

The Atlanta Thrashers have signed winger Maxim Afinogenov to a one-year deal worth \$800,000.

Fantasy Impact: Afinogenov is coming off of a disastrous 20-point campaign with the Buffalo Sabres in 2008-09 (although he did only play 48 games). He brings speed and skill to a suddenly and surprisingly deep Atlanta team. He won't be knocking either Bryan Little or Nik Antropov off of the top line or first power play unit, but he may be able to earn a spot on Atlanta's second line with the ageless Slava Kozlov and Todd White. Afinogenov will never come close to the 73 points he recorded in 2005-06, but he is much better than a typical 20-point player. Look for him to get around 40 or 45 and move between Atlanta's second and third offensive line.

Although the Thrashers are not openly saying this, Afinogenov's presence means one less spot

Thrashers sign Maxim Afinogenov

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in the top nine for Evander Kane. Don't expect the talented rookie to stick past nine games unless there is an injury or he plays extremely well. Atlanta has a few other players that may play second line minutes as well (Rich Peverley and Colby Armstrong in particular), so Afinogenov may take away some of their offensive minutes. Peverley has gone from top line center last season to third line winger this season (penciled in at least).