

## Super-Bore?

Written by Matt Bugg

Saturday, 01 September 2007 06:00 - Last Updated Monday, 24 September 2007 09:30

---



The Russians swore this team they were sending their best. Pinky-swore it, in fact. But several mind-numbing coaching decisions and two critical injuries have negated what could easily have been a, super series. Here's who's stood out for the Russians- and who is out all together- as the series comes back to Canada 4-0 in favor of the red and white (the other red and white).

**Alexei Cherepanov**- The word 'playmaker' is obviously not in the Russian dictionary, because one of the best U20 goal-scorers in the world was without one in the first one and 1/3 games of the Super Series. Never in the same class as Evgeni Malkin or Alexander Ovechkin, Cherepanov was nevertheless given the dubious task of dragging along two fourth-line players while being relied upon for offense. Oh yeah, and he was benched a lot, too. The much-maligned first round selection of the New York Rangers still shone from time to time, demonstrating at least the awareness required to produce with better linemates. However, Brandon Sutter exposed one area of deficiency in the young winger's game: head-up

## Super-Bore?

Written by Matt Bugg

Saturday, 01 September 2007 06:00 - Last Updated Monday, 24 September 2007 09:30

---

awareness. A hard, awkward check knocked 'Cherry' out of the first period Game 2, and it was reported yesterday that he was done for the series.

**Egor Averin**- A personal favorite of yours truly before the 2007 Draft, more than one team is now regretting the decision to pass on the hyper-talented winger. Dangerous on numerous shifts in Game 1, the crafty forward displayed the puck skills, speed and agility that earned him high marks in the first place. But it was perhaps what Averin didn't do that impressed the most. Derided for the usual qualities Russian prospects are derided for- motivation, work ethic, and defensive prowess- Averin was never the reason his team lost. Like Cherepanov, Averin will not have a chance to improve his stock any further, as he too is out for the series with a concussion.

**Slava Voinov**- &quot;...overall stellar play put the 2008-eligible rearguard into the upper echelon of his draft class.&quot; You'd think some people would have listened the first time I mentioned Voinov, the aforementioned tidbit coming from an article on the Under 18s earlier this year. Instead, the extremely skilled defenseman is earning rave reviews after seemingly coming out of nowhere. I'll say it again: Voinov is a tremendous player, playing the point on the powerplay with unmatched zeal and confidence. He can stickhandle and wire wristshots like a forward, and pass like the best of his peers. While he hasn't torn up the scoreboard, Voinov has demonstrated some terrific skill.

**Maxim Mayorov**- We called him a poor man's Ovechkin in the Prospect Report, and now you know why. When full of steam, no one on the Russian roster is harder to defend than the 6'2, 180 lbs left wing. Blessed with good speed, soft hands, and of course a big frame, Mayorov has earned plenty of fanfare with his patented drives on net. One of the more interesting subplots of the 2007 Draft was Scott Howson trading three fifth round picks in order to move ahead of his former employer- the Edmonton Oilers- in order to snag the enigmatic winger for the Columbus Blue Jackets.

## Super-Bore?

Written by Matt Bugg

Saturday, 01 September 2007 06:00 - Last Updated Monday, 24 September 2007 09:30

---

**Alexander Vasyunov** - One major disappointment has been winger Alexander Vasyunov. Hyped as a terrific scorer not only by us but most observers, the New Jersey Devils prospect was expected to be a major component of the Russian squad after some excellent performances elsewhere, both statistically and in-game. As with most of his teammates, though, this hasn't been the case. Literally away from the puck for all but a few seconds every shift, the wickedly accurate shooter hasn't scored primarily because he has yet to remember where to be in order to do so. Credit Canada for doing an excellent job disrupting his game, and don't ditch him too fast- as we have seen countless times in international play, the best can disappear while... unsung (cough Brandon Reid cough Jordin Tootoo) players can rule the day.

And, well, that's about it for standouts from the Russian side. Sort of understandable, then, that the team has been beaten quite badly- and will continue to be beaten badly as two of the above are done for the series.

-----

Even Hockey Canada has gotten bored. In the interests of sportsmanship, etc. our gracious country has allowed their opponents to add three players despite already being at the roster limit. Ironic, considering these three players should have been on board from the very beginning:

### **Viktor Tikhonov, C** **6'2/180 lbs (Undrafted)**

Should've been on the roster in the first place. The son of a certain former coaching legend, the right genes made their way down the family tree from a hockey standpoint. A solid if unspectacular checking centreman, Viktor adds defensive consciousness to the bottom six. Undrafted, Tikhonov has nevertheless mastered the two-way game well enough to earn time in the RSL, doing so for Cherepovets this past season.

### **Kirill Tulupov, D** **6'3/220 lbs (Drafted 3rd Round, New Jersey, 2006)**

## Super-Bore?

Written by Matt Bugg

Saturday, 01 September 2007 06:00 - Last Updated Monday, 24 September 2007 09:30

---

Another no-brainer that wasn't. Likely blacklisted for playing in North America, the massive, mean defender could have helped prevent a lot of the dirty stuff that has so dearly cost Russia in the first place. Maybe that Canadian style of play isn't a bad idea after all. In his rookie season in the QMJHL, Tulupov amassed 28 points and 88 PIM in just 54 games, and could pop home 20+ PIM in four or less Series games.

### **Ruslan Bashkirov, LW 5'11/182 lbs (Drafted 2nd Round, Ottawa, 2007)**

117 PIM in 64 QMJHL games, as well as 67 points? How could an agitator NOT help you? Clearly outskilled from the very beginning, the only advantage Team Russia had was a veteran presence. Had the team's braintrust rounded the team out with not only Bashkirov, but Tikhonov and Tulupov, you might have a (somewhat) closer series. But some things never change, and politics played a major part in Bashkirov's non-inclusion.

-----  
If nothing else, Tikhonov, Tulupov and Bashkirov promise to make this a spicier series, even if their side drops game five and thus any chance of a victory.

However, one should not dwell too much on the fact this has largely been a Canadian clinic thus far. Just think- thirty years ago, there was no way in hell Hockey Canada would allow the "pinko commies" to add extra bandaids to their allotment, let alone players. That we've come so far from a relations standpoint should count for something.