

Going Browntown

Written by Matt Bugg
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Imagine an NFL running back on ice. You'd have the 17 year-old J.T. Brown, who plays for Rosemount High School in Minnesota. Beyond the fact that the 5'11, 165 lbs forward is a swift skater, a fierce competitor and a wicked finisher, you'd really actually have a running back on the ice- or rather, the spawn of one. The son of eight-year Minnesota Viking RB Ted Brown, J.T. has taken his career in an entirely different direction.

With 19-16-35 in just twelve games, the July-born forward is one of high school's deadliest snipers. In fact, from December 1st to the 8th, Brown accomplished a feat rarely seen even in high-scoring high-school hockey: three hat-tricks in a row. And every single goal was needed. Beginning with a tight 5-3 win over Apple Valley on the first day in December, Brown accumulated three goals five nights later in an 8-7 win over the Academy of Holy Angels. That night was also memorable for Brown's three helpers, giving him a season-high six points in a night. A 5-4 win over Eastview High polished off the triple triple. Making it even more unbelievable was the fact Rosemount posted a 10-0 win on December 11th, giving Brown an opportunity to push the streak to four contests.

Why the lack of buzz? Plagued by marital problems at home, Brown was almost pushed to the

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brink- and out of the game. Scouts took notice, and in a bad way. While they've come back- along with college offers- it was enough to delay his hype by at least a year. Additionally, the same types of rumors that plagued Patrick O'Sullivan on draft day have worked their evil magic here. With high school scouting resources slim among NHL staffs, bad word of mouth can submarine a prospect on 25 of 30 teams.

But, rumors are rumors. Here's what we do know about J.T. Brown:

Born: July 6th, 1990 (17)

Height/Weight: 5'11, 165 lbs

Number: 4

Statistics

2006-07 USHS Rosemount H.S. 27 GP 24-23-47

2006-07 UMEL District 8 12 GP 15-11-26

2007-08 USHS Rosemount H.S. 12 GP 19-16-35

Assets: Natural athlete with elite fitness level... never stops trying to outwork his opponents, so his already-great footspeed is magnified ten-fold... lust for driving to the net... tricky hands... has become a selfless player, setting up goals in blowouts.

Flaws: While he has managed to keep himself in check, skin is still too easy to get under... may be a man among boys physically in high school, but is still underweight and undermuscled.

Comparison: Mike Grier + Jonathan Cheechoo

NHL Projection: Bullish power winger, 30+ goals

Draft Position: 45-50

Now, enough about high school hockey. We've got them fancy **World Juniors** to worry about. And for the second year in a row, Team USA choked at a critical time as a perfectly beatable Team Canada piled up the goals in a 4-1 rout yesterday afternoon. In the day's other game, Sweden beat Russia in OT on a softie by Mikael Backlund.

I hate to say it, but the Swedes seem to have Manifest Destiny on their side. How else do you explain a lacrosse-style goal, a come-back, seven-seconds-left goal to stop Canada at 20 wins, and today's most recent winner? Sweden has been on the ropes in every possible way this tournament, and they've delivered a piledriver each time. It's not impossible for Canada to win this, but it'll take a great effort by Canada- which they've gotten two of- and a terrible effort by Sweden, which has yet to have happened.

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