CCM
CCM
82

Although many of the top end potential free agents this summer have already been locked up, there are still numerous stars available. Marian Hossa and Brian Campbell will obviously be the most sought after, and some of the other top guys include Pavol Demitra, Wade Redden, and Mats Sundin. Beyond that tier, there are some interesting free agents that are not getting much fanfare or media attention. Until now, that is.

Ron Hainsey. The Jackets astutely snapped Hainsey up off of the waiver wire from Montreal in 2006. He struggled to live up to the hype of being the 13th overall pick in 2000, but found his game in Columbus. He has hovered around 30 points each of the past two seasons, and his defensive game has improved. There will be considerable interest for him, as many teams around the league are still lacking defensemen able to swiftly move the puck up the ice. In the right situation, he could become a 40-45 point guy.

Jeff Finger. Finger is another in a long list of unheralded prospects that seem to come out of nowhere to play a big role with the Avalanche. While it may seem that him re-signing is merely a formality, his breakout season has attracted league wide attention. The premium placed on puck-moving defensemen increases Finger's value dramatically. He is a solid bottom-pairing guy with a very solid upside, and he has great awareness in the offensive zone. He can work the powerplay well and is a very effective puck rusher. Look for the Avs to try hard to get him locked up to a long-term deal, but Finger may want to wait and see what else is out there for him. He has the potential to be a 15-goal guy from the back end.

Mark Streit. Streit emerged as one of the key cogs on the league's best powerplay this season. He can play both forward and defense, although he spent the majority of the season on the blue line. He is extremely creative and fast, and will have teams lining up to sign him. His versatility makes him one of the most valuable players available this summer, and there are rumors in Montreal that he is interested in testing the market. His value is much higher as a defenseman rather than a forward, so expect to see him used primarily at defense wherever he ends up. 58 points put him near the top of scoring in the entire league for d-men.

Martin Straka. With this being (potentially) Jagr's last season in the Big Apple, Straka may join him wherever he ends up. Straka is a very solid winger who can fit in on any line. He is a perfect example of a second tier forward who can flourish in the right situation. The Rangers may try and bring him back, but they have a lot of younger legs (Dawes, Dubinsky, Prucha, Cherepanov, Anisimov) that may push him out of a roster spot. Look for Straka to remain in the East. If the Penguins fail to lock up Hossa, he may be an attractive option to line up with Crosby on the top unit.

Niklas Hagman. Hagman had a breakout season for the Stars, with 27 goals and 41 points. He has been snake-bitten in the playoffs (at least for the first two rounds), but still has been playing

great hockey for an extremely underrated Dallas team. Dallas will want to re-sign him, but 27 goals could get Hagman a pretty big contract elsewhere. He is perfectly suited to second line minutes and is a great complementary player. As long as he has someone to get him the puck, he will be a solid 20-25-goal guy.