

HOCKEY DRAFTOLOGY 2009

A collective presentation of
**SPORTSOLOGY,
CARD CORNER CLUB,
THE FDH LOUNGE &
FANTASYDRAFTHelp.COM**



June 19, 2009

Edited by Russ Cohen & Rick Morris

Welcome to the most comprehensive pro hockey draft/offseason guide available today!

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The day has finally come! Two of the most creative new media sports entities in existence today have joined forces to bring you the ultimate guide to the 2009 NHL Entry Draft and offseason.

In these pages, you'll read interviews with top young stars. These question-and-answer sessions will provide you insights about the stars of the not-too-distant future. Plus, our player features, outstanding photography, prospect analysis and organizational assessments deliver a well-rounded window on the proceedings.

As an added bonus, you can get an early jump on next year's hockey pool with a look at how players fared according to the "Ultimate Quantitative Baseline" statistic in 2008-09! Enjoy your reading and remember the forces who came together for this publication: Sportsology, Card Corner Club, The FDH Lounge and FantasyDrafthelp.com.

Draft Thoughts and Profiles

By Russ Cohen

This draft is pretty loaded, and if you hear otherwise, people just aren't paying attention. I have interviewed some players that will go anywhere from the first round on down and have scouted others. Here are my thoughts on some of the top picks not in any particular order.

Ryan Ellis – 5-10, 180 - Defense – He has a great shot up the gut. He's very advanced at all facets of the game. Size be damned! He has terrific hockey sense. This blueliner will do anything he can to keep the puck in the zone and more. He is a clutch scorer. He was the OHL's best postseason point producer from the blue line and he won the OHL Defenseman of the Year. He should be a top-ten pick.



Likely #1 overall pick John Tavares
Picture courtesy of Feldman/Sportsology

Matt Duchene – 5-11, 200 – Center – This youngster has blazing speed, perfect body mechanics and a laser of a shot, but at his size

he won't be able to muscle in goals the same way that Tavares will be able to do. This kid plays in all situations and can outrun OHL defenseman, but let's see how he does at the next level. He has a pro slapper and he should be a top scorer. He should go third overall.

John Tavares — 6-0, 198 – Center – He looked better than the previous times that I had seen him when he played in the last WJC. Lets face it, he wasn't challenged enough in the OHL, and maybe getting traded to London helped that a bit, but in this tournament he was an absolute sniper. He was terrific at face-offs, and he scored in the clutch and played a very good two-way game. He was sensational around the net. I think he will be the top pick in this year's draft and he will be a marketable player for the Islanders unless they make the mistake of trading the pick. Remember this: Luc Robitaille was once criticized for his skating and he is a future Hall of Famer.

Victor Hedman – 6-6, 212 – Defense - He is my choice for the second overall pick. He had a shoulder injury in the '09 U-20 World Junior Championships, but he showed that he was still a precision passer. He moves extremely well for a big man. He wasn't an offensive force, but you could see flashes, and he was the most impressive blueliner that I saw hit the ice. He had a cheap-shot punch that didn't get him a penalty, which shows that he's already getting the star treatment. I think he will take longer to develop than Tavares and the Canadian is a more marketable player. Generally speaking, teams near the bottom usually need some help in that area.

Magnus Pääjärvi-Svensson - 6-1, 201 – Left Wing – He has superior puck control and he attacks the offensive zone with amazing stick skills. He has some very flashy goals because of his great acceleration and drive to the net. He does lack some toughness and he will need that when he plays in the NHL. With that said, I think he will be picked somewhere in the 6-10 range rather than the top-five.

Evander Kane - 6-0, 185 – Left Wing – This was a big year for this kid in the WHL and the World Juniors. He's a good skater and a good fighter. He has good puck skills and he has terrific on-ice awareness. A very important aspect of his game is the fact that he can win battles in the crease. This winger is an intelligent kid.

Brayden Schenn – 6-0- 195 – Center – His numbers keep going up. Schenn is now synonymous with tough thanks to Luke's solid first year with the Leafs. This forward is good on both sides of the puck. He will improve his skating and he has good hockey sense. He will play in the crease and lay the big hit. Schenn is an excellent passer and he's hard to cover. I'll be surprised if he's not a top-five pick.

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Draft Thoughts and Profiles

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Oliver Ekman-Larsson – 6-3, 180- Defense – This blueliner was a plus-44 this year in a men's league and he's a plus-55 for his career. That's impressive no matter how you slice it. Even if his teams were solid, he still excelled and he will be an impressive NHLer after he learns the North American game.

Jared Cowen – 6-5, 220 – Defense – This big defenseman isn't a great skater but he covers his area well. He can be a shutdown defenseman. He has great reach! I like the fact that he has a shot that he can get on net. The knee injury he suffered this past season shouldn't hamper his draft position. He's still a top-ten pick in my eyes.

Nazim Kadri – 6-0, 180 – Center – This talented forward trains with Matt Hackett (the #1 ranked Domestic goaltender). The netminder is faster on land! Kadri is an excellent skater who has terrific moves. He's got great Memorial Cup experience. He has terrific hockey sense and he's a very smart player. You notice him on the ice and he's a player who can make a play in a pinch. His previous broken jaw shouldn't set him back in this draft.

Scott Glennie – 6-1, 185 – Right Wing - He's a 'Pegger and there are a lot of them in the league. He has a solid two-way game. Glennie can win one-on-one battles to get to the net and score and that's what I like the most about him. His excellent skating makes him a top 20 pick.

Zack Kassian – 6-3-211 – Right Wing – Kassian is very aware of where the puck is and he moves well without the puck. He can lay the smack down with the best of them.

John Moore – 6-3, 190 – Defense – This USHL standout had 28 interviews in 48 hours due to NCAA rules. He's committed to Colorado College but will the organization that drafts him ask him to play in juniors? It's the most compelling storyline outside of the draft. He's a clutch goal scorer, and he possesses good puck skills. The rear guard is an excellent skater and he's excellent on the power play. He plays a solid two-way game. He's a good passer and a solid puck mover. Knows where to go on the ice and he's a real wild card. He should go in the top 15.

Dmitry Kulikov – 6-0. 195 – Defense - He changed his hair style and I like it much better. That could move him up a few slots: ask Colton Gillies. He helped Russia win Bronze in '09 WJC. He could drop if teams don't think he will sign right away. He was the 08-09 Defensive Rookie of the Year, the Rookie of the Year, the Best Professional Prospect and Defenseman of the Year by the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League.

David Rundblad – 6-3, 190 – Defense – The Swede is a good passer, a solid skater and he has terrific offensive instincts, plus he's smooth. He's got top-20 written all over him.

Jacob Josefson – 6-0, 190 - Center – He's an excellent skater and he wore a letter in '09 in the Swedish Elite League. He can take a hit, give a hit and he's a great puckhandler with a solid shot.

Louis Leblanc – 6-1, 180 – Right Wing – He's fast and he has an aerodynamic look to him. He's a decisive player. He stays with the play, gets dirty, looks for his teammates first and can score as well.

Drew Shore – 6-3, 195– C/RW – This U.S. product is a big strong kid, he's a good skater and a big part of the Gold Medal U-18 squad. He's going to Denver University and his parents went there as well and are law school grads! Should make the top 20.

Tim Erixon – 6-3, 190 - Defense – Former NHLer Jan Erixon is his dad and he was known for his defense. The younger Erixon can be a terrific defensive stalwart in the league.

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Draft Thoughts and Profiles

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Dylan Olsen - 6-2.5, 207 - Defense – He will attend Minnesota-Duluth this fall. There's never been a defenseman from the Alberta Junior Hockey League taken in the first round of the NHL Draft and Dylan has the opportunity to be the first. He is an offensive defenseman.

Landon Ferraro – 5-11, 175 – Center – He's a bit small, but so was his dad Ray who played 1,258 games in the NHL. Landon is a good skater who possesses great hockey sense and terrific speed. He should be a first-rounder.

Links to Highlight Videos of Top Prospects

Truly, we live in a wondrous day and age when videos of so many top players are readily available on the Internet. Here are links to some of the best players of the '09 Draft in action. Thanks to the NHL Network, producer of all of these videos.

Matt Duchene

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTQU6R_TQAM&feature=channel_page

Victor Hedman

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZr0oVdF4Fw&feature=related>

Nazem Kadri

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jRmHDjaoQDo&feature=channel_page

Evander Kane

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74anrMrmttw&feature=channel_page

Magnus PaajarviSvensson

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LN9bWOBRqM&feature=channel_page

Brayden Schenn

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_k58z91z9g&feature=channel_page

Jordan Schroeder

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FvjesXc8rvU&feature=channel_page

John Tavares

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATi2RypOHMM>

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NHL Prospect Profile: Jordan Schroeder

By Russ Cohen

Jordan Schroeder will soon be a household name once he gets called to the podium in Montreal at the June NHL Entry Draft. This year was his first NCAA season with the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers where he had 45 points in 35 games. To put that into perspective, he was one point behind Ryan Stoa (drafted by Colorado in 2005) for the team lead. It's hard enough to get ice time in a program like that, but to be this prolific in his first college season proves that he is something special.

The early knock on this forward was he was an assist man and he couldn't finish. In the 2009 World Junior Championships, he showed that he could play in the slot, even though he is 5-9, 180 pounds. He also showed a very quick release which got him quite a few tallies besides setting up some nice goals. He has soft hands and tremendous hockey sense. With a little seasoning, he can be a terrific two-way player.

"In Jordan, you have one of the best all around players in the world today in his birth year," said Team USA Asst. Executive Dir./Hockey Operations Jim Johansson.

Schroeder was on a line with Flyers first-rounder James van Riemsdyk, and Colin Wilson (Nashville), who just won the Frozen Four with the Boston University Terriers. Going into this year's tournament, JVR was excited about reuniting this potent line.

"Last year we had a great amount of success," van Riemsdyk said about his linemates.

Schroeder came up through the NTDP, and there is a laundry list of great players with that same training on their resume.

"Being in Ann Arbor in the National Team Development Program, it taught me a lot about hockey and a lot about life too," Schroeder said honestly. "It's brought me to both ends of the ice, defensively and offensively. I've learned a lot through it. Playing International hockey, you get a feel for that too, so I'm pretty comfortable with it."

Like most kids from Prior Lake, Minnesota, he has a lot of pride when he puts on the Team USA sweater.

"It's definitely an honor to put on that sweater every night. I've had some bad experiences with it on and I've had some success," he said. "Ever since I heard about the program and ever since I watched the Olympics growing up, it was kind of a dream to put on that USA jersey and represent your country."

Schroeder is virtually a lock to be a top-ten pick (5th ranked N.A. skater according to CSS) in Montreal this coming June. But nothing is guaranteed; just ask Angelo Esposito. There is a chance this kid could be picked higher if a GM out there feels like he is a "must have" player for their organization.

This soon-to-be-NHLer will be watching the Olympics intently this coming winter and someday he hopes to make that roster as well.

"It would be an amazing honor and definitely a dream come true," Schroeder said with real excitement in his voice.

Keep an eye out for this exciting player, because he should turn pro in the next 2-3 years.

THE FDH LOUNGE ULTIMATE LINKS PAGE

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NHL Prospect Profile: Chris Brown

By Russ Cohen

Chris Brown is a draft-eligible forward who hails from Flower Mound, Texas, a small town outside of Dallas. He plays a rugged brand of hockey and he hopes to make it to the NHL someday.

“I will be in Montreal,” he quickly stated. “I think I will just be on cloud nine just to be able to go to the NHL Draft. It’s been a dream of mine ever since I was a little kid, it’s every hockey players’ dream, to get drafted and play in the NHL.”

Team USA recently won a historic game against Russia when they won the World U-18 Championships with a 5-0 rout. It just so happens that this Texan played in that game, which was USA Hockey’s first world title win on U.S. soil since 1980. But Brown didn’t just play in this game, he scored the team’s fourth goal! Did he think the game was over after that?

“The funny thing is no, we didn’t, because in Pool play because we were up I think two or three goals and we ended up losing to Russia,” Brown said. “It gave us a little comfort room to get that momentum in the third period. We made sure we just stuck to our system and played hard throughout the game.”

Sometimes players like to check out their work on the Jumbotron. Was this the case for this budding prospect?

“This past weekend I did, but it’s because we actually had a Jumbotron with instant replay,” he chuckled. “It was something new and kind of fun to see. I mostly try to stay focused. If I make a big hit, I can see it because I lived it.”

There were a ton of scouts at this tournament, which was held in Fargo, North Dakota, but the center stuck to his game and enjoyed the sold-out crowds!

“It’s indescribable. We trained really hard the past two years. We became like a little family ... what better way to beat the Russians on home soil again. The city of Fargo was going through a rough time. It was great for them and it gave them a little life and they knew there was hope and we appreciate the support for coming out to every game.”

Before Brown steps up to the podium for his new NHL team, he decided on a college, and now he will suit up for the University of Michigan next season.

“When I was little, my dad turned on the television and it was a Michigan-Minnesota game. I was just in awe. I had never seen anything like that before. When I saw the helmets and the jerseys, I thought that was cool and new and I knew that one day I wanted to play for them. When the opportunity came, it was a no-brainer,” said Brown, who is the 30th ranked North American Skater according to CSS.

This pivot watches the Dallas Stars regularly, and the fact that Marty Turco and Brendan Morrison are also Michigan alums was a bonus for him.

“When they opened the ACC, back when I think maybe I was a squirt,” he recalled. “I actually sat next to Marty Turco up in the stands for the ribbon cutting. It’s kind of ironic, Michigan, kind of a connection there. He’s a great guy. He was giving me elbows while I was sitting there. It was a fun day. I hope I can play either with him or against him and give him that reminder that ‘hey I was that kid sitting next to you’”.

The captain of the Stars is a player he patterns himself after.

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NHL Prospect Profile: Chris Brown

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“I think I can give them an edge. A power forward edge. I like to use my body to its advantage. I have a good shot and good speed and good vision on the ice,” the 6-3, 200 pound prospect said confidently.

“Even though he’s not as big, Brenden Morrow is one of my all-time favorite players. He plays that power forward position and he’s obviously got great leadership. He does what he needs to do to help the team win. Night in and night out.”

Many times, scouts are looking to see what a kid is made of on the inside. Can he lead or he is a follower? The right response on and off the ice can ensure a solid draft position.

“I had moments where I can be vocal or lead by example. I was not put in a leadership role but I feel everybody has a leadership role on the team. I have been a captain before on previous teams. My captains this year and in the past few years have been great and they have really stepped up,” said the recent gold medal winner.

His favorite food is steak and his favorite iPhone applications are the “wooh” button and the “cowbell” app.

Look for this future leader to get drafted late in the first round or sometime early in the second round.

THE FDH LOUNGE MULTIMEDIA MAGAZINE: Nothing is off-topic

Among the hundreds of topics thus far: Karl Rove ... tunnels under Las Vegas ... Flava Flav ... Michael Vick ... the comeback of the KGB ... Summerslam ... the Big Ten Network ... Mitt Romney ... Mark Shapiro & Larry Dolan ... Sarah Palin ... LeBron James ... Ron Paul ... a Hamas boy band ... C.C. Sabathia ... Pat Robertson ... Ohio State/Michigan ... Vladimir Putin ... NFL Sunday Ticket ... Jim Tressel ... Madden '09 ... waterboarding ... Roid-ger Clemens ... NHL Winter Classic ... 2009 NFL Draft profiles ... Hillary Clinton ... all-star selections ... Juno ... hottest female cartoon characters ... Stone Temple Pilots reunion ... Bill Belichick ... Bill Clinton ... Jason Kidd ... Tony Bruno ... Chris Berman ... Chris Benoit ... Pao Gasol ... Berkeley city council hippies ... Bobby Knight ... Shaquille O'Neal ... Pistol Pete Maravich ... the Super Bowl ... Super Tuesday ... WrestleMania ... open-wheel racing ... James Dobson ... Looney Toons ... Barack Obama ... Grammy Awards ... John McCain ... NBA All-Star Weekend ... American Gangster ... George W. Bush ... the Daytona 500 ... old-school pro wrestling ... Dennis Kucinich ... Academy Awards ... Kosovo ... NBA trading deadline ... Bobby Jindal ... Vince McMahon, Jr. ... Brett Favre ... rating the greatest quarterbacks ... Floyd Mayweather ... geopolitics roundup ... timewasting video clips ... imagining Michael Scott of “The Office” moderating a presidential debate ... rating baseball’s best players by position ... **TheFDHLounge.com**

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NHL Prospect Profile: Matt Hackett

By Russ Cohen

Plymouth Whalers goaltender Matt Hackett is a top-notch prospect in the Ontario Hockey League who sported an eye-popping .913 save percentage this season and a .930 in the playoffs. A lot of scouts and pundits have paid close attention to Central Scouting's #1 ranked domestic goaltender, and now his life will soon change forever once he finally hears his name called in Montreal at the 2009 NHL Entry Draft this coming June 26th and 27th.

"It's nice to be ranked," he said in an understated way. "Our team had a solid year and I have them to thank for a lot of my accomplishments this year. Last year was my draft year and I was passed over, so I had a chip on my shoulder this year. It has always been my dream to get drafted and play in the NHL. It will definitely be an amazing moment for me."

Hackett, 19, loves playing in front of the loyal fans in Plymouth, Michigan.

"Our fans are pretty crazy and it's a good atmosphere there," said Hackett, who expects to come back next season.

A fair amount of top prospects hail from the OHL and two of them require some special attention.

London's John Tavares is a devastating scorer who is fully capable of dishing off for a goal every time he touches the puck. He is especially dangerous in the crease, and that doesn't go unnoticed by this netminder.

"It's definitely in the back of your mind and you say 'uh oh' you just have to be more careful. He's a sneaky player," he added.

Matt Duchene's speed is his best attribute, and Hackett is very aware of that when he's facing the Brampton Battalion.

"Yeah, definitely. My goalie coach, Stan Matwijiw, shows me what their tendencies are. It's fun and he's definitely a very talented player, so it's always fun when he's coming down the ice on you," said Hackett.

During the summer his uncle Jeff, a former NHLer and current Colorado Avalanche goaltending coach, works with his nephew to help him get to the next level.

"Since I was 13 he brought me out with all of the NHLers that are around town here and just on ice he would be there once or twice a week. He's been a great influence on me, and he has basically made me the goalie that I am today," he said with pride. "When I was younger, I went to his games in Chicago a lot and, of course, I went to his games in Toronto."

Jeff was drafted in the second round, 34th overall in 1987. It's possible Matt could be drafted earlier than that, and if he is, will he nudge his uncle a bit?

"Yeah I might. I'm not too worried about where I go but I might give him a little nudge," he said honestly.

At 6-3, 175 he's a big butterfly goaltender who takes his off-ice conditioning very seriously.

"Last year I put on 11 pounds and this year I hope to do the same. My trainer and I, along with Nazem Kadri (the 11th ranked Domestic Skater according to Central Scouting), trained almost everyday, maybe five, six days a week. We are in the gym doing either legs and arms and lots of core exercises. Then on Saturday we go to the track and then Sunday we have the day off."

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NHL Prospect Profile: Matt Hackett

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And when questioned who was the faster athlete? He laughed and then he said, "I don't know? It goes back and forth; he's a good athlete. But I'd say I'm a tad faster than he is."

The lanky goalie has a difficult food challenge that most of us would love to have.

"You try and eat healthy and trying to put on just muscle, I don't want to put on any fat, but yeah I'm eating a lot right now," he said casually, and then he talked about the dinner he had the other night. "A few potatoes, a big steak, vegetables, lots of bread, and for dessert I think I had four tarts. Then I came home and had a protein shake that's like 12,000 calories. It's hard to force it down."

Jeremy Smith helped him a lot this year until he was traded to the Niagra IceDogs and that's when Hackett had his chance to shine.

"My backup is a good friend of mine, Scott Wedgewood, and he was now getting a chance too. I was ecstatic when I heard he was traded. Smitty was a good friend to me. I love playing and I hate sitting on the bench," said the competitor.

Like most young backstops he had a little trouble with his rebound control last season but this year was another story.

"Last year I was having trouble with it and the game seemed faster this year it's slowed down a lot and controlling rebounds has gotten a lot easier," Hackett stated. "Getting the pucks to the corners, and just catching pucks with my glove and clearing them with my chest.

"My 'D' did a great job all year. They did a great job of clearing the rebounds if I had any and they kept the shots to the outside."

When his defense performs well, does he take them out to dinner like a quarterback does with his offensive lineman in football?

"We don't get paid that much yet. I'll get them something but we only get paid \$50 bucks a week."

Hackett is a special player who has a bright future ahead of him.

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NHL Prospect Profile: Kenny Ryan

By Russ Cohen

Kenny Ryan is a 6-0, 204 or so pound right winger who loves his position, has a solid work ethic and likes everything about the Detroit Red Wings.

"I live about 45 minutes from Ann Arbor, so my family and friends get to come up and go to the games, which is always nice walking out after a game and seeing them," Ryan said. "On certain lines, you might have to be that player that does the dirty work, and if that has to be me I am more than willing to do it."

Ryan is a goal scorer who can also set up his teammates and he is certainly striving to be a complete player.

"Scoring goals is always fun, I won't lie. It's something that you always try to do, to get the big goal, but setting up your guys with a nice pass is a good feeling too," he added. "I haven't really thought about what I like better, but I definitely like scoring goals."

One of his favorite Detroit Red Wings has certainly impressed this prospect in more ways than one.

"I love watching Pavel Datsyuk and what he does. Obviously Henrik Zetterberg too. I like them all. He (Datsyuk) could get over 100 points a year, but he's so unselfish in how he plays. I was kind of surprised that this was his first Selke Trophy nomination. Obviously, he deserves it."

Ryan is like any other high school kid who hates cafeteria food, so he cherishes his lunch break and the usual lunch spot.

"Usually our team goes to Brueggers (a bagel place) rather than eating high school food. It's nice to be able to go out for 45 minutes and grab some food. I haven't been in the cafeteria the whole year," he said proudly.

This right winger understands his position and doesn't mind breaking it down for inquiring minds.

"The hardest thing about the position is when you are breaking out of the zone, sometimes the D don't have a lot of time to bring the puck around. You have to take it off the boards, or take a hit to make a play. The best thing is when the defenseman do have time and they start leaving the zone a little faster than usual so you can get speed and come down on your off-wing, which would be my left wing. Otherwise, you can come down on the right wing, but you have time with the puck and I like playing it a lot."

Ryan has committed to Boston College but he had a tough decision to make.

"It came down to Boston College, Notre Dame and Michigan. I have two brothers, and they both went to Michigan. My dad went to Notre Dame. I kind of wanted to do my own thing. When I went out there (to BC) I visited with Jerry York (the head coach) and he's just an unbelievable guy and coach and I felt that it would be the right fit for me," said Ryan.

"Growing up in Michigan, the big rivalry is Michigan vs. Michigan St. or Notre Dame, but this will be fun getting into the BC vs. BU rivalry. I have never been to one of their games or the Beanpot."

Like any teenager, he loves technology and has a family member to thank for helping him to upgrade his phone.

"I just got a Blackberry, because my brother just got one so I got the free one," he said with excitement. "There was no other way I could get one unless I got it for free."

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NHL Prospect Profile: Kenny Ryan

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And when asked what his favorite game or application was, he quickly answered back with, "I like Brick Breaker."

Ryan was a member of the World U-18 gold medal winning team and he has some lifelong memories that he took from that tournament.

"It was pretty unbelievable, throughout the tournament we lost one game against Russia, 6-5....Just being on home ice and everybody has an American flag in the crowd, and they are all cheering for you, it's definitely a great feeling," the prospect said with pride. Then he talked about whether or not USA vs. Russia is still a rivalry.

"I would say so. We played against Russia over there in the Five Nations Tournament and we ended up in a bench-clearing brawl. So I think there is still a rivalry against us with us beating them this year."

Ryan has also played overseas and has been booed many times but it didn't bother him in the least.

"Guys in the locker room, we love it, it's us against everybody else," said Ryan.

In regards to the 2009 NHL Entry Draft, he's trying to keep a calm demeanor.

"I tried to stay away from looking at it too much. Hopefully, I will be drafted. Wherever I do get drafted, I will be very happy about it. I think I will be there my family really wants to go. I'm hoping to go anywhere between the first and third or fourth round and that would be unbelievable."

Look for Ryan to go somewhere in the second or third round.

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**Sportsology
Assessment
of
Prospect
Strength by
Organization**

- 1 LA Kings
- 2 St Louis
- 3 Montreal
- 4 Nashville
- 5 Washington
- 6 Columbus
- 7 Philadelphia
- 8 Atlanta
- 9 NY Rangers
- 10 Detroit
- 11 Boston
- 12 Buffalo
- 13 Ottawa
- 14 Florida
- 15 Edmonton
- 16 Vancouver
- 17 Phoenix
- 18 Carolina
- 19 Calgary
- 20 San Jose
- 21 Colorado
- 22 Chicago
- 23 Anaheim
- 24 Tampa Bay
- 25 Dallas
- 26 Minnesota
- 27 Toronto
- 28 Pittsburgh
- 29 New Jersey
- 30 NY Islanders

**Sportsology
Assessment of
Priorities by
Organization**

NOTE: These priorities are in terms of overall organizational strength and take into account potential loss of unrestricted free agents.

- Anaheim: LW, C
- Atlanta: C, LW, RW
- Boston: LW, RW
- Buffalo: G, D, LW
- Calgary: LW, D
- Carolina: D, RW
- Chicago: LW, D
- Colorado: G, LW, D
- Columbus: D, RW
- Dallas: RW, G
- Detroit: RW, LW
- Edmonton: G, RW
- Florida: D, RW, C
- Los Angeles: RW, LW
- Minnesota: RW, LW, D
- Montreal: D, RW, LW
- Nashville: LW, RW
- New Jersey: D, LW, RW
- New York Islanders: G, RW, D
- New York Rangers: LW, RW, D
- Ottawa: RW, LW
- Philadelphia: D, RW
- Phoenix: D, RW
- Pittsburgh: RW, D
- St. Louis: LW, D
- San Jose: RW, D
- Tampa Bay: LW, C, D
- Toronto: D, LW, RW, C
- Vancouver: LW, C
- Washington: LW, C

**FantasyDrafthelp.com
Assessment of
Priorities by
Organization**

NOTE: These priorities are strictly in terms of strengths and weaknesses among prospects.

- Anaheim: LW
- Atlanta: D, RW
- Boston: RW, D
- Buffalo: RW, LW, C
- Calgary: RW, D
- Carolina: RW, D
- Chicago: LW, C
- Colorado: G, LW
- Columbus: D
- Dallas: G, RW
- Detroit: RW, LW, C
- Edmonton: RW, LW
- Florida: LW, G
- Los Angeles: LW
- Minnesota: G, D, LW
- Montreal: RW, C
- Nashville: RW, LW
- New Jersey: D, C, G
- New York Islanders: D, G
- New York Rangers: LW
- Ottawa: RW, D
- Philadelphia: C, G
- Phoenix: D, G
- Pittsburgh: RW, G
- St. Louis: LW, RW
- San Jose: D
- Tampa Bay: RW, C
- Toronto: D, RW
- Vancouver: C, D
- Washington: D, C

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Demonstration: Importance of top-level players

As a team sport by and large incapable of devolving into the often-selfish "Me Ball" of the NBA, the NHL is rightfully held up as exemplary of true team play. However, does this tendency devalue the effect that true mega-stars have on the ability to win titles? FantasyDraft-help.com decided to find out, in an attempt to ascertain exactly how important it is for teams to hit on their picks in the NHL Entry Draft. First, we ranked the top players in our opinion in the last quarter century into three tiers, the top five, the second five and the third five. Then, we took a look at which teams had captured the Stanley Cup during that period of time and looked for any correlations. The results were very revealing. Here's the designation of the best players on each tier, in no particular order on each tier:

- A) Wayne Gretzky, Mario Lemieux, Nicklas Lidstrom, Patrick Roy, Martin Brodeur
- B) Steve Yzerman, Mark Messier, Ray Bourque, Dominik Hasek, Jaromir Jagr
- C) Joe Sakic, Ed Belfour, Brett Hull, Paul Coffey, Al MacInnis

And here's who's won the Stanley Cup over the past 25 years:

1984: Edmonton A (Gretzky), B (Messier)*
1985: Edmonton A (Gretzky), B (Messier)
1986: Montreal A (Roy)
1987: Edmonton A (Gretzky), B (Messier)
1988: Edmonton A (Gretzky), B (Messier)
1989: Calgary C (MacInnis)
1990: Edmonton B (Messier)
1991: Pittsburgh A (Lemieux) B (Jagr)
1992: Pittsburgh A (Lemieux) B (Jagr)
1993: Montreal A (Roy)
1994: New York Rangers B (Messier)
1995: New Jersey A (Brodeur)**
1996: Colorado A (Roy) B (Sakic)
1997: Detroit A (Lidstrom) B (Yzerman)
1998: Detroit A (Lidstrom) B (Yzerman)
1999: Dallas C (Belfour) C (Hull)
2000: New Jersey A (Brodeur)
2001: Colorado A (Roy) B (Sakic) B (Bourque)
2002: Detroit A (Lidstrom) B (Yzerman) B (Hasek) C (Hull)***
2003: New Jersey A (Brodeur)
2004: Tampa Bay****
2006: Carolina****
2007: Anaheim**
2008: Detroit A (Lidstrom) B (Hasek)*****
2009: Pittsburgh****

* The '80s Edmonton teams had several other players who would have rated as "Honorable Mention."

** Scott Niedermayer, who won Cups with New Jersey and Anaheim, would have rated as "Honorable Mention," as would Chris Pronger with Anaheim and Scott Stevens (as well as potentially Brian Rafalski) with New Jersey.

*** To properly appreciate the greatness of the 2002 Red Wings, consider that Luc Robitaille and Chris Chelios would have rated as "Honorable Mention."

**** If this feature was revisited in another decade, Vincent Lecavalier would probably make the cut, with Martin St. Louis probably at least meriting "Honorable Mention." Eric Staal would have a very good chance to make the list at that time also and the Crosby/Malkin/Fleury troika will almost certainly be represented by two if not three players, so this "megastar principle" may yet prove to be the case for the 2004, 2006 and 2009 champions as well.

***** Neither Hasek nor Chelios skated for Detroit in the Finals.

So essentially, it's every bit as important to have high-end impact players in the NHL as it is in the NBA. Only eight times since 1984 has a team won a title without an "A" caliber player (again, not counting the 2009 Penguins who will have anywhere between one and three "A" players once this feature is revisited down the road) and also in a minority of cases (12), a team has captured the title without at least two players on this list. So after reading this feature, whether one quibbles a bit or not with the rating of certain players, this much is certain: teamwork matters, and so does coaching, but the high-octane engine of superstar power almost invariably is needed if a team is to hoist Lord Stanley's Cup in the end.

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NHL free agency overview

Coming a year after a thin 2008 free agent crop, the 2009 group will be welcomed by GMs across the league who dream of drastically upgrading their rosters with one great summer. “Nossa”-yelling know-nothings aside, it is clear how much last summer’s marquee free agent Marian Hossa brought to the Detroit Red Wings for at least most of their impressive season. This year, he is joined by a much deeper class of unrestricted free agents examining the possibilities on the market. The jockeying should be very interesting for a number of reasons, not least of which the one involving a lower salary cap than many teams might have anticipated last year at this time. Here is how the different positions rate, from best to worst in terms of potential impact players:

Right Wing: This year, Hossa is one of more than a few great options for teams seeking scoring punch from the right wing. Since there is a good chance that he is staying in Detroit, the plethora of top-notch stars really benefits the rest of the league. How about these names: Marian Gaborik, Martin Havlat, Brian Gionta and Daniel Sedin? There’s also some other decent options who could be envisioned to fill spots on a #2 line under certain circumstances: Nik Antropov, Alexei Kovalev, Petr Sykora and Bill Guerin. There’s also some decent depth players out there like Mikael Samuelsson and David Moss. No question, this position is the deepest and the best this summer.

Defense: Jay Bouwmeester is a rare bird, a high-upside youngster just coming into his own hitting the market at a prime point in his career. Scott Niedermayer is a legit Hall-of-Famer with some gas left in the tank, but he isn’t judged to be very likely to leave Anaheim. The pool of defensemen worthy of skating on a #1 or #2 combo doesn’t stop there: Jordan Leopold, Mike Komisarek, Mattias Ohlund and Rob Blake.

Center: This position and left wing are fairly interchangeable; while there are fewer impact players available here, they should deliver more punch. Henrik Sedin may well end up with his twin bro somewhere once again, and what a great opportunity that would be for a team with sufficient cap room. Mats Sundin proved last year that he was willing to leave Toronto for the right situation and if he decides to keep playing, there are many situations that might stack up nicely for him. Saku Koivu is hard to envision anywhere but Montreal — but as Sundin proved last summer, nothing is forever.

Left Wing: The two most coveted players at this position will be Mike Cammalleri and Erik Cole. Alex Tanguay, intriguing youngster Tomas Kopecky and the venerable Keith Tkachuk will also be judged to have some value.

Goalie: When the two best players available are ones that their own teams have figured that they can live without, that pretty much says it all. Nikolai Khabibulin and Manny Fernandez both still have some good play ahead of themselves, but they are going to benefit greatly from a market that will be insanely distorted in terms of supply and demand. The “Bulin Wall” looks likely to come up a huge financial winner in free agency just like he did last time.

Outside The Box Score

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The Ultimate Fantasy Hockey Statistic

FantasyDrafthelp.com's Ultimate Quantitative Baseline

This is the FantasyDrafthelp.com statistic, the Ultimate Quantitative Baseline, based on the statistical principle of standard deviation from the mean. For defensemen and forwards, the relevant statistics are points, goals, assists, penalty minutes and plus-minus. For goalies, the relevant statistics are wins, shutouts, goals against average and save percentage (with the categories being weighted extra since there is one less). In each category, a spectrum is calculated from the best performance to the worst (on a per-game basis for forwards and defensemen). The numbers in each category are added together to create our statistic. An additional equalizer is injected to apply more points to each player at the positions of scarcer depth. What this stat truly does is to quantify beyond doubt how the stronger and weaker performances in each category add up to the absolute fantasy value for each player. As such, it establishes a baseline for performance that is more comprehensive than anything ever developed. A number over 300 is considered elite. We have listed below the rankings at each position for last season.

Left Wings	UQB	Rk	Centers	UQB	Rk	Right Wings	UQB	Rk	Defensemen	UQB	Rk
Alexander Semin	335	1	Evgeni Malkin	327	1	Marian Hossa	290	1	Mike Green	346	1
Alexander Ovechkin	325	2	Sidney Crosby	307	2	Corey Perry	273	2	Nicklas Lidstrom	265	2
Zach Parise	295	3	Pavel Datsyuk	302	3	Martin Havlat	265	3	Zdeno Chara	257	3
Daniel Sedin	267	4	Derick Brassard	299	4	Bobby Ryan	257	4T	Rob Blake	256	4
Rick Nash	264	5	Ryan Getzlaf	292	5	Jamie Langenbrunner	257	4T	Mark Streit	248	5
Patrik Elias	262	6	Marc Savard	289	6	Jarome Iginla	249	6	Duncan Keith	246	6
Simon Gagne	260	7	Jeff Carter	287	7	Shane Doan	243	7	Dennis Wideman	244	7
Scott Hartnell	259	8	Daniel Briere	282	8	Michael Ryder	238	8T	Brian Rafalski	240	8
Alex Burrows	258	9	Tim Connolly	281	9	David Backes	238	8T	Dan Boyle	239	9
Ilya Kovalchuk	255	10	Mike Richards	280	10	Daniel Alfredsson	233	9	Sheldon Souray	237	10
Henrik Zetterberg	249	11T	Joe Thornton	269	11	Martin St. Louis	231	10	Lubomir Visnovsky	236	11
Sean Avery	249	11T	Nicklas Backstrom	268	12	Ales Hemsky	231	10	Andrei Markov	233	12
Mike Cammalleri	244	13	Henrik Sedin	266	13	Patrick Sharp	229	11	Shea Weber	230	13
Rene Bourque	242	14	Steve Ott	263	14	Devin Setoguchi	228	12	Matt Hunwick	229	14
Alex Tanguay	236	15	David Krejci	261	15	Owen Nolan	227	13	Kevin Bieksa	223	15
David Booth	232	16	Johan Franzen	258	16	Alex Kovalev	225	14	Scott Niedermayer	221	16T
Dany Heatley	231	17T	Phil Kessel	254	17T	Blake Wheeler	224	15	Kimmo Timonen	221	16T
Thomas Vanek	231	17T	Eric Staal	254	17T	Teemu Selanne	223	16	Craig Rivet	216	18
Ray Whitney	228	19	Jamie Lundmark	252	19	Kris Versteeg	221	17	Chris Pronger	214	19
Tomas Holmstrom	225	20T	Patrick Marleau	250	20	Patrick Kane	220	18	Niklas Kronwall	209	20T
Ryan Malone	225	20T	Robert Lang	247	21	Pavol Demitra	214	19	Denis Grebeshkov	209	20T
Milan Michalek	222	22	Jason Arnott	246	22	Brian Gionta	213	20T	Dion Phaneuf	207	22
Ryane Clowe	219	23	Travis Zajac	239	23	Tuomo Ruutu	213	20T	Cameron Barker	206	23
Loui Eriksson	218	24	Jonathan Toews	238	24	Chuck Kobasew	210	22	Steve Montador	205	24
Steve Sullivan	217	25	T.J. Oshie	235	25	Nikolai Zherdev	205	23	Joni Pitkanen	204	25
						Jean-Pierre Dumont	200	24	Paul Martin	203	26
						David Clarkson	199	25T	Bryan McCabe	202	27
						Joffrey Lupul	199	25T	Brian Campbell	201	28
									Anton Babchuk	196	29T
									Filip Kuba	196	29T
									Alexander Edler	195	31
									Keith Ballard	194	32

(Continued on Page 16)

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The Ultimate Fantasy Hockey Statistic

FantasyDrafthelp.com's Ultimate Quantitative Baseline

Goalies	UQB	Rk	Overall Top 50	UQB	Rk	Overall Top 50	UQB	Rk
Steve Mason	360	1	Steve Mason	360	1	Daniel Briere	282	28
Tim Thomas	359	2	Tim Thomas	359	2	Tim Connolly	281	29
Niklas Backstrom	358	3	Niklas Backstrom	358	3	Mike Richards	280	30
Roberto Luongo	354	4	Roberto Luongo	354	4	Martin Brodeur	278	31
Evgeni Nabokov	334	5	Alexander Semin	335	5	Corey Perry	273	32
Cam Ward	330	6	Evgeni Nabokov	334	6	Joe Thornton	269	33T
Pekka Rinne	321	7	Cam Ward	330	7	Scott Clemmensen	269	33T
Tomas Vokoun	312	8	Evgeni Malkin	327	8	Nicklas Backstrom	268	35
Ryan Miller	307	9	Alexander Ovechkin	325	9	Daniel Sedin	267	36
Chris Mason	304	10	Pekka Rinne	321	10	Jonathan Quick	266	37T
Henrik Lundqvist	303	11	Tomas Vokoun	312	11	Henrik Sedin	266	37T
Jonas Hiller	284	12T	Sidney Crosby	307	12T	Martin Havlat	265	39
Nikolai Khabibulin	284	12T	Ryan Miller	307	12T	Rick Nash	264	40
Ty Conklin	283	14T	Chris Mason	304	14	Steve Ott	263	41
Marc-Andre Fleury	283	14T	Henrik Lundqvist	303	15	Patrik Elias	262	42
Miikka Kiprusoff	283	14T	Pavel Datsyuk	302	16	David Krejci	261	43
Martin Brodeur	278	17	Derick Brassard	299	17	Simon Gagne	260	44
Scott Clemmensen	269	18	Zach Parise	295	18	Scott Hartnell	259	45
Jonathan Quick	266	19	Ryan Getzlaf	292	19	Johan Franzen	258	46T
Brian Boucher	253	20	Marian Hossa	290	20	Alex Burrows	258	46T
Martin Biron	251	21	Marc Savard	289	21	Bobby Ryan	257	48T
Cristobal Huet	245	22	Jeff Carter	287	22	Jamie Langenbrunner	257	48T
Craig Anderson	244	23	Jonas Hiller	284	23T	Ilya Kovalchuk	255	49
Dwayne Roloson	240	24	Nikolai Khabibulin	284	23T	Phil Kessel	254	50T
Marty Turco	235	25	Ty Conklin	283	25T	Eric Staal	254	50T

			Marc-Andre Fleury	283	25T		
			Miikka Kiprusoff	283	25T		

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The CBA & The Evolving Euro Prospect Situation

When the Collective Bargaining Agreement was signed between NHL owners and players four summers ago, most observers paid the lion's share of attention to the institution of the salary cap. Inasmuch as this was the critical element in the most disastrous sports shutdown in modern history, it was bound to be the big attention-grabber. A new set of TV deals and the increased enforcement of obstruction rules in an attempt to boost scoring and excitement also obscured from popular attention other elements of the "New NHL" that would comprise the post-lockout era.

However, the changes instituted to Entry Level system contracts were important as well, even if they are only now being understood in more detail. While teams used to be able to stash foreign prospects under longer contracts, here is how the system reads now:

"Players who sign their first contract at age 18-21 are required to sign three-year Entry Level contracts; players age 22-23 will be required to sign two-year deals; and players age 24 will be required to sign a one-year Entry Level contract."

As such, all but the more hugely promising European prospects are sliding under the radar to an increasing degree. Teams need to be able to count on seeing these youngsters in an NHL sweater in a relatively short timeframe. Late bloomers who aren't judged worthy of that risk when they first become draft-eligible may be in position to benefit.

If you're searching for one player who may embody the future in this way, it may well be Detroit prospect Ville Leino. This left wing was a classic late bloomer, going undrafted prior to capturing the Lasse Oksanen Award as the top player in the Finnish Elite League in 2008. He then hit the free agent market and chose the Red Wings, living out the dream of every young would-be star in having the chance to write his own ticket. Now while the Detroit organization ironically has led to an increased appreciation around the league for European scouting based on the team's coups over the past two decades, there are limits to the risks that teams can take when signing players to such short contracts under this new CBA. Leino will certainly not be the last talented young player with the chance to put himself on the open market and as such, it will be very interesting to see if the issue of Entry Level contracts gets reopened in the next CBA. If it does, it will surely command a higher profile in the grand scheme than it did last time.

History Comes Alive on the Ice: 100 Ranger Greats Preview

Sportsology is of course one of the entities responsible for contributing to the HOCKEY DRAFTOLOGY 2009 guide — and one of the prime movers at Sportsology is Russ Cohen, co-author of a great hockey book that will be released on September 28. 100 RANGER GREATS celebrates the superstars, the unsung heroes, and the great players of yesteryear about whom not much is written. The profiles in 100 RANGER GREATS combine statistics with personal interviews and often humorous stories, anecdotes and more, and are brought to life with over 200 color and black and white photos. The authors have ranked the 100 greatest Rangers of all time—from forgotten greats like Aitkenhead, Brown, and Chabot to household names like Gretzky, Messier and Leetch. For every Rangers fan who wants to know their team and its history better, this is the book. Legendary Rangers broadcaster Sam Rosen penned the foreword. It is available for pre-order on Amazon.com, Wiley.com and other online retailers, with other information about the book available at www.rangergreats.com.

Here is an excerpt from the book's introduction:

"Players, many of whom were interviewed for this book, were graded according to their contributions to the overall success of the teams on which they played, plus individual achievements such as points scored, awards won, popularity and length of service.

So exhaustive is our top 100 list that it includes 26 Hall-of-Famers (and counting), 20 career Rangers, a dozen goaltenders, nine members of the 1994 Stanley Cup team, four Dons, three pairs of siblings, two Finns, a Civil War buff and even a 'Polish Prince.'

Our list does not include names like Guy Lafleur, Bernie (Boom Boom) Geoffrion, Tim Horton, Terry Sawchuk, Doug Harvey or Pat LaFontaine. They are all Hall of Fame legends, to be sure, but their Ranger careers were simply too brief to warrant consideration for this compendium. As well, we were forced to omit the likes of Johnny Bower, Rick Middleton, Eddie Shack, Marc Savard and Doug Weight—all superb players who began their NHL careers in New York, but rose to stardom elsewhere."

If you love hockey, if you love history, if you love passion, you will love this book. September 28 will be a magical date indeed when 100 RANGER GREATS hits the bookshelves!

A modest proposal: hockey playoff TV like it's never been presented before!

No, this is not another rant about the NHL being televised on a network with the national penetration, or lack thereof, of Versus. That would be another piece for another time if everything there was to say had not already been said 1,000 times — because frankly, there's another issue related to this one that is of more concern and is potentially more easily addressed.

Ever since leaving the ESPN family in 2005, the NHL has placed the bulk of their playoff games in the first two rounds on a premium subscription package that costs their loyal fans more money — and puts the games behind a firewall that casual fans will not choose to access. It is worth noting that they are alone among the four major sports in North America in this regard (although the NBA does put a few games on NBA TV, currently in less homes than the Test Pattern Channel). Few if any observers would dispute that the NHL is the sport most in need of reaching out to casual fans — and few if any would dispute that the passion and action of the Stanley Cup Playoffs are elements that can accomplish this feat.

Now, this column was inspired by memories of the rare occasions back in the day when ESPN would carry a first-round playoff doubleheader on one channel and ESPN2 would carry the night's other two games. With staggered start times of 7:00 PM EDT on one network and 7:30 PM EDT on the other, fans could experience the nirvana of skipping between the games at intermission — or commercials — and missing a fairly minimal amount of action.

From there, that format germinated into the idea of how to consolidate the action into a single channel, inasmuch as Versus is the single present cable/satellite channel for NHL action and it cannot be assumed that the league's next TV contract will include two channels worth of action even if Disney gets back in the game. Wouldn't the league and the sport benefit from a March Madness-type of presentation with their playoff action? Is this presentation possible? We believe that it is, under the following format.

For first-round action with four games in one night, a pregame show should air from 6-7 PM EDT, setting the table for the night's action and recapping events of the previous day. The first game would start promptly at 7:00 PM EDT, with the next one dropping the puck at 7:25 PM EDT. This would allow for coverage to move fairly seamlessly between games, albeit with fairly minimal intermission analysis from the studio — but that would be the price paid for the frenetic action. The geography of the local markets would determine which game would take priority for the brief moments when the games overlap — and the network would also be free to utilize the split-screen when urgent sequences are occurring simultaneously. The third game would begin at 9:25 PM EDT, hopefully right on the heels of the first game's conclusion, although admittedly the second game would still be underway — this concession to having some overlap would be necessary, though, in order to keep the evening's overall conclusion time within some semblance of reason. The fourth game would start at 9:50 PM EDT and the second half of the evening's action would progress in the same manner. A studio postgame show would follow the conclusion of the last game and ideally air from about 12:15 AM EDT until 1:00 AM EDT assuming the games are all on schedule.

For first-round action with three games in one night, everything would air in the same fashion except for the third game beginning at 9:50 PM EDT so as to decrease the chances of overlap between the early games and the late one. For first-round or second-round action with two games in one night, the format with the 7:00 PM EDT and 7:25 PM EDT start times could be retained if both games are in the Eastern or Central time zones; otherwise, fairly standard doubleheader coverage would air with start times of 7:00 PM EDT and 9:40 PM EDT.

Ideally, a network would air these games with their own broadcast crew instead of subcontracting out to local affiliates like Versus has done, but if a continuation of that arrangement were deemed necessary to make the finances add up for this package to take place, it would be a trade-off that is easily justified. While a number of parties might end up sacrificing financially in the short-term to make this system possible, the buzz that would be generated and the new and curious viewers enticed would surely make this a winner within a few years. There would not be extended commercial breaks available during the three-game and four-game nights, but sponsorships for the evening could be sold off in a number of creative ways. In short, nothing would bring the unparalleled excitement of the Stanley Cup Playoffs to the masses like this idea would. Make it happen, NHL!