I think he should be picked at the draft.

Another impressive game from Wakely. He showed a bunch of stuff I haven't seen from him before: a delay game in transition, escapability along the boards, and legitimate playmaking. Timed his cutbacks perfectly (mostly), waiting for the defender to lean him, then accelerating into space. He used them in three zones, to evade and escape pressure. From there, he drove the net for a chance or set-up teammates off his backhand. Didn't make the best play consistently, sometimes taking a low-percentage shot instead of passing

to a team in the slot. The give-and-go game appeared again, too. Off-puck offence appeared through well-timed dashes to the net and down-low support. With the offence came the physical play and defence. He hits, but mostly importantly, he establishes body positioning and wins pucks on the second and third effort.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Another impressive game from Wakely. He showed a bunch of stuff I haven't seen from him before: a delay game in transition, escapability along the boards, and legitimate playmaking. Timed his cutbacks perfectly (mostly), waiting for the defender to lean him, then accelerating into space. He used them in three zones, to evade and escape pressure. From there, he drove the net for a chance or set-up teammates off his backhand. Didn't make the best play consistently, sometimes taking a low-percentage shot instead of passing to a team in the slot. The give-and-go game appeared again, too. Off-puck offence appeared through well-timed dashes to the net and down-low support. With the offence came the



physical play and defence. He hits, but mostly importantly, he establishes body positioning and wins pucks on the second and third effort.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

Barrie Colts vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

For the most part, Wakely's a generic checker. Most of his value comes from his anticipation on the forecheck, non-stop pursuit, and overwhelming pressure on the backcheck. He has some details, angling attackers to the outside and pressuring them into poor decisions without taking himself out of position. But there are moments where Wakely looks like he could become something more. While he's not skilled as a handler or skater, he plays an effective off-puck game. He gets open, uses give-and-gos over individual skill, and can rip it off the pass. When he's not in the middle of the play, he's in front of the net battling for position. And he's a clever passer on breakouts. Nothing advanced, but enough to suggest that he become a solid pro.

**Lauren Kelly:** February 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

Wakely had an up and down game. Good defensive zone positioning allowed him to intercept passes and disrupt plays. Scored the 5-2 goal, a shot from a bad angle that somehow beat the goalie up high. Also took a hooking penalty in the offensive zone. I don't know that I saw too much out of this one that would make me confident in drafting him.

**Lauren Kelly:** January 27th, 2022

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Solid game for Wakely, who made a nice defensive play in the slot to box out a much larger opponent and take away a scoring chance. He scored North Bay's first goal, deking out the goalie after being left all alone in the slot to score. His positioning all game long in both ends was solid and he was disrupting plays in his own end to help start play back up ice. I think there's something here, but I need to see more shift-to-shift consistency.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 23rd, 2022

Sudbury Wolves vs. North Bay Battalion - OHL

Wakely got positioning on a defender at the far post, turning

that into a tap-in on the powerplay. Broke up the ice for a 2-on-1, setting up his teammate with a pass under the stick of the defender. That was about it for this game. Touches were few as he was playing defence in this game. Some proactivity to his positioning, but limited play-killing ability. Supports plays down low and along the boards, but the ensuing play is usually a simple one. Didn't see NHL upside here.

**Lauren Kelly:** December 17th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Mississauga Steelheads - OHL

Wakely didn't really stand out that much in this game offensively. He laid a big hit and was also the recipient of a hip check in the neutral zone. His skating lacked acceleration at times and he was a bit behind the pace of play. Not too involved with playing the puck either. Took an unsportsmanlike penalty (diving according to the boxscore) late in the third period. Don't know if I saw anything in this particular viewing that would make me too confident in an NHL projection.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 31st, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Sudbury Wolves - OHL

I don't think Wakely's skill quite reaches NHL-calibre, but there are enough flashes that make it worth keeping an eye on him. He has some problem-solving ability through handling, and stays with plays -- he makes things happen on the second effort. Simple off-puck movement but knows where to position himself just outside the slot, leading to a scoring chance. Playmaking's limited to obvious reads, but he passes at the right time. Hardly an effective transition or defensive player. Worth keeping an eye on, anyway.

**Lauren Kelly:** October 7th, 2021

North Bay Battalion vs. Peterborough Petes - OHL

Wakely established himself as a good passer, who also has a shot with a quick release. He move around the ice well but I found he was a bit too casual coming back to his own end and I'd like to see a more concerted effort from him given the Battalion defense seems to like jumping up in the play. Wakely seemed a bit all over the place in his own end, chasing after pucks and leaving players unguarded. He made a couple of nice plays in the neutral zone to force turnovers and can play a physical game if needed, throwing his body around on a few hits - though sometimes they took him out of the play.



Rank



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Grade



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# MATHEW WARD

F | SWIFT CURRENT BRONCOS

HEIGHT 5'8"

D.O.B. JAN. 24, 2004

WEIGHT 157

SHOOTS LEFT

22%

2022 XLS

30%

3Y REGR. bXLS

10%

3Y REGR. iXLS

1.1

SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	64	22	35	57
WJC-18	4	1	1	2

## Scouting Report

While Mathew Ward's production plateaued after his 0.97 point per game clip as a draft-minus-one, his game improved. Still, the contrasts in Ward's game keep his NHL odds low, despite obvious skill.

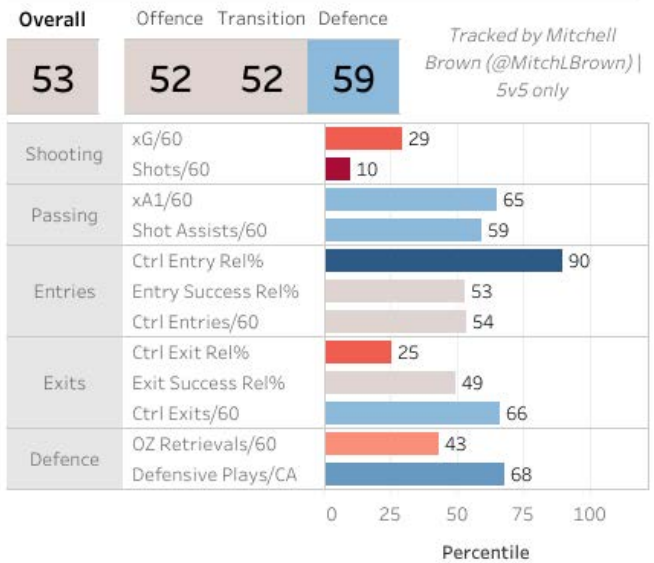
Like many of the most exciting passers, Ward has plenty of creative setups in his arsenal. He spins around defenders before passing into the slot, reaches around sticks, and passes under them. If he's not looking to pass immediately, he's deking defenders or battling for possession in corners.

However, Ward's game is not one of restraint. He forces passes and dekes that aren't there, killing opportunities. More concerningly, he's not a true creator. He has creative solutions to access existing lanes but won't manipulate defenders to create or even prolong passing lanes. For example, when faced with a defender along the boards, he usually tries to outpace them. A more projectable creator either cuts back to find the trailer or baits the defender to reach across, before passing under their stick to the inside.

Mechanical limitations also hamper Ward's projection, with his upright stance and lack of refined edges leave him second to many pucks and easily knocked off balance if he gets there first.

What isn't in question is Ward's motor and defence. Despite his stature, he's plenty successful in battles. The skating

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 117.9



limitations might limit some of that effectiveness going forward, but he's a proactive defender, a fearless battler, and a sneaky-good hitter.

The NHL remains biased towards tall players. In the eyes of most teams, shorter players must have an extra layer or two of speed and skill to make it over their taller peers. In Ward's case, those extra layers include refining his stride, scanning habits, and play selection with the puck.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 27th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

The most exciting part of Ward's game is the production. That's usually a bad sign. The skating projects below NHL average, just barely getting his knees to his toes. He lacks any sort of skating skills or notable edge work. The lack of depth limits the push off power of his crossovers, and reduces stability through turns and cutbacks. He tries, but he can't change directions quickly enough to beat defenders at this level. The makes simple skill plays with variable success, or forces dekes and no-look passes with limited success. Threw a massive hit. Won a few battles. But that was it. He's not a candidate for our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 11th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Alright, I might have gotten a little too excited. Ward's skating still lacks the ankle flexion to make him a 4.5 projection. He's probably a 4, at best. A lack of ankle flexion prevents his hips from doing the same. The stance becomes upright, which he counteracts with a low back angle. The heels kick and the stride pushes behind, rather than laterally. He loses races he probably should win. He has a bit of creativity to his game, like spin around passes. But nothing too advanced. He's a determined, pesky player who works hard to regain possession and tries plays. But it's hard to see him making the NHL, given the turnovers, skating, and lack of notable off-puck offensive skill. Don't see a pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 28th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Another game where Ward's skating looked better than I previously thought, but it's still not an NHL average projection. The rest of his game doesn't help, either. He's a straight-line with an overreliance on his inside edges and hand speed to beat attackers. Not much off-puck offence or ability to get open. Chased the puck around all game as a result. He doesn't manipulate or even deceive defenders. He excels on the powerplay and after receiving a puck with an ocean of space to decide – but that didn't happen in this game. Not a draft pick based on this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

This is the best Ward's skating has looked: knees pushed to his toes, hips integrated, and the odd completed stride. Energy and physicality were probably his biggest strengths in this game. Lacks leverage because of his skating posture, but he's relentless in pursuit. Connected with his spin pass

finally, it was actually a well-timed play with a pre-scan to ensure his teammate was there. Straight-line and too simple with the puck otherwise. Doesn't have much dynamic potential because of his mechanical limitations. I don't see the creativity, off-puck offence, or manipulation-focused mind to offset them.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Tricky projection. Ward's clearly a skilled offensive creator. He's a crafty playmaker and a high-volume hook pass user. Crafty set-up with some deception and has great timing on that dish. Compared to his teammates, his off-puck instincts stand out, especially on the interior – he knows how to get the puck back in scoring position. Better one-timer than wrister, as he struggles to get enough force over the puck. He's not the most reliable forechecker from his poor route selection but his aggressive gets him steals regardless. The skating's still an issue, but the decision-making looked crippling in this one. He kept trying to beat through defenders without any success (1 of 8 on my count). He puts the puck into the triangle, but then never retracts it. He doesn't wait for defenders to react to his route, and he tries to bust into space that simply doesn't exist. Also a random spin pass attempt that killed play in an otherwise threatening position. Some viewings, I think he's a skilled creator limited by low-scoring environment. In this one, he looked more like a player who gets the points he does because of a role he wouldn't get elsewhere.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Prince Albert Raiders vs. Swift Current Broncos - WHL

The skating and lack of dynamic potential are going to be issues for Ward. In this game, he never found separation, even with his handling skill. Doesn't scan before passing, leading to accuracy issues. He's creative, but the skating prevents him from making the most of his mind, even at this level. Defensively, he's solid. Non-stop motor and fearlessness make him a threat to run through someone. He understands body positioning and angling, driving plays up and away from the net. Traps feet and shows timing when going for the puck. It's tough to see him as an NHLer, but he's talented enough to keep me watching. I think he could be a draft pick for us.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 30th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Regina Pats - WHL

Ward reminds a lot of Trevor Wong -- the motor, the high average pace, the physicality, the inside play, the lack of patience, the defensive instincts, etc. -- just without any of Wong's dynamic potential. The skating's a problem: He


**"What isn't in question is Ward's motor and defence. Despite his stature, he's plenty successful in battles. The skating limitations might limit some of that effectiveness going forward, but he's a proactive defender, a fearless battler, and a sneaky-good hitter."**

doesn't bend his ankles enough and his hips stay too high. His acceleration is just his stride posture -- too wide with no explosive driving. His crossovers are weak with limited push-off. He overhandles the puck, blindly throws pucks into the slot, rushes passes, etc. He's also not particularly deceptive. I love the energy, motor, and inside driven-ness, but it's tough to see him in the NHL.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 16th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Brandon Wheat Kings - WHL

Ward was the best of the draft eligibles in this game. He created chances for himself and teammates, overwhelmed with pace, and applied non-stop pressure on the puck carrier. Always looks to make contact, whether that's a quick shoulder late or running into them at full speed -- advanced

understanding of body positioning but still learning how to apply it to board play. Complements the energy with defensive instincts. Advanced shooter for this level: hands in front, distance between feet, powers through his shots, and gets that top arm elbow elevated. Just as impressive off the pass, bolstered by a bit of movement and timing around the slot. Set up a scoring chance with a backhand cross-slot pass after cutting through the defender's recovery route -- advanced read. He's inside-driven, too. Skating will be the biggest issue. Mechanically, he lacks depth and his feet kick significantly from his short strides. It worsens when pressured. Straight-line attacks with limited crossover integration in puck-carrying sequences. He's fun to watch and likely a draft pick, but a project. I like him in the third right now. 

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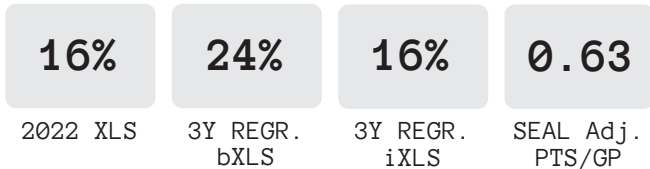
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# JACE WEIR

D | RED DEER REBELS

HEIGHT 6'2" D.O.B. MAY 21, 2004  
WEIGHT 195 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	64	5	20	25

## Scouting Report

While Jace Weir couldn't maintain the torrid pace he set early in the year, he remained an effective piece of Red Deer's top-four all season.

In many regards, Weir is the standard mid-scoring CHL defensive prospect, standing 6-foot-2, skating with fluidity, and showing the rare flash of brilliance.

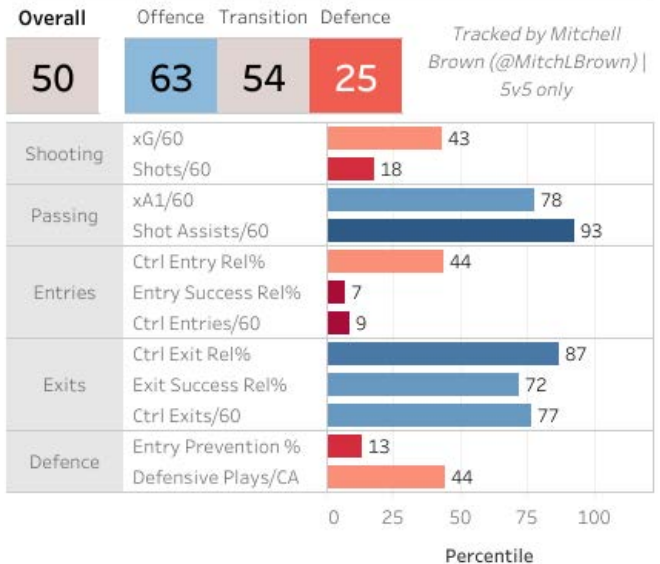
The stand out moments most frequently appear when Weir's in the offensive zone. He proactively fills lanes in the offensive end, drawing defensive attention and becoming a shooting threat. Playmaking flashes suggest upside, as Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown, explains: "[he] steps into [space to] draw pressure before passing, or works laterally to drag the defender towards him, creating the passing option on the inside."

In transition, those moments of brilliance appear when Weir's deceptive. He uses look-offs to mask his intentions from pressure, makes passes with his feet moving, and leads the rush himself when given space.

Throughout the season, our scouting staff noted significant shift-to-shift and game-to-game variance in Weir's play. If a forechecker's closing in, he starts hammering pucks off the glass or flinging weak passes to teammates with more pressure than himself. "He doesn't create lanes or space, and he won't cut-back, delay, or attack forecheckers head-on," Brown wrote in an April game report.

Defensively, Weir's game is similarly contrasting. If given a single variable to manage, he kills plays emphatically,

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 108.1



whether that's in open-ice or along the boards. He builds speed with heel pushes instead of crossovers, and even gets the odd stop at the red line. However, his sluggish pivots expose him to quicker attacks, and off-puck coverage often sees him straightening his legs and wandering.

Improving pressure management will be key for Weir's NHL odds. Tightening up his puckhandling, including his pass receptions and backhand skill, should help him get to the inside and evade pressure easier. He might just be a depth piece in the NHL, but his flashes suggest that he could be an everyday player.



Photo Credit: Red Deer Rebels - Rob Wallator

**Mitchell Brown:** April 13th, 2022

Red Deer Rebels vs. Calgary Hitmen - WHL

Weir activated twice in this game, getting rewarded with a goal. Activation was proactive, although not advanced. He's not creative or particularly pacey when activated, preferring to glide around the perimeter until a simple play appears. Passing in the offensive end is very simple, but he took pucks in-motion and worked laterally before passing. Breakouts are limited unless given a bit of space. He doesn't create lanes or space, and he won't cutback, delay, or attack forecheckers head-on. Defence is sound in straightforward situations, but his pivots lack power and he has limited recovery ability. Body positioning remains inconsistent, but he had some strong plays to create opportunities - it's likely the consequence of a lack of awareness. Skating looked more limited than in previous games, although a 4.5 or 5 projection still seems reasonable. He's solid with some fluidity, but I don't see any qualities to suggest anything more than a depth player.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 26th, 2022

Regina Pats vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Didn't see anything new from Weir in this game. He's a relatively bland player across the board, but has some details and interesting skills. Defensively, he concedes too much ground but he takes the middle and pushes plays wide. Heel pushes to manage the gap instead of crossovers. Collides with players along the board and occasionally gets inside positioning. In transition, he makes the simple play unless he has a runway of space to walk it out himself. He misses cutback, delay, and inside lane options to instead throw possession away. Limited off the backhand. Zero offence. Didn't look like a candidate for our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Saskatoon Blades vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

I don't find many answers when I watch Weir. He's skilled, sometimes. Too often, he's an up-the-boards-into-another-battle breakout player. Give him space on the regroup, and he'll look off his target then pass up the middle. Take it away, and he hammers the puck down the ice. He doesn't cut back or manage pressure, beyond the occasional glide, then accelerate around the net. When he's looking to carry the puck up the ice, it stops at the red line. And his upright stance with short, choppy crossovers doesn't allow him to push the pace. Limited from the point. Defensively, he's acceptable, but lacks the proactivity and physical play to project it as a strength. Don't see him as a candidate for our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 28th, 2022

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Weir's skill level really comes and goes. In this game, he activates straight down the middle, but then whiffed on the shot. He moves on pass receptions and showed solid point activation habits, but didn't make any plays afterwards. Got rid of the puck too much in transition, but also delay, spun away, then charged up the boards while fighting off a defender in one sequence. Pass reception issues remain. He's passive defensively and then overcommits inside the DZ. Often lunges forward when engaging. But he's also physical and times his engagements well along the boards. Many contrasts. The skating and flashes might be enough to land on our board.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 31st, 2021

Red Deer Rebels vs. Moose Jaw Warriors - WHL

In the third period, Weir stepped on a stick, crashed into



the boards, and lost the puck. That pretty much summed up his game tonight. Some slick breakout passes, but always along the boards to a teammate up the boards, and a couple of reactionary DZ breakups. I don't think he's a particularly creative player with the puck, although he has moments as a passer in the OZ, for sure. Return to previous rush defence habits: passive. Lots of mistakes overall, letting them compound across all three zones. Tough game.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 15th, 2021

Swift Current Broncos vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Most impressed by Weir's OZ playmaking in this game. Managed space: stepping into draw pressure before passing, or working laterally to drag the defender towards him and creating the passing option on the inside. He's not deceptive through his puck positioning or eyes - it's all through his feet. Activated once in a hand-off sequence where he looked for a teammate against the grain. Nothing too interesting. Everything seems scripted with him, lacking the instinctual execution and creativity within Red Deer's structure to believe he'll do it at the next level. Careless with the puck in transition, just one missed play after the next. He'd benefit a ton from stepping to the inside lane first before making his decisions. Not a draft pick, based on this game.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 27th, 2021

Regina Pats vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Weir started off this game well. He was looking for high-value breakout targets without too much risk, often stepping to the middle first to survey for options and prepare to the F1. Connected with a crafty, but somewhat slow shot-pass to the net front. Early on, the gap was tight and he timed his

engagements. A couple of quality stops where he switched off one check to dislodge the puck at the time of reception. Then, it all fell apart. He became passive and uninvolved. He was beat off the rush to the outside, reactionary in DZC, and struggled to get the puck out the zone. The first half of the game, he looked like a top-two rounds prospect. In the second, he wasn't a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 23rd, 2021

Brandon Wheat Kings vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Weir was kicked out of this game in the first period after throwing a hit from behind. But he did a lot with the few minutes he played. Tight off-puck NZ gap that led to a couple of break ups. He had a poor supporting route on a turnover, but also completed several crafty breakout passes. Activated into the rush and finishes his off-puck routes. Eye deception and hesitation move to beat a forechecker. He definitely looked like a draft pick in this game, although I'm not sure how high.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Lethbridge Hurricanes vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Meh. Weir had some moments. Beat a forechecker with an inside-outside fake before passing cross-ice. Blends hands into movement, albeit not consistently. Very inconsistent gap. Sometimes, he erased attackers from the play with a tight NZ gap. Other times, he defended nothing. He got lucky picking off two breakaway passes -- both times it was his check that slipped away. He wants to get into the play, but rarely commits fully. In the one sequence he did, he whiffed on the catch-and-release pass. I don't see an NHL prospect, not based on this game.





Rank



Grade



Skating



Transitions



Hands



Tracking



Post



Depth

# CAMERON WHITEHEAD

G | LINCOLN STARS

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. JUN. 13, 2003  
 WEIGHT 170 CATCHES LEFT

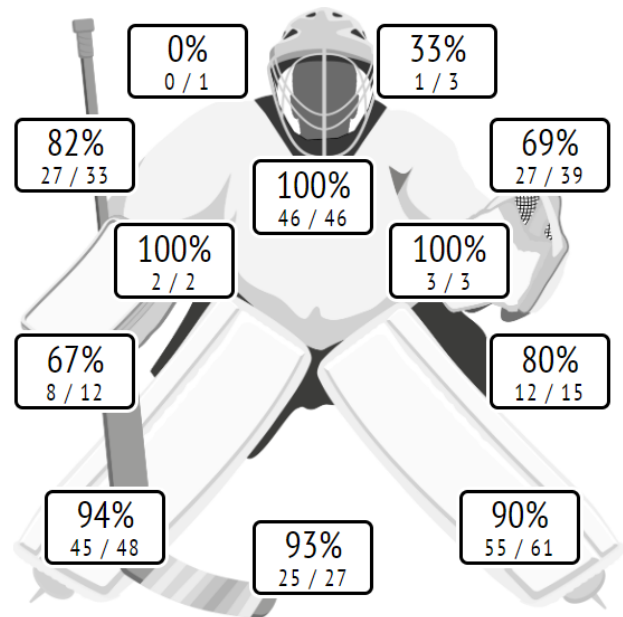
LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
USHL	31	3.19	.892	1

## Scouting Report

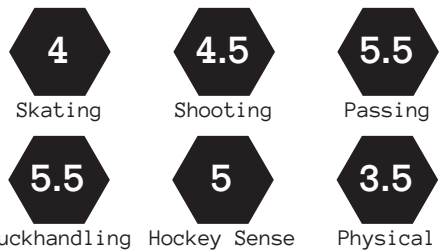
A fascinating work-in-progress, Cameron Whitehead is the kind of goalie you want to see your team draft in the sixth or seventh round as a long-term project.

So close to putting it together – but not quite there yet – Whitehead has the height that general managers covet at the position, the tracking prowess to suggest he's got a good read on the game, and the kind of spatial awareness in terms of how much net he leaves open at the top of his crease to make any fan cringe. Fantastic at staying on his feet, but hasn't quite figured out what that means in relation to his upper body stance. As a result, Whitehead wastes too many precious seconds trying to recover after making himself smaller trying to see through traffic down low without having to drop to his knees.

The good news is that the style he plays makes for some pretty efficient footwork – something that puts him ahead of fellow draft-eligible goaltender (and former Northeastern backstop) T.J. Semptimphelter. The bad news is that he allows just a few too many of those goals after exposing the top half of his crease to get a good feel for how much of it is him learning how he relates to his surroundings and how much is him struggling to take up the necessary space in the top half of his crease when he needs to.



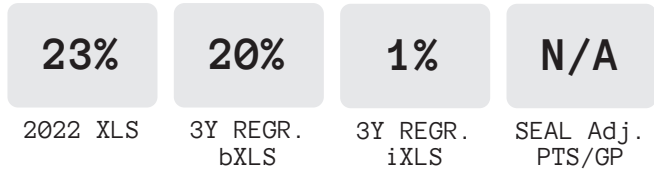
His hands could use a bit of work, but that ties into his upper body stance enough that there's a compelling case to be made that scouts just need to sit and wait for him to make it through his first NCAA season this fall. Whitehead shouldn't be at the top of any draft boards, but has enough of the raw talent to make him a consideration for teams who just need to top up their cupboard a bit.



# JEREMY WILMER

C | TRI-CITY STORM

HEIGHT 5'7" D.O.B. AUG.16,2003  
 WEIGHT 141 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	60	25	73	98

> Committed to Boston Univ.

## Scouting Report

Few prospects have built up as much good will in Draft Twitter as Jeremy Wilmer. The 5-foot-7 centre earned it through his flashy handling, fearless game, and intelligence. Ultimately, those traits weren't enough to convince an NHL to select him last year; however, his 98-point season surely put him back on some radars.

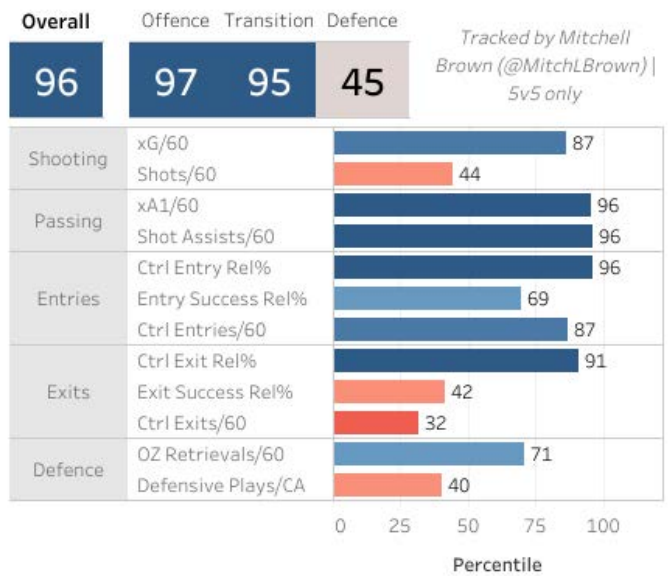
If the 80 assists in the regular season and playoffs combined didn't give it away, Wilmer's a playmaker. Backhand, forehand, with pressure, or in space - he finds ways to connect. Head and stick fakes prolong passing lanes, and times his passes with the defender's reaction.

This season, Wilmer showed a bit more of a nuanced approach to his playmaking. Instead of seeking the perfect play every single time, he added a short-range passing game to build the play in three zones.

The off-puck instincts that always put Wilmer in position to receive a pass and immediately make the next play became a legitimate scoring tool this season. He started making the quick pass, then darting into the slot for a return feed or rebound.

Still, Wilmer's a tough projection. His wide, hunched skating posture and preference for a controlled glide when handling the puck limits his ability to separate. And while

Games Tracked: 11 | Minutes Tracked: 143.8



he's skilled, he's not a lane creator or overly manipulative attacker, two key abilities for players to make the NHL with skating and strength disadvantages.

As a result, envisioning Wilmer in the NHL isn't an easy task. If he hits, he might hit big. More likely, he becomes a capable AHL scorer after a high-scoring career with Boston University.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: April 9th, 2022

Sioux City Musketeers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Wilmer's improvement doesn't seem as stark as the point

totals might suggest. Perhaps his shooting mechanics are a bit cleaner and he's physically stronger, which helps his stride a bit. Even then, both likely project below-average

still. He's always on his heels in a wide glide. While he times some engagements well, he lacks the balance to consistently absorb contact. Game largely runs through his hands, which is problematic given the skating limitations. He's a worker on the defensive end, shows projectable off-puck instincts (largely by getting open between checks), and the playmaking should get him points against in the pros. Not sure it results in an NHL player; too many limiting mechanics.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 7th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Des Moines Buccaneers - USHL

Fascinating game from Wilmer from a projection standpoint. He didn't bother with the solo rushes in transition. Moved the puck quickly and then got open for a return pass. A very selective offensive performance, too. Took one shot at 5-on-5, a high-danger chance. Then, spent the rest of the game looking for the perfect pass to the inside. Hit most of them. Had a rebound chance, but chose to pass for an even better look. Backhand and slip passes. He's not a manipulator, but he understands how to prolong passing lanes and times his pass with the reaction of the defender. The skating's still the same, unfortunately. He's always on his heels in a wide glide. He can't separate or protect the puck along the boards. He's scoring while taking his playmaking to another level, but it's still tough to see him as a draft pick this year. Perhaps there's more high-level playmaking to come this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 26th, 2021

Tri-City Storm vs. Fargo Force - USHL

Wilmer is the same player as last year, which is unfortunate. The skating's still very limiting, even at this level. He gets to the middle, but not in ways that will work in the NHL. The handling is fun. His style of play is admirable. But his wide, hunched base will prevent him from his game at the next level. Not a prospect.

**Joey Padmanabhan:** March 14th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Playing on the wing, first few passes missed the mark. Has good skating ability, gets pinned easily and struggles with physicality. Gets incredibly limited minutes with the 18s team. A little bit errant defensively, keeps a wide stride base which inhibits full power on his stride. Decent playmaking ability, setting up his teammate on a 2-on-2 for a goal. Good hands, used some slick dangles to maneuver to the middle from the wing.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 27th, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Green Bay Gamblers - USHL

In a game like this, where Wilmer isn't getting the puck a ton, his lack of speed really stands out. His skating's so awkward, like he's tripping over himself constantly. Limited ankle flexion, very short extensions and wide recoveries, significant variance between strides, and his weight's always on his heels. It's really problematic during acceleration, where he tilts his weight back. Extremely inside edge-dependent. He doesn't separate with his feet; it's all hands and vision. And when pressure comes, he's usually just throwing the puck into an area anyway. But, it also highlighted his off-puck instincts: he thinks in give-and-goes, immediately repositioning after passing. He finds space around the slot, occasionally with timed movements with the puck, and he finishes his off-puck skating routes. High defensive motor and a knack for disrupting plays, even if his feet flail in a million different directions while skating. There's surely quite a bit of potential here, and he's effective with his body despite his lack of ankle and hip flexion, and some general stability concerns. Doubt his high hips battling style will work at the next level, especially with his lack of quickness. Maybe he's just a very low probability third-liner. In which case, he's probably not a draft pick.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 22nd, 2021

Green Bay Gamblers vs. USNTDP U18s - USHL

Wilmer's skating is a concern, to put it mildly. Limited flexion, short extensions, wide recoveries, and sloppy acceleration. Lifts weight and leans on heels when crossing over. He's certainly not an NHL calibre skater, and the path to get there looks tricky given that his issues don't appear to be solely strength related. At this level, he uses preemptive hits and subtle contact to create space, like a puck-between-the-legs spin where he got low on the player, but it was all from his back angle rather than ankle flexion. Deceptive passer and handler, often deceptive on the first touch to create a bit of separation. Lots of look offs and quick transitions into moves, occasionally stringing them together with give-and-goes. High defensive engagement, with scanning, athletic posture, and proactive positioning. If he's a pick, he's a late one. The upside here is probably a third-liner and the odds of hitting it seem very low.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 3rd, 2021

USNTDP U18s vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Wilmer's a tricky projection, but games like these convince me he's not worth writing off entirely despite his total lack of ankle flexion, wide recoveries, and reliance on glides to

create. He plays fast until he's forced to make a decision, but he's so effective in his "comfort zone." With shoulder, head, and stick fakes, he opens up defenders, freezes their feet, and moves the puck quickly. Backhand, forehand -- he makes skill plays as a handler and passer. He usually doesn't overhandle, opting for give-and-goes after freezing the defender. He's energetic and involved along boards and defensively, but his success rate isn't particularly high: lack of depth and strength prevents him from leveraging his frame, while he lacks any sort of quickness to escape. He's a late-round player, I think, but I'm intrigued.

**David St-Louis:** December 19th, 2020

USNTDP U18s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

I underestimated Wilmer's pace. He doesn't move fast -- not even up to his potential (which isn't great) -- but he thinks fast. His ability to analyze and make positive plays under pressure stands out. On a sequence, he stole the puck on the backcheck à la Pavel Datsyuk, jumped on the loose puck, but didn't take it immediately. He saw the defender coming at him so Wilmer waited for an extra second, knowing that the D would reach for it. As soon as the stick was extended, Wilmer dragged the puck away and moved around the opponent, creating a 2-on-1 with St-Louis. He lobbed a nice backhand pass over the other defender's stick for a one-timer goal. He also scored as he tried a backhand pass from below the goal-line off a faceoff; the puck deflected on a defender. Quick mental pace of play, but the legs have to catch up to hope for an NHL future. Highly skilled hands (6, 6.5 maybe).

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2020

USNTDP U18s vs. Dubuque Fighting Saints - USHL

Small, below-average skating and a lack of pace -- makes most of his moves in a glide and doesn't set up his dangling moves with skating patterns. He flashes some creativity. There was one sequence in particular where Wilmer spun on himself to evade a defender on a zone-entry and turned his back to a second one, and while bracing for impact, he managed to backhand the puck to an open teammate in the wide-lane. Rapid execution and superior handling skills. Is it enough? His flaws are pretty massive, but he could make an interesting late-round project.


**Mitchell Brown:** October 25th, 2019

USNTDP U17s vs. Youngstown Phantoms - USHL

Wilmer's offensive toolkit is really interesting, arguably enough to translate to the NHL despite his lack of size and explosiveness. He's such a deceptive handler, using fakes and weight shift moves to open up defenders before finding his route. He manipulates, reaching out to bait sticks and moving in one direction with the intent of going the other way. He doesn't rely on 1v1 skill, but struggles to make moves in stride. He used his lack of size as a tool, digging underneath opponents' centre of gravity before cutting back the other way. His scoring tools were second to only Lucius, as he feathered backhand passes into the slot, hit short-range feeds through layers, and made well-timed moves around the goal to clean-up rebounds. He didn't show much finishing ability (low puck patience), but the base is strong enough that goals should come with time. He's certainly not shy of playing on the inside; he seeks play up the interior.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 19th, 2019

USNTDP U17s vs. Chicago Steel - USHL

Wilmer was the U17s' best forward from start-to-finish, leading the team with an impressive 1.15 ixP1/60. He's tiny and not explosive, which immediately will lead to some disregarding him entirely, but I think there's upside here. First, Wilmer's a deceptive handler and manipulates the opposition in transition. He's a bit too deferential, but looks in open direction before going the other -- and integrates his feet and shoulders into the deception. He keeps the puck across his hips, rather than in front of his body, allowing him to immediately transition into passes and rely on creating advantages instead of 1v1 skill. He set-up what should've been a sure-goal with a backhand WARP pass -- again, pulling the puck far enough behind the net that he got the net-front defenders and goaltenders to commit for the wraparound. He pulled off a similarly manipulative pass in the slot, showing shot while off-balance before passing against the grain. A smooth weight shift on the outside leg through a catch-and-release shot generated his best look of the game. Currently, he looks like the most manipulative/deceptive/high-level offensive forward on this roster. He's someone to watch, for sure. 



# ZACCHARYA WISDOM

RW | CEDAR RAPIDS ROUGHRIDERS

HEIGHT 6'0" D.O.B. APR. 21, 2004  
WEIGHT 172 SHOOTS RIGHT

6%	4%	1%	0.97
2022 XLS	3Y REGR. bXLS	3Y REGR. iXLS	SEAL Adj. PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	53	10	13	23

## Scouting Report

23 points in 53 games doesn't exactly generate excitement, but Zaccharya Wisdom averaged just over 10 minutes per game. Using points per 60 at even strength to adjust for ice time, Wisdom co-led his USHL squad with an impressive 2.4, suggesting there's more scoring upside.

Few players show more desire to make contact than Wisdom. He throws crushing hits across the ice and uses subtle bumps to knock opponents off balance. It always serves a purpose: he hits along the boards to force dump-ins, throws reverse hits to create space, and establishes body positioning to keep his stick free.

With practical physicality comes Wisdom's defence. "A proactive defender, constantly scanning and ready to close distance and force turnovers," Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown wrote in an April game report. "He sprints from one puck carrier to the next, forcing

a chain of hastened decisions until one results in a turnover."

With the puck, Wisdom's game shows more contrasts. His touches are limited, both because of his limited role and reactionary off-puck positioning. And when gets the puck, he's an inefficient player, focused on outracing defenders. Once he runs out of space, he shoots. Pucks rolls off his stick and he's rarely looking to pass to create offence.

However, that doesn't have to be Wisdom's game moving forward. "In transition, Wisdom shows patience, awareness, and play-building ideas," Brown wrote. "He waits for pressure to arrive, then cuts back or spins away to reset the play or create an advantage up the ice."

If Wisdom translates those skills to the offensive zone, he could become an effective NHL player with defence and physical play as his primary strengths, while chipping in a bit of offence.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 25th, 2022

Cedar Rapids vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

In the offensive zone, Wisdom makes simple plays: shots when space runs out after racing to the net and low-to-high passes for point shots. There's no nuance to his offensive game, even without the puck. His hands are a potential weakness, with pucks rolling off his stick numerous times. He has a choppy handling style, too. Elsewhere on the ice,

he's a big-impact player. A proactive defender, constantly scanning and ready to close distance and force turnovers. He sprints from one puck carrier to the next, forcing a chain of hastened decisions until one results in a turnover. Takes the extra stride to take away sticks. And he supports the play effectively. He could be an NHLer - it depends on skill development.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 3rd, 2022

USNTDP U18s vs. Cedar Rapids RoughRiders - USHL

Two goals in under 10 minutes of ice time. This was the usual performance from Wisdom, although with more off-puck instincts shown. He didn't just stand around in space, he established positioning on defenders and kept his stick free. He clearly has physical potential through body positioning and his desire to make contact at all times. Defensively potential remains high. But he's a limited offensive player. He barely squeaks past defenders and turns pucks over with poorly set-up dekes. He sprints until he runs out of space. Beat a defender wide but then jammed the puck inside of making the goaltender move laterally. Limited playmaking ability. If he makes the NHL, it's as a checker.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Muskegon Lumberjacks vs. Cedar Rapids - USHL

An incredible display of physicality in this one. Wisdom threw crushing hits along the boards to force dump-ins, reverse hits to create space, and ran into players at full-speed on the forecheck. Involved in every battle, making contact with every opportunity. The skating already limits the impact of his hits – could reduce some of his effectiveness at the next level. He's an aware defender, always scanning with his knees bent, ready to close space. Sprinted on the backcheck without overextending, then grabbed a steal. Lacks patience and creativity in the offensive end, but in transition, he shows a bit of skill to delay, deke through defenders, and find cross-ice options. Off-puck offence: shrunk distance to puck carrier multiple times, but also failed to identify space and missed a couple of scoring chances as a result. Looked like a late-round candidate.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 21st, 2022

Dubuque Fighting Saints vs. Cedar Rapids - USHL

In transition, Wisdom shows patience, awareness, and play-building ideas. He waits for pressure to arrive, then cuts back or spins away to reset the play or create an advantage up the ice. That mentality disappears in the offensive zone, where he takes low-percentage shots at the expense of better plays. He lacks the passing skills to connect through pressure, and while he tries complex handling moves, the puck rolls off his stick. He shows physical ability – hitting, absorbing contact, driving to the inside – and some defensive value through energy and scanning, even if he tends to overcommit. Drives the net with and without the puck, but doesn't show much nuance in how he does it.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 4th, 2021

Cedar Rapids vs. Muskegon Lumberjacks - USHL

Wisdom's an intelligent player limited by mechanics. He has a hunched over, wide stride and his lack of ankle flexion prevents him from exploding through his manoeuvres. He's also patient with the puck, not forcing plays and spinning away from pressure to build the offence. Cuts inside when possible, earning a scoring chance. Forces dump-outs and turnovers on the forecheck. Threw a couple of big hits, including one in open ice, and he's successful in battles despite his skating limitations. Didn't see any playmaking ability. He's worth paying attention to, even with his limited role.

**J.D. Burke:** September 24th, 2021

Cedar Rapids RoughRiders vs. Lincoln Stars - USHL

Some really excellent work on the forecheck. Great routes to the puck, solid contact, second and third efforts. You love to see it. Flashed some decent skill with the puck in this contest, too. Might be a late-round prospect worth following.



Rank



Grade



Skating



Shooting



Passing



Puckhandling



Hockey Sense



Physical

# TREVOR WONG

C/LW | SASKATOON BLADES

HEIGHT 5'9"

D.O.B. MAY 4, 2003

WEIGHT 154

SHOOTS LEFT

8%

2022 XLS

22%

3Y REGR.  
bXLS

11%

3Y REGR.  
iXLS

N/A

SEAL Adj.  
PTS/GP

LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	50	17	25	42

## Scouting Report

Ranking Trevor Wong 35th overall in the 2021 Draft Guide proved to be too rich. Still, we remain believers in Wong's upside.

Last year's projection was based on Wong's tools and fearless style. Both still apply. Wong's quick and dexterous, slicing through and around defenders after bursting towards the outside, waiting for the defender's pivot, then taking the middle. He overwhelms defenders with pace, making plays in-motion and through the tiniest of openings – often showing little regard for his safety in the process.

Away from the puck, Wong's disruptive, engaged, and proactive. One of the very best defenders in the WHL, he both out-works and out-smarts opponents across the ice. He eliminates off-puck threats, then starts the breakout. He's constantly moving away from the puck, always choosing the best route and space to maximize the puck carrier's

passing options. Wong's a skilled passer, using hook, slip, saucer, and backhand passes to connect with his target as they burst into space.

Last season, his playmaking was hampered by the lack of patience and manipulation. Both appeared in flashes this year. Some game reports highlighted passes where he pulled defenders out of lanes first and delayed the extra half-second to access the lane, but just as many described the absence of such skills.

Wong's a long-term project, with an emphasis on his puck game developing more high-level details and his tools becoming more refined. There's still third-line skills and intelligence here. He's still worth draft capital and development resources, but don't be surprised NHL teams disagree for the second straight season.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Not much offensively from Wong. He finished his off-puck route, took the defender's stick, and then got a high-danger chance. Created a couple of runways for his teammates. But he's not making advanced plays out there. To be fair, he's not exactly getting favourable touches. He still finds space, gets open, stays in motion, and chooses the best place on the ice, but his linemates won't pass him the puck (they're

shooters). Remains a projectable defender. He angles, gets above the puck, eliminates off-puck threats, and applies so much pressure that he turns shots into turnovers. Didn't look like a pick in this game. NHL future requires tons of development, but his game still lacks refinement.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 4th, 2022

Winnipeg ICE vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Wong's scoring again, but I don't know if he's improved

enough. At the very least, it's nice to see his off-puck instincts around the net getting rewarded. He grabbed two goals and nearly had a third. Best play: attack the inside, outracing a pivoting defender for a 2v1, before using a reaching backhand pass under the defender's stick. Those are the plays that Wong needs to keep making. He doesn't have a clear change of pace or delay yet, but he alters his speed inside passing to maximize his odds of getting the puck through. In short, he's getting close. Of course, there's the usual retrievals, defensive engagement, steals. He's one of the best defensive players in the league. Doesn't sound like there's a ton of interest in him as a re-entry, but I'd still pick him.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 27th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Saskatoon's best forward in this game. Scored with a deflection in front of the net, and probably earned an assist. Created several looks, including a quick-possession shot-pass to the inside for a deflection. Showed planning and deception by spotting his passing target, looking away for a moment, then passing just as the defender committed. As usual, he's always moving, supporting pucks, and disrupting the opposition. He has dynamic potential, but just doesn't have the mechanical consistency and high-level thinking to make the most of his pace, problem-solving, and inside attacks. However, he's been scoring at 1.3 points per game since the start of 2022 – perhaps there's some reason for optimism.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 13th, 2021

Saskatoon Blades vs. Winnipeg Ice - WHL

Wong still stands out for his defensive acumen, aggression, and off-puck movement. He's always open, always moving, and always killing plays. He actually led this game in zone entry preventions -- impressive for a forward. It's clear that he's made a conscious effort to play slower with the puck. He delays where he used to sprint, cuts back where he used to throw a puck into the slot and hope it connected. Remains a skilled handler who can access different passing lanes and turns simple plays into scoring chances. But he just doesn't click with his linemates. Lisowsky doesn't look for him, or well, anyone, and Wong seems to fight the puck a ton. He's a long-term project who needed to be selected by a skills-focused development staff -- he didn't even get picked. For many re-entries, it's a matter of physical development, and then they get when they score. Wong isn't scoring and physical development won't turn Wong from a relatively simple creator to a high-level one, even with his skating, pace, and inside play. Not sure he's a pick this year.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 13th, 2021

Brandon Wheat Kings vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Back to the old habits for Wong, rushing passes, overly aggressive defensively, and failing to spot trailing options. He's so concerned about being the little guy who could that he completely loses track of how effectively he manipulates defenders. He made several defenders turn their feet in the wrong direction and then did nothing with it. Again, terrific energy, very inside-driven, physical, and insane pace. None of that matters if he can't do anything with it offensively. In games like these, he can't because he's too singularly focused on the net. To be fair, he also set up a chance from behind the net after moving a defender's stick out of the way, but that was it for high-level details. He needs to slow down, scan more, and start waiting for defenders to concede the space that he creates so much.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 2nd, 2021

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

New team, same story for Wong, Well, sort of. His teammates still have some difficulty turning his passes into offence, although he showed much better patience on the deliveries. He takes the extra second in transition or while escaping a battle to evaluate his options, then hitting the teammate just as they move into space -- he's slowed down a bit, which is good. The off-puck offence is still there: He's always supporting, getting opening, occupying space. Takes every pass in motion and usually makes the next one, too. Extremely physical with an excellent understanding of how to win battles using his feet. Defensively-sound, showing some really advanced gap control and footwork. One sequence saw him push the attacker up the boards while angling his body between their body and stick, so as soon as they cut inside, he pulled his stick across and poked the puck away -- don't see that from defenders at this level, let alone forwards. Wong's still lacks depth through the hips while skating, even if he has the ankle flexion done. Moments where he achieves proper posture only occur early in shifts. It's clear he needs to get stronger. He also needs to score this year to get drafted, and I'm not sure he does. He'll probably end up on our board regardless, as he fits the emphasis on stackable skills, inside play, and pace.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 12th, 2021

Victoria Royals vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Wong's had a few quiet offensive games this season, with most of this being of his own doing. Not this one. His teammates killed the play constantly, failing to read give-and-go opportunities, failing to support the puck, and completely avoiding scoring chance positioning during the cycle. That



led to Wong endlessly cycling the puck with no options. It doesn't matter how much better his punch turns and handling looked in this game -- no options means that there's nothing he can use to get inside. Hard to get the puck back when teammates aren't looking to pass, either. He still made an impact, with the usual motor and defensive effort. A little bit more patience with the puck would certainly help his game. His engagement's so rare.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 9th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

Everything was here: the pace, the vision, the fearlessness, the defence, and the shocking amount of physicality. One play perfectly described the current inefficiencies in his game: he fired a no-look backhand pass that was easily intercepted, but fired it right back into the slot for an assist. Hook pass use, but didn't layer any deception on PP passes -- too obvious. Give-and-goes in OZP, and finds space, but is pushed out of his route a bit too easily. Not sure if skill or awareness, but regardless he missed a perfect jam turn escape along the boards, and instead did a hesitation into a one-foot stop to initiate a battle -- worth watching going forward. He struggles to sink his weight into his shot, especially on catch-and-release opportunities because he doesn't adjust his feet to the incoming pass, take it across his hips, and then create the distance for the energy transfer. DZ scanning was off at times, but also several corrective reads and eliminated threats entirely. He lacks skill refinement, but his pace of operation, engagement, and fearlessness are much harder to teach. Late-first/early-second.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 4th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

This is the best board play I've seen from Wong. He pre-scanned on retrievals, got into proper posture, and then made the best play. Lots of skating skill on display in-tight: double cuts, punch turns, cutback set-up by a look-off, and adjusting his top hand positioning to keep the puck tighter to his body. Kept feet moving through pressure, and got low to leverage and create distance. Some strong rush sequences in this one, taking the puck from outside to the middle, then dropping the puck back in the runways he created. His pace, handling, and speed should make him a better manipulator than he is.

Right now, he's all about manufacturing runways over threading the needle. To his credit, his off-puck reads allowed him to constantly get the puck back in favourable positions. He played between checks in the slot, timed his movements to the net front, and used his backwards skating/crossovers to face the puck while he moved through his own passes into

give-and-go positioning. The runway playmaking isn't a high-end skill, but combined with that pace and off-puck, I have little doubt it will work in the NHL. Anticipation and checking habits are strong by coming across the hips and sealing off the back pressure, not to mention the insane motor. The shot remains a touch concerning, but he's getting better distance between his feet now -- it's all about getting that top elbow up and pushing the top hand forward pre-release. There's a role for Wong to be an NHLer, probably as a third-liner. He showed more patience in this game, but that needs to come with manipulation. If it does, there's a real chance he's a top-nine forward. In the late-first/early-second discussion for me.

**David St-Louis:** May 4th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

I honestly don't see a ton in Wong's game that would transform him into a top-six forward. His skill-level is above-average, but not significantly so, not enough to confidently project him to the NHL at his size. He skates hunched over and doesn't show high-level dangle setup consistently (manipulation, feet activation, deception, weight shifts...). I like the motor, the defensive involvement, and the complete fearlessness (Wong takes all hits to make all plays and he goes to the net without any hesitation), but is there enough there? I have yet to be convinced this season. I want to see higher-level offensive skills more consistently. I think Ty Voit is a better manipulator, not necessarily a better prospect overall, but better offensive creator. He is more of a mid to late second-rounder for me. At least, he is scoring this season.

**Mitchell Brown:** May 1st, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs. Kamloops Blazers - WHL

Wong's motor is crazy. It's not just lazy cliches like "never quits on a play" -- his energy's unique to the point where it allows him to affect plays/pucks in a way that other, hard-working players can't. A penalty kill menace, he proactively shuts down lanes. Swings down low to disrupt pucks, often reading plays faster than his defencemen. More refined skating and strength will allow him to maximize his anticipation and effectiveness on the forecheck/retrievals. Right now, he gets pushed off the puck too easily (his teammates don't exactly get open, either). Offensively, there were awesome plays. A mohawk high in the zone followed by a cross-slot bullet out of a fake shot. He read the next play off an interception immediately and set-up another chance. Front foot one-timer on a 2-on-1 for a chance off the post, showing better shooting mechanics than I've seen from him previously. More delays are working into his game -- he's less focused on dropping the shoulder and driving the net, which will benefit his game

going up the ranks. He lacks patience, but he shows some high-level slip pass use. I think it comes with time. Looked like a late-first/early-second in this performance.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 30th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Some games, it doesn't really matter what Wong does, he won't get the puck back. In this game, he moved the puck early, looked for give-and-goes, drove plays up the middle, and zig-zagged the dot lane to make defenders move their feet. To show for it, he set-up a scoring chance and got two of his own, one from a rebound and another from a deflection. His teammates aren't looking for him, and as a result, his touches are so infrequent for a player with this level of pace and defensive ability. But, there's still a ton more that Wong should be doing with the puck. He gets ahead of himself, leading to turnovers and missed opportunities. Just a bit more patience would completely change his offensive game. Despite his best efforts, the lack of size is really noticeable along the boards. He tries to compensate by pivoting to face the slot early, but he's too reliant on his hands rather than feet to escape. The beginnings of manipulation are there, but he's mostly a high-pace problem-solver, one who often creates the problems for himself. His motor and fearlessness are elite, and his high pace is NHL calibre, but he has to diversify and cycle gears to make it. Otherwise, he's a mid-six AHL scorer. Mid-to-late second.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 27th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

Defence aside, this was a really quiet performance from Wong. He was pretty much no-event hockey at 5-on-5, erasing plenty of chances but never getting any of his own. Pace remains high and the off-puck movement has purpose and timing, but he wasn't in the middle of the offence. More assertiveness in transition could amplify his threat -- it's like he's shifted to the other extreme. His shot remains a problem: he leans over his stick instead of creating distance between his feet, locking his elbow to his side instead of lifting it up. The skill was mostly visible on the PP, scoring a backhand goal after a timed move to the net-front and setting up another with a laser-like shot-pass.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 20th, 2021

Kamloops Blazers vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Wong's move to centre has really elevated his defensive game. The high motor transfers down low, where he's buzzing from one check to the next, scanning and maintaining strong athletic posture. Some of the defensive reads are high-end:

non-committing, but high-energy close out to thwart the shot, break up on mirroring footwork in open-ice, then finishing with the body, and perfectly balancing the passing lane and the man. Non-stop communication. He's still inefficient with the puck, but he's dynamic from high pace and a higher motor. Strong problem-solving skills, and flashed some manipulation by setting up a defender's feet than using a hook pass around them. Pulls pucks off the boards and moves them inside immediately. Collapses at the hip too much, even with his knees pushed over his toes -- it's especially noticeable after his initial burst of energy on a shift. And, of course, no fear of contact. His teammates don't exactly help him out, but more give-and-goes are needed. He's a late-first/early-second for me.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 19th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

Wong's performance was total chaos in this game. His motor's absolutely incredible -- elite seems fair. He doesn't quit on any play, puts effort into everything that he does, and absolutely hounds the puck. Improved scanning and decision-making has leveraged that motor to make him one of the WHL's best defensive players: he intercepts passes, eliminates his man, wins battles, overwhelms with pressure, and blitzes switch offs. He reads down low plays faster than most of his defencemen -- it's incredible. Offensively, he looked for the give-and-go, connecting a couple of times but not getting the return feed. Always builds speed under the puck, taking tricky passes and instantly pushes them to his forehand to make the next play. With that energy came poor decisions: passing too early instead of handing onto position for his teammate to get into position. Increased deception comes at the expense of accuracy, with several look off feeds getting intercepted as the time between his scan and pass were too long. His pace overwhelms at this level -- he needs to exploit that. Of course, he's problem-solver to near-highest degree, immediately recognizing another play after his initial mistake. He's small, but he gains leverage on players, initiates contact early to create distance, and keeps his feet moving through pressure. In this game, he looked more like a late second type.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 17th, 2021

Kelowna Rockets vs. Prince George Cougars - WHL

It's tough to poke holes in a 4-goal game, but Wong has to stop the no-look dump-outs when pressured. He had several in this game -- if he just settled the puck down and took a second he would've made several clean exits. Apart from the failed exits and missed net-front read, Wong played an

awesome game. The motor never quits across the ice: he's physical, identifies threats, and launches himself towards them. When the puck leaves his stick, it's usually going to a better-positioned teammate. By finding space across the offensive zone, balancing between cycle support and scoring positioning, he continually got the puck back in favourable positions. Two of his goals directly came from that, including an impressive read where he cut back in front of the net-front defender and established positioning for the deflection goal. Looks for the next play off the boards by pivoting to face the slot early. Skating remains very similar to last year: he flashes ideal posture and has natural quickness, but he drops his chest and the heel kicking starts after his initial burst. He's a bit of a bet on his mentality, fearlessness, and pace over true dynamic puck skills, but I'm willing to make that bet on him. Late-first, early-second.

**J.D. Burke:** March 28th, 2021

Vancouver Giants vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

There may not be a more courageous player in all this class than Wong. I'm just not sure he's aware or overly concerned with the risks that come with playing his inside-driven, contact-weaponizing style in a 5-foot-8 frame. He plays the net-front during sustained in-zone possessions and on the power play. He takes the puck to the centre lane. He absorbs contact along the boards to separate from opponents. He makes passes through contact. It's like watching prime Milan Lucic but almost a full foot shorter. You watch a game like this one, where the Rockets get smashed 6-0 by the Giants, and it actually helps sell Wong. It's just hard to imagine a scenario where he's not putting up substantially better numbers with a better support network. His problem-solving ability, and the way he warps the defensive front with against-the-grain feeds -- it's just so advanced from a playmaker at this stage in their career. Loved his pace on and off of the puck in this one. Truly, his talents are wasted on this Rockets team, the second-lowest scoring unit in the B.C. Division.

**David St-Louis:** March 26th, 2021

Victoria Royals vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

So Wong is still getting hammered, hit in the face, and plastered to the boards this season. He gets right back up after drawing the penalty and continues playing. He has an ability to absorb shock that is quite unusual -- he needs it at his size and style of game. He goes to the net, fights for tips and rebounds, and supports teammates closely on the boards. What worries most is the infrequent scanning habits. He needs to know his next play as soon as the puck touches his stick. It's not the case right now. He needs to search and

it exposes him. His skating is still significantly above-average; he will get even faster with more strength. I'd like to see more manipulation, change of lanes, playing to the heels of defenders. He still showed problem-solving skills this game, using the boards to bounce the puck around defenders and rapid fakes to make them go down and move around. I don't see a first-rounder here. More a second to late-second. I need to see more though.

**David St-Louis:** March 11th, 2020

Victoria Royals vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Wow. It's puzzling why Wong didn't score more this season as his game doesn't look like the one of a 16-year-old. He skates at an above-average level (projectable) and handles at an above-average level, making fakes to beat defenders and improve the dangerousness of his scoring chances. He is on the smaller side and slight, but he can absorb and play off contact reasonably well considering his huge weight disadvantage. I like his skating habits, receiving every puck in movement. His defensive game looked like a plus this game, too; he blocked shots, and pressured opposing defencemen rapidly at the top of the zone.

**David St-Louis:** March 7th, 2020

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Wong's skating will take a massive jump with just a little bit more strength. He needs to sit back on his skates a little more, right now his butt is raised and strides to the back or kicks as a result. But the knee-bend and ankle flexion is good and at his size, he could achieve form, speeding past defenders quite easily. Wong plays the game at a very fast pace for a 16-year-old, never taking time to settle and dribble the puck if there is an option open. He showed high-awareness this game and deception, looking-off a teammate in the slot as he attacked below the goal-line and feeding him a perfect back-hand pass through a defender. He played a pass and reposition style that fit him well; good timing to attack the net and not spend too much time there inside check. On the walls, he has some movement fakes that could help him dance away from coverage as he gets more experienced, as his timing improves, and as he gets more explosive. Lots to like in Wong's game.

**David St-Louis:** February 7th, 2020

Portland Winterhawks vs. Victoria Royals - WHL

Wong's size is obviously a problem. It severely limits his whole game right now and he requires a ton of projection. His skating allows to fly around the ice, especially when he starts using crossovers, and he takes all pucks in movement, moves them quickly, but if the defence catches him...Wong suffered

a huge open-ice hit in this game that sent him spinning and flying. He doesn't look enough at his surrounding space before acquiring the puck, missing option, and defensive pressure. It's a must at his size. He won't take his career anywhere if he doesn't learn to pre-scan better. That said, when he does pre-scan, Wong makes deceptive, skilled, quick plays that are very projectable. He is a 16-year-old. I'd use a draft pick on him. Let's hope he grows in the off-season. It's possible as he is a late 03.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 7th, 2020

Portland Winterhawks vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Just a really impressive performance from Trevor Wong. The motor never stops. He played big penalty kill minutes, getting a pair of chances for his efforts. Strong supporting reads down low, but he also flew by the puck a few times. He missed the odd DZ assignment, but nothing too egregious and his energy helps him to offset the relative rawness in his reads.

Offensively, Wong has the potential to be a huge WHL scorer. He plays at a breakneck pace; pace that was only matched by Seth Jarvis in this game. He takes every pass and makes every play (save for shooting) in-stride. He blended in-stride pass receptions with look-off passes, although his accuracy was a bit off. Some intelligent off-puck offensive reads, flaring wide into space to get open. He created a goal by intercepting a breakout pass, feeding a back pass across the slot for a should-be tap-in, before grabbing the rebound and nearly scoring and screening the goaltender. Flashed some lane deception, too.

It's the details that hold Wong back right now. In this game, he tended to handle the puck out in front of his body, rather than across the hips, and he's a bit too eager to work through defenders, rather than relying on his pace and deception to work around defenders. Really, he needs to pre-scan more. He missed an easy high-danger pass and several breakout options by failing to scan for information pre-reception. The skating needs work, as he doesn't sink his hips back into his stride, which compounds with his lack of strength to make him easy to dispossess. But overall, I really like Wong's game. Easy to see him becoming a top-64 prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 24th, 2020

Seattle Thunderbirds vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Strong performance from Wong, creating heaps of offence while being a presence on the defensive end. Wong's motor never stops. He's so aggressive coming down low, supporting his defencemen, driving plays to the perimeter, and reading passing lanes. Strong backchecking habits, and he tries to

come across the hips, but his lack of strength hurts him a lot. He's just so engaged in every play; even when he gets caught being reactionary, he works to close out the shooting threat.

There were some really high-level offensive flashes in this game. He used lane deception to compress the defence laterally, before working wide. He had a clever sequence where he scanned behind him, then turned around and flung a look-off pass cross-slot that was just deflected. He set-up two other chances with deception, including a fake backhand shot and look off. Manipulated defenders to get his lane. Stays active off-puck to support the play; generally takes the optimal route. Balances battling and supporting well; lacks of strength aside, he's always in the mix.

Wong's passing accuracy was a bit off at times, and that's largely traced to a major issue in his game: scanning habits. He rarely scans before touching the puck, limiting his options and exposing him to (injury) risk. Even in high-leverage situations, like DZ breakouts, he doesn't scan -- fixating on the puck instead. He makes quick plays with possession, with a low success rate because he doesn't have the full ice mapped out when the puck arrives.

Honestly, if he could improve his scanning habits, it'd probably make him an elite WHLer and significantly help his NHL odds. I like his game a lot. He's one of the top WHLers by both skill and intelligence.

**Mitchell Brown:** January 4th, 2020

Vancouver Giants vs. Kelowna Rockets - WHL

Solid performance from Wong, who's a waterbug in need of refinement. His energy doesn't die. He's rail-thin but tries to hit. He's an endless annoyance on the forecheck and back-check, and he seems to hate point shots almost as much as me judging by how hard he closes out on them. He's already killing penalties and getting rewarded with shorthanded scoring chances. His routes and angling need work, but his base is way ahead of the curve.

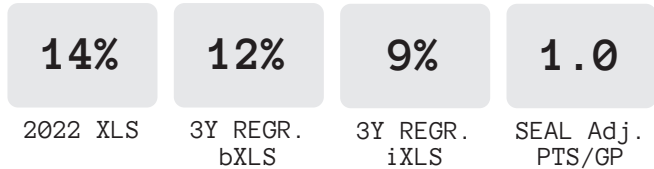
Similarly, Wong's a budding offensive force by virtue of his ability to everything in motion. He had some incredible pass receptions, taking pucks in the mohawk, off his feet, in-stride, and through crossovers. He layers on deception to his passes but he doesn't scan enough, increasing his turnovers. Lane deception rush (crossovers toward the middle, then pushes outside after compressing the defence) led to a backhand dangle, but his weight was just off. That trend was visible in his passing all night long. He lacks strength but mostly fine wrister shot mechanics and gets inside with pace. Not sure about his off-puck instincts; seemed to just settle for space rather than trying to find the best pocket. Ignore the point totals, he's a player.



# LUKE WOODWORTH

C | DRUMMONDVILLE VOLTIGEURS

HEIGHT 5'9" D.O.B. APR. 1, 2004  
 WEIGHT 154 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
QMJHL	68	16	34	50

## Scouting Report

Perhaps in past years there would have been room for Luke Woodworth on our final ranking. Certainly, his high-end hockey sense would've made him a part of the conversation, if nothing else.

We place a serious premium on hockey sense at Elite Prospects, more so than any other part of a player's game. As we've learned in past seasons, though, hockey sense alone won't necessarily make someone a viable NHLer or even a top-end QMJHL skater. Not if the player's physical tools - their skating, handling, physicality, passing, and shooting - aren't good enough.

With those lessons fresh in mind, Woodworth didn't have what it takes to make our final draft ranking. We may revisit this player in a year or two's time as a re-entry should he finish this draft without an NHL home to call his own, but that's it.

"He continues to make smart plays with the puck, not hitting closing lanes, showing adaptability, recognizing the best next play before getting the puck," Elite Prospects QMJHL scout David St-Louis wrote in a December game report.

If he does manage to improve his skating and shot, even

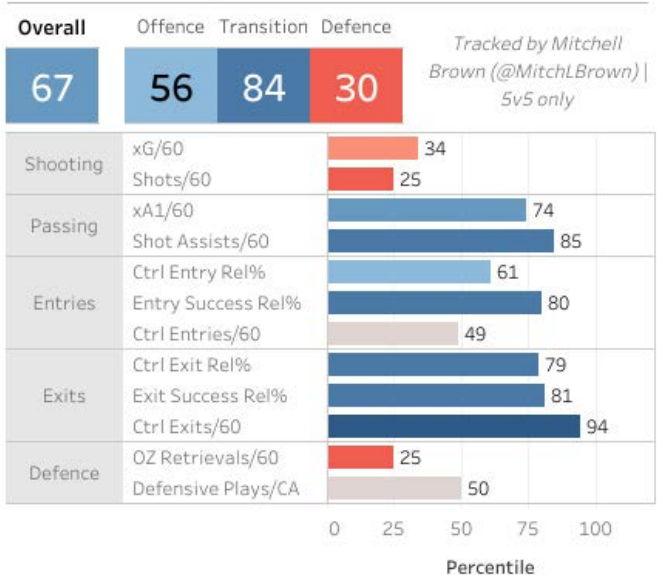
## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** May 6th, 2022

Blainville-B. Armada vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

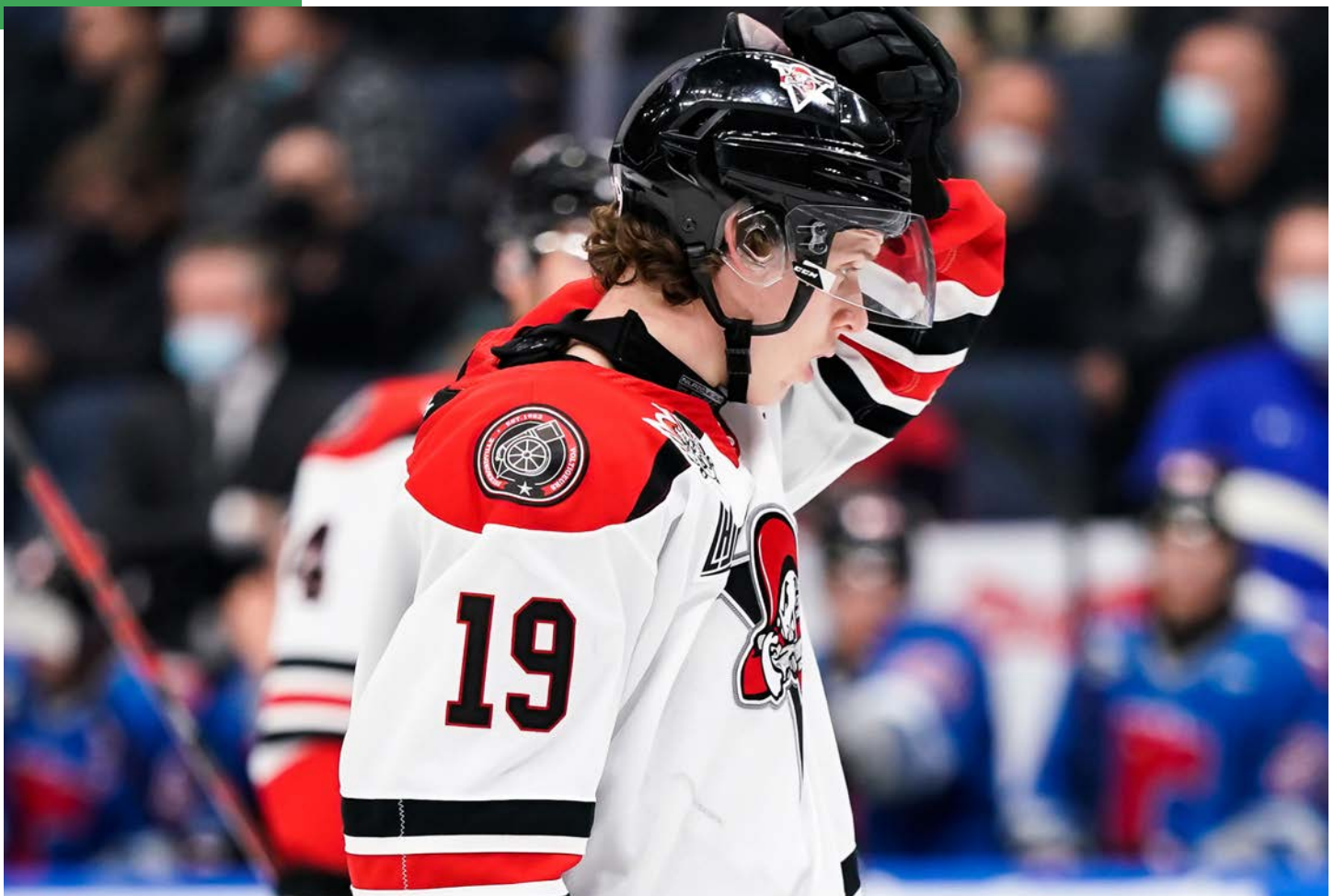
Woodworth is one of the smartest draft-eligible prospects I've seen in the Q this season. He delays, cuts back, deceives,

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 105.9



slightly, Woodworth could become one of the better forwards in the QMJHL over the next two seasons. He already has an above-average understanding of how to control the flow of the play and better playmaking instincts than many top-end attackers in the 'Q.

and manipulates defenders in multiple ways. Details are strength. Late in his shifts, he doesn't just dump the puck - he gains the zone, then uses his delay game or cuts across the slot as he waits for support. Consistently positioned in



the right space, whether that's between defenders in the offensive end or eliminating threats off-puck in the defensive end. Playmaking has moments of advanced reads, but he mostly plays a short-range, runway-creating passing game. Not sure if he's a pick this year, but I'd like to see him get called. Could have a big breakout.

**Mitchell Brown:** April 1st, 2022

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Gatineau Olympiques - QMJHL

Woodworth had a quality game. His handling really stood out. Consistently beat defenders and cut to the inside. Along the boards, he brings pressure towards him, waits, then slips away into open ice. Scored by walking off the boards in the heel-to-heel, cutting across the top, then firing a wrister. Clearly an intelligent player across the ice. Supports plays, often assuming the best position. Anticipates interception opportunities. Playmaking tends to be more short-range, clever plays than more complex plays. Stride: knees past toes, but the hips don't follow. It'll improve. I don't know if he's a draft pick this year, but he'll become a big scorer next season.

**David St-Louis:** February 4th, 2022

Québec Remparts vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

It's getting clearer and clearer that Woodworth is too limited in terms of skill to be a draft pick in this year's selection. He isn't scoring all that much (also because his team isn't great

because he just doesn't have many solutions to defensive pressure. He can pass. He can spot the puck into space, but is very reliant on his teammates to create the breakdowns that will enable him to score. His hockey sense is his best attribute -- he understands rotation and where to position himself -- but I'm not sure it's enough to carry him in the professional game.

**David St-Louis:** December 18th, 2021

Québec Remparts vs. Victoriaville Tigres - QMJHL

I really like this player. Woodworth is stuck in a less-than-ideal environment, with little to no offensive support (or defensive support), but he continues to make smart plays with the puck, not hitting closing lane, showing adaptability, recognizing the best next play before getting the puck. He has tool limitations (they project as below-average), but above-average sense. I've got burned by these players before, so I'll wait before including him on my list, since he's also not scoring, but I wonder how he would look complementing more dynamic line-mates -- I'm not talking about Justin Côté here, but players with actual offensive instinct. Woodworth's passing under pressure is his greatest quality at this point.

**Mitchell Brown:** December 9th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Halifax Mooseheads - QMJHL

In a different environment, Woodworth could be a draft

pick. Instead, he's mostly an intelligent, but simple player who struggles to create. He's a deceptive playmaker with an understanding of advantages. Looks for short-range passing options to build the play over using individual skill. Changes pace to deceive defenders, and while his stride lacks, he's a agile skater who uses pivot turns and the heel-to-heel to misdirect defenders. Always in between defenders when away from the puck, but it rarely comes. The intelligence signs on the defensive end, too. But Woodworth doesn't get many favourable touches. Many of his best sequences are unsupported. And since he's not willing to just throw pucks into areas and hope for the best, his game becomes largely simple plays.

**David St-Louis:** December 4th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Woodworth looks like a smart player, but he barely got the puck this game. It was hard to evaluate him. Still, he finds space, plays between checks, and seems to anticipate the play at quite a higher level compared to most on the ice. He also connects plays well. Like I said, he didn't show much in terms of flash in this game, but he remains an interesting prospect. He looked smaller in this live viewing, however.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 12th, 2021

Gatineau Olympiques vs. Drummondville Voltigeurs - QMJHL

Woodworth's an intelligent player. He scans, makes plays quickly, and constantly changes the point of attack. Moves pucks from the boards to the middle under pressure. Intelligence translates to the defensive end, where he backtracks with the purpose of angling, anticipates switches of coverage, and makes tons of proactive supporting reads. Didn't get the puck much in this game. Hardly enough to evaluate.

**David St-Louis:** October 1st, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Val D'Or Foreurs - QMJHL

Woodworth seems to always know his next play. The puck touches his stick, but it rarely stays there long. It moves to the next open teammate and, very often, connects with the friendly stick, too. He is full of one-touch passes and can find ways around closed lanes and create pockets of space with east-west movement. He is a fast playmaker who blends

receptions into more passes. He scored this game from a far-post tap-in. I also appreciated his physicality, finishing checks, taking hits to make plays... Lots to like there, but the skills are a bit vanilla. His skating looks below-average.

**David St-Louis:** April 30th, 2021

Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Québec Remparts - QMJHL

Not much interesting from Woodworth. His skating was exposed a couple of times. He skates in wide tracks and he forced more than a few passes. His line had trouble connecting plays all game.


**David St-Louis** - March 4th, 2021

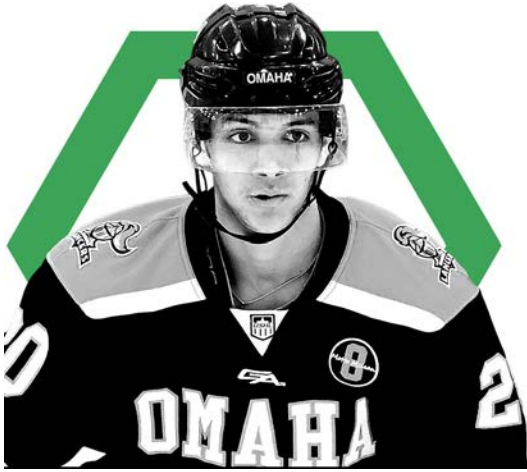
Drummondville Voltigeurs vs. Blainville-B.Armada - QMJHL

Interesting performance from Woodworth. He's active, pacey, and tries a ton of plays (that mostly barely fail). He passes and repositions, shows defensive engagement, waits for the best play to open, and shows above-average processing speed. I think, next year, he will start hitting more of his passes and opening up more lanes himself. He could have a significant upward curve in his development due to his tools, poise, and desire to make plays.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2021

Drummondville V. vs. Chicoutimi Saguenéens - QMJHL

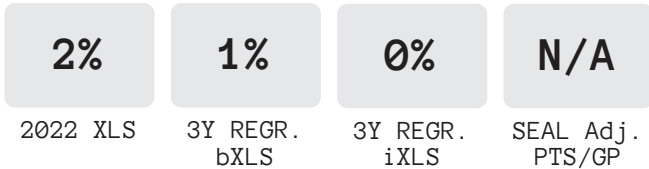
Woodworth is a burgeoning playmaker, requiring more consistency within his standout skill to become a top-two rounds prospect. He's deceptive with certain passes (slip passes off the boards for example), but lacks deception on feeds where it's required. He makes passes in-motion, identifies the trailer to the play, and identifies runways of space for teammates, but he can't manipulate defenders to create a lane. He strikes me as more of a pacey or volume playmaker who beat defenders to lanes for years, and now has to adjust. Narrow stride but projectable posture with his knees pushed over toes; lacks strength. Not much of a shooting threat. Engaged down low and without the puck, looking for threats and options, but didn't consistently make the right read. Really curious to see how the next two season play out. Lots of players like him, but the variety of passes make me confident he will add more deception soon. 



# JARED WRIGHT

RW | OMAHA LANCERS

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. NOV. 22, 2002  
WEIGHT 170 SHOOTS RIGHT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
USHL	59	15	19	34

> Committed to Colgate Univ. ('23-24)

## Scouting Report

Passed over in last year's draft, Jared Wright's high-pace game translated quickly to the USHL.

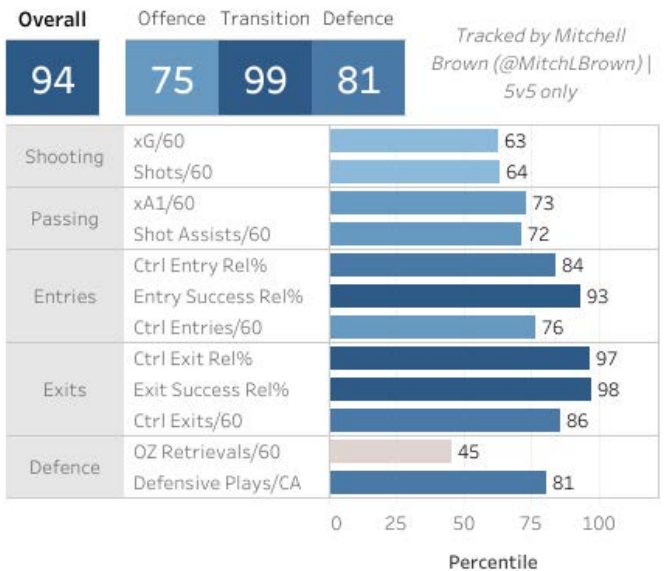
Wright overwhelms USHL defenders with speed. He attacks the middle, then shifts his weight, pushes off, and attacks the outside with a series of powerful crossovers. Early in the season, it seemed like he only played at top speed. Soon after, it became clear that he has a change of pace game, playmaking skill, and even some deceptive qualities.

When Wright puts everything together, he drives wide, gears down to manipulate the defender, then turns on the jets and finds a teammate in the slot. Other impressive sequences show more deception, like firing a look-off shot or faking a pass to the middle-lane driver before hitting the trailer.

As is often the case for high-speed players from the High School circuit, Wright's still developing his in-zone offence. Right now, he moves, but often without a purpose. Along the boards, he prefers low-reward plays, even when he has opportunities to cut inside.

While Wright develops the details, he'll continue to leave

Games Tracked: 7 | Minutes Tracked: 92.5



defenders in wake, create the occasional highlight-reel goal, and force turnovers on the breakout. He's a long-term project with no guarantee of even getting drafted, but he's worth keeping tabs on.

## Game Reports

Mitchell Brown: April 16th, 2022

Omaha Lancers vs. Waterloo Black Hawks - USHL

Not much from Wright in this game. He wasn't able to create the same advantages through his speed as normal. He didn't force plays through, instead slowing down or cutting across to find a teammate. Not much of a factor in

the offensive zone. He moves, but often without a purpose. Sometimes has solid ideas, like making a quick play off the boards, but he's usually playing a simple, low-reward game. Despite this, he's still showed that he's more than just a fast USHLer. There's some upside here, but I just haven't seen enough offence to advocate to put him on the board.



**Mitchell Brown:** April 15th, 2022

Tri-City Storm vs. Omaha Lancers - USHL

Wright doesn't create much in-zone offence. He mostly just extends the cycle and passes to the point. He steps off the boards, but gets pushed and fires low-percentage shots. In transition, his game comes alive. He just sprints past players like it's nothing. Skating's not mechanically refined, nor are his rush patterns, but his crossovers are powerful and explosive. He's not just sprinting past players either; he slows down, then passes for the trailer. He even shows some deception. Forces passes to the middle-lane driver on occasion. The off-puck offence isn't there, but he moves. He's active. It'll take time, but there's upside here. He's fast, but plays a game of many speeds – that's pace in the NHL. Could be an interesting late-rounder.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 25th, 2022

Omaha Lancers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

A big game from Wright against one of the best teams in the USHL. Set up his moves through defenders at an angle, rather than head on. One time, that led to a between the legs shot. Stretched the ice, then took the pass and sprinted past defenders to the net. Didn't connect, but he looked at his teammates in transition. The motor continues to impress without the puck. He pushes attackers wide, then gets steals along the boards or forces the dump. Inconsistent execution. He won't make our board, but I can see why teams would be interested.

**Mitchell Brown:** March 23rd, 2022

Fargo Force vs. Sioux Falls Stampede - USHL

Another intriguing game from Wright, using his speed to create opportunities but also flashing more nuance. In one

sequence, he took a puck at the point, faked the shot, then passed to the inside for a high-danger chance. Turns defence to offence with his motor, particularly when he's looking for steals. Knees pushed over his toes, hips almost there, often full extensions and forward-driving recoveries, but his speed comes more from explosiveness than mechanical perfection. A bit too reliant on taking defenders wide in transition, but he's using crossovers and lane changes to maximize his odds. I could see an NHL team picking him, although I doubt he makes our board.


**Mitchell Brown:** October 22nd, 2021

Fargo Force vs. Omaha Lancers - USHL

Wright showed off much better playmaking than normal. He connected with a pair of high-end passes, combining changes of pace, deception, and accuracy. Passed through the legs of a defender to turn a scoring chance into a tap-in goal. Foresight and creative. In transition, he consistently worked the puck from the boards to the middle. Still too reliant on his individual skill for entries, but he's not inept at passing or anything. Appreciate the backchecking and energy, although he's mostly just hunting steals. Tends to float around if he doesn't anticipate an opportunity. Not sure if he's a pick, but he has some tools.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 9th, 2021

Omaha Lancers vs. Tri-City Storm - USHL

Wright outraces players like they're not even there. It's Jackson Hallum-esque. He wins races from substantial disadvantages. He doesn't do anything with that speed, it's all just straight-line attacks until he runs out of room. More crossovers and changes of pace will open up better opportunities, but I'm intrigued. 

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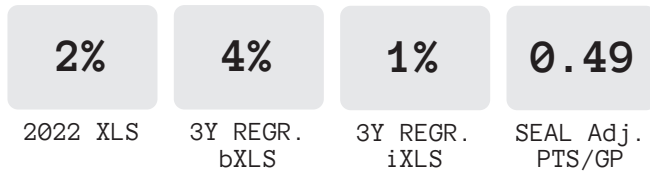
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# CHARLIE WRIGHT

D | SASKATOON BLADES

HEIGHT 6'1" D.O.B. OCT. 22, 2003  
WEIGHT 179 SHOOTS LEFT



LEAGUE	GP	G	A	PTS
WHL	58	23	12	35

## Scouting Report

With a couple of standout performances as a draft-minus-one player, Charlie Wright appeared poised for an offensive breakout. Instead, his WHL career has been defined by a slow build-up.

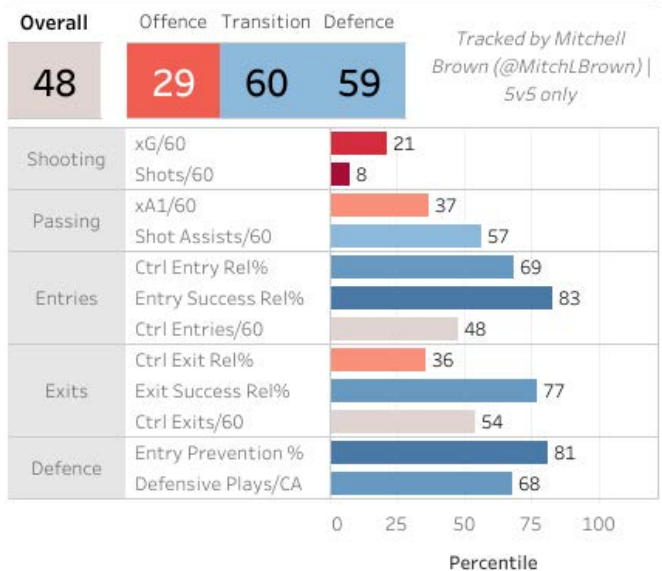
Wright's impact is primarily felt without the puck, particularly defensively.

Elite Prospects Dir. of North American Scouting Mitch Brown describes Wright's rush defence as his best skill: "He establishes his gap early, then guides the attack to the outside. He times his engagement at the point of least resistance. Even when he's making up ground, he still influences the puck carrier's options."

With the puck in friendly hands, Wright joins the rush. He sprints ahead to back off defenders and create space for his teammates or provides short-range support as the trailer.

Despite the activation, Wright defers to his teammates and makes simple plays, even when given favourable situations. The flashes of manipulation and handling skill appeared less as the season wore on. Improving his push offs through his

Games Tracked: 8 | Minutes Tracked: 124.6



pivots and footwork when defending the cycle could make Wright a depth player. But to become an NHLer, he'll have to improve his mechanical foundation by building upon the flashes of projectable offence.

## Game Reports

**Mitchell Brown:** April 26th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Wright isn't making many skilled plays out there, but he's smart. He jumps into the rush regularly, pushing back defenders in the process. The handling and skating prevent him from making skilled plays after getting the puck, but

he seems to play more of a simple, offensive zone-extending game with possession.

Defence remains the most exciting part of his game. He establishes his gap early, then guides the attack to the outside. Times his engagement at the point of least resistance. Even when he's making up ground, he still influences the puck

carrier's options. He's not a candidate for our board, but NHL interest is warranted.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 27th, 2022

Moose Jaw Warriors vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Not much from Wright in this outing. He's a relatively bland skill player: point shots, D-to-D passes, only uses the outside line. He's a sturdy defender, combining projectable defensive skating with a tight off-puck gap to great effect. Killed several plays deeper in the zone, too. Doesn't over-commit or reach in. If he has an NHL dimension, it's defence. But I fear it won't be enough.

**Mitchell Brown:** February 18th, 2022

Saskatoon Blades vs. Red Deer Rebels - WHL

Wright was trying to make plays in this game. Didn't succeed, but he delayed, cutback, and looked for teammates up the middle. The upright stance prevents him from exploding out of his cutbacks – instead, he has to use multiple to find a bit of space. Too many passes end up behind his target or compromise their pass reception.

The skating also impacts his defensive game at a bit, but he's mostly a detailed rush defender. Pivots and mirroring footwork leave him chasing, but he angles and gets stops inside the neutral zone. And even when he's beat, his routes prevent access to the net. He's an intelligent defender with some flashes of skill, but it might not be enough to make the NHL.

**Mitchell Brown:** November 6th, 2021

Prince Albert Raiders vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

A skillful game from Wright. In transition, he delayed and let the F1 fly past him, before hitting a teammate up the ice. He even tried to manipulate incoming pressure. In the offensive zone, he proactively recognized space and activated, one time leading to a scoring chance. One stickhandling sequence where he cut through everyone. He's a confident NZ defender who eliminates off-puck threats with proficiency. He was so good at removing his attacker that the puck carrier didn't have options. Mechanically, he's pretty weak with the puck. I wonder what the ultimate ceiling is, but I think he has an NHL mind. Probably a fringe prospect.

**Mitchell Brown:** October 13th, 2021

Brandon Wheat Kings vs. Saskatoon Blades - WHL

Zero offence from Wright in this game, but he was still good. Turned a DZ break up into a chance with a pass straight up the middle. Didn't play every rush perfectly, but his footwork's already there. He uses c-cuts and heel pushes to generate momentum and angle out attackers. Too passive the odd time, but still manages to get the stop deeper in the zone. Closes space quickly and knows the next play. Rudimentary handling, but he tries to manipulate and weight shift. Eye deception in there, too. Overhanded the puck in one sequence. Scans for threats off-puck, seems quite refined defensively at this stage. Skill is limited, probably at the lower end of the NHL. Defence is a clearly strength. P





Rank



Grade



Skating



Transitions



Hands



Tracking



Post



Depth

# TY YOUNG

G | PRINCE GEORGE COUGARS

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. SEP. 11, 2004  
WEIGHT 183 CATCHES LEFT

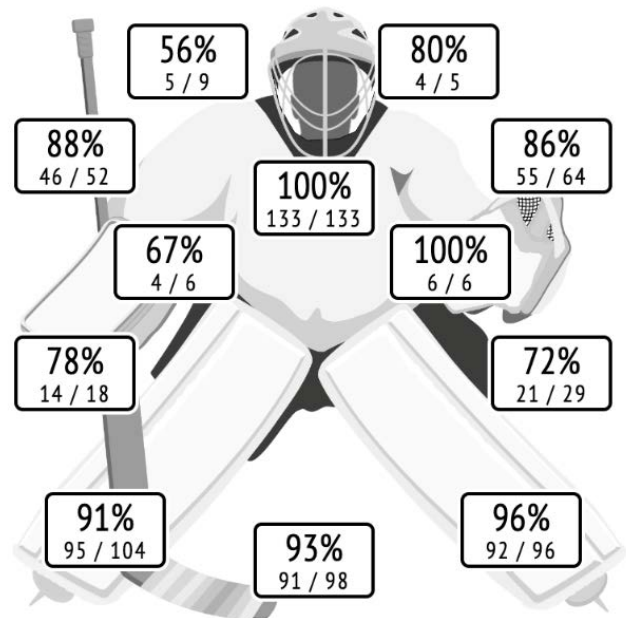
LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
WHL	23	3.50	.899	0
AJHL	17	3.38	.918	1

## Scouting Report

NHL scouts were treated to a pair of contrasts from the Prince George Cougar's crease in this year's draft. While Tyler Brennan is the perfect example of "if you can stop the puck, anything goes" behind the Cougars porous defence, Ty Young offered proof that he can keep his technique looking impressive and his movements timely, even when things have fallen apart in front of him.

Young isn't afraid to move to the top of his crease and get a little aggressive in the face of oncoming traffic, although he doesn't necessarily try to challenge shooters to the point where he leaves an open back door for opponents to take advantage of. Great at staying on his feet and recovering without looking frantic or erratic, he plays like he takes up more of the net than he does; were his birthday even a week later, pushing him into the 2023 Draft Class instead, he'd likely be headlining the North American group in-goal with the way he's been progressing.

There's still a bit of a question mark when it comes to whether or not he's got the top-tier agility it takes to really thrive behind a more porous defensive structure, and he still needs to do some cleaning up when it comes to his cross-ice movement tracking (although, as mentioned in the



report about Brennan, it's entirely possible that's simply a byproduct of his environment). But overall, there's enough to like about his game to make it worth a team's while to add him to their draft board if they're looking to stock up on goaltenders throughout their pro system in the next 2-3 years.



Rank



Skating



Transitions



Hands



Grade



Tracking



Post



Depth

# IVAN ZHIGALOV

G | SHERBROOKE PHOENIX

HEIGHT 6'3" D.O.B. APR. 30, 2003  
WEIGHT 161 CATCHES RIGHT

LEAGUE	GP	GAA	SV%	SO
QMJHL	42	2.84	.892	0

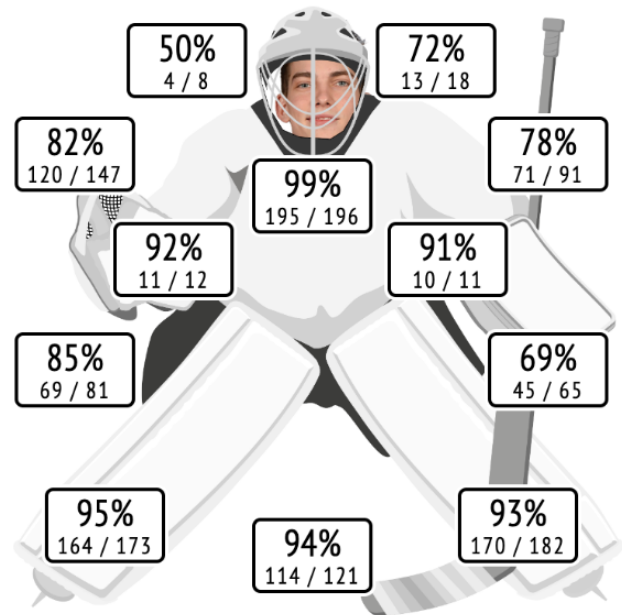
## Scouting Report

There's at least one QMJHL goalie every year who forces scouts to ponder whether they trust their eyes or the numbers, and Ivan Zhigalov is the perfect example of that in the 2022 NHL Draft.

Nothing about his statistical profile is all that remarkable. Zhigalov is a 19-year-old re-entry with an .892 for the Sherbrooke Phoenix whose first year of eligibility wasn't that great either. The tape, however, is far more interesting. The Belarusian goaltender appears far more compelling to the eye, showcasing the occasional flash of fluidity and technical inconsistency. When he hits a rhythm, Zhigalov can look nearly unstoppable; he's quick on both his knees and his feet and effectively moves across the crease without overcommitting on depth.

But when he can't quite get rolling smoothly, Zhigalov's game is riddled with seemingly-simple errors that frustrate scouts as he lets pucks slip under elbows and between his pads and the ice.

He isn't exactly a grade-A prospect for that very reason, and he offered up too small of a sample size during his last



season overseas to get a true feel for just how much work still needs to be done. But overall, the raw components of his game all look like a sturdy foundation for coaches to build upon, should they want to invest the time.