



The 2007 trade deadline was the kind of day we expected to see. Big names moved to big markets. Small names moved to small markets. And the ribs of Oilernation were once again cracked and the heart of the team torn out, still beating... so to speak. But wallowing in depression after losing Captain Canada hasn't stopped me from letting you know all about the young guns moved February 27th.

**The Deal:** Gary Roberts to Pittsburgh for defenseman Noah Welch.

Held over from the night before as Roberts contemplated waiving his NTC, the Pens and Panthers consummated the first deal of the day. In exchange for the grizzled veteran winger, Florida picked up 24 year-old prospect Noah Welch. Standing a solid 6'4, 212 lbs, the aggressive blueliner led Harvard University in PIM all four years there. He's taken that pounding style of play to the pros, racking up 147 penalty minutes in 131 games between the American League and NHL. But that's not all the Brighton, MA native is good for. A keen student of the offensive game, Welch's crisp passes and hard point shot have led to 50 points in 104 AHL games. As he gains experience, expect his NHL totals to hover around 25-29 points annually. Welch will help those in keeper leagues that score across a wide-range of categories that reward defensemen- hits, blocked shots, PIM, +/- and of course points.

## Bugg Bytes - Trade Deadline Bonus Article

Written by Matt Bugg

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**The Deal:** Georges Laraque to Pittsburgh for Dan Carcillo and a 2008 3rd round draft choice.

The Pens gave away two more potential roster players for a help-now kind of guy in Laraque, acquired to protect Sid the Kid. The Yotes got good return in Carcillo, a hard-working, gritty forward whose 183 PIM and 21 goals are first and second respectively for the Baby Pens. Carcillo's trademark, much like the guy he was traded for, has always been pugilism. But the Ontario native has the kind of shot that makes him useful for more than 5 minutes a game. And on a team like the Coyotes, who are desperate for offense from any source, a fast start in the NHL is a strong possibility. Pick him up on the cheap. If Carcillo does boom out of the gate- say, 4-1-5 in his first ten games- use him as tradebait. The allure of a 22 year-old with power forward characteristics is strong even in today's skillful NHL. Alternatively, if your league rewards enforcers, Carcillo may prove a keeper as he establishes himself as a premier fighter in the league.

**The Deal:** Bill Guerin to San Jose for Jay BARRIBALL, Ville Niemenen and a 2007 1st round pick.

The San Jose Sharks picked up the first big scorer of the day, coming away with perennial 25-goal man Bill Guerin. In return, the Blues netted a future perennial offensive stud in Jay BARRIBALL, to speak nothing of the additional 1st rounder. BARRIBALL, three months away from age 20, has emerged as the top forward for the powerhouse University of Michigan. Through 35 games, the freshman has compiled a team-leading 20 assists and 36 points. Second on the squad in goals (16) and PP goals (5), the 5'9 dynamo has come seemingly out of nowhere. A savvy pick by the Sharks thanks to their USHL scouting staff- responsible Joe Pavelski and others- BARRIBALL is still two to three years from making the NHL. If your league is on stable ground for the long term, pick him up. No one else will. The rebuilding Blues are the perfect environment for the small forward as they continue to audition every player in every situation.

**The Deal:** Brad May to Anaheim for G Michael Wall.

A relatively minor deal between the Ducks and Avalanche has the potential of paying off big for both clubs. With their sights set on upgrading the bottom six with yet another tough-as-nails forward, Brian Burke was more than willing to cough up 21 year-old goaltender Mike Wall. A surprisingly solid fill-in when injuries decimated the Ducks, the former Prince George Cougar and Everett Silvertip Wall was acquired to shore up Colorado's minor league goalie spot. Big, mobile, and with a solid mental game backing up an equally solid skillset, the 6'2 keeper has all the ingredients to be a servicable NHL backup. With a plethora of goalies in the Anaheim pipeline, the Ducks will think nothing of the price they paid- especially if May helps them to a Stanley Cup.

**The Deal:** Todd Bertuzzi to Detroit for Shawn Matthias and a conditional draft choice.

As the Peter Forsberg deal demonstrated, solid drafting means B-level prospects can easily be sacrificed for veteran help. Such was the case when the Wings dealt 19 year-old centreman Shawn Matthias to Florida for Big Bert. Even if the Panthers never see that draft choice, they still come away winners. At 6'3, 212, Matthias was drafted in 2006 after a solid 34-point rookie campaign for the Belleville Bulls. Fast forward a year later, and the 2nd round selection has

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developed into one that OHL franchise's best players. With a team second-most 33 goals and 61 points, Matthias is making good on the power forward promise he'd flashed during the 2005-06 campaign. While his offense stands a good chance of not translating to the NHL, the big centreman will still prove a useful shutdown-line player who can chip in 20 goals and 20 assists a year.

**The Deal:** Pascal Dupuis and a 3rd round draft pick for Alex Bourret.

So let's get this straight: the Thrashers give up a boatload of draft picks for a power winger- which they desperately need- and then follow that up by trading a prospect with such upside for a penalty killer who scored 20 goals four years ago. Credit is due to the Rangers for acquiring the type of player they've had difficulty drafting (see: Hugh Jessiman) and scorn is due for the Thrashers who are building a skilled forward group with little grit. Bourret may not have the offensive potential of a Keith Tkachuk, but any team could use a future 50-point scorer built and willing to hit like a bull.

**The Deal:** Yanic Perreault, 2008 5th Round draft pick to Phoenix for Brendan Bell and 2008 2nd Round draft choice.

Another poor example of asset management came with the trade of centreman Yanic Perreault to his former team, the Toronto Maple Leafs. The Leafs were forced to give up a valuable young defenseman in Brendan Bell for the faceoff wizard when they could have had him for free just a couple of months ago. However, the Coyotes were curious in who they asked acquired as well. A burgeoning powerplay specialist, Bell comes to a team with a stacked blueline. Derek Morris, Ed Jovanovski, Nick Boynton, Zbynek Michalek, Keith Ballard, Travis Roche and prospects Keith Yandle and Chris Summers look to make up the squad for the next five years. Where does Bell fit? Not even the Yotes know. He may see himself traded again if Gretzky can't fit him in within the next two years. Good for 10 goals and 20 assists a year very soon, Bell is someone to hang on to.

**The Deal:** Matthias Norstrom, Konstantin Pushkarev, 2007 3rd and 4th Round draft picks for Jaroslav Modry, Johan Fransson, 2008 1st Rd Pick and 2007 3rd and 4th round picks.

Undoubtedly the biggest deal of the day in terms of assets moved- four players and four draft picks in total- the Kings and Stars swapped prospects and defensemen. For one team, it was a move to add leadership. For the other, it was simply a way to obtain extra assets during a season of rebuilding. The Stars got the less valuable prospect in the deal, acquiring agitating winger Konstantin Pushkarev from the Kings. A Jarkko Ruutu-esque winger with a small amount of skill, the 22 year-old has never posted more than 38 points in the AHL. Acquired simply to replace Mattias Tjarnqvist as a depth forward, Pushkarev's future is limited to 25-35 points annually. On the flipside, heading to the Kings is one Johan Fransson. The prototypical Swedish offensive defenseman, Fransson's contributions will be similar to the player who came to LA with him, Jaroslav Modry. A future powerplay specialist and defenseman goal-scoring leader, great wheels, a hard shot and slick playmaking ability outweigh a poor attitude and so-so defensive zone coverage.

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**The Deal:** Ryan Smyth to the New York Islanders for Ryan O'Marra, Robert Nilsson and NYI's 2007 1st Rounder

Of course, while the LA/Dallas deal was the biggest in terms of bodies, the trade of decade-long Oiler Ryan Smyth was the undisputed story of the day. In exchange for the player described as bleeding copper and blue, the Oilers welcomed two former 15th overall draft picks and a potential 15th overall pick into the organization. While GM Kevin Lowe mentioned only this evening that the team now had the assets to trade for 'another Chris Pronger', if he elects to keep Nilsson and O'Marra, the team will soon reap the rewards. Nilsson, son of current Oilers scout Kent Nilsson, was leading the Bridgeport Sound Tigers in scoring with 45 in 50 points before the trade. Called up just prior to the deal, the supremely talented winger looks to be kept up with his new team. Incredible lacrosse-style goals aside, equally incredible vision, hands and needle-fine passing make up one of the most enigmatic prospects in hockey. For a shift or two every game, the 22 year-old dazzles with Hemsley-like domination. For the rest of his shifts, however, Nilsson is either at the blueline or going for a skate. Or that was the case up until a few months ago. Spurned by Islanders coach Ted Nolan, Nilsson has shown consistency and effort for the first time in his career. Playing for dear old dad's employers might motivate him even further. The highly skilled forward could make a quick impact, especially if the Oil opt to give the kids lots of ice-time down the stretch.

As for O'Marra, opinions vary greatly between fans. But the facts are this: with tremendous skating ability, a sandpapery game and elite defensive awareness, the tools are there for the 20 year-old pivot to become one of the best shutdown forwards in the game. And he's not a shoddy scorer, either. Capable of snapping home a smart wrist shot or banging in a rebound ala Smytty, O'Marra is likely a year or two from full-time NHL duty. Despite third-line ice-time for the Belleville Bulls, the former 'Assistant Captain Canada'- at the U18s, anyway- has notched 39 points in 39 games, including 21 goals. O'Marra's upside is that of a checking centreman with a touch of offense. 25-25-50 with 100 PIM in a peak year is in the cards.