Sometimes a player's character will impress a GM so much that they'll go to great lengths to get that player on their team. It's human nature, even if you're a fantasy GM and your league doesn't have categories for character and grit.

You can bet the New York Islanders were pretty proud of Travis Hamonic's symbolic gesture in the world junior final. The Team Canada defenseman had suffered a separated shoulder in the semifinal against Switzerland and could not play against the U.S. Still, he donned the jersey he worked so hard to earn and sat on the bench to be with his teammates. Many Canadian readers will know what I mean by that, but for folks elsewhere, you need to understand how much Canadian kids yearn to play for this team. The tryout camp in December is such a grueling test that the players often find they push the limits of what they're capable. It's like basic training, and when a player is cut from camp, it's not unusual for them to be in tears. This helps explain why Hamonic suited up even though he could not play. To make sure he didn't jump over the

boards in the heat of the game, he wasn't allowed to wear shoulder pads; this speaks volumes about his character.

An NHL GM or scout would take note of things like this because players with this kind of character will help their team win. It's not as important for fantasy GMs, although solid character and a good work ethic usually mean a player has a better chance of reaching their potential.

Many will surely love the way Travis Hamonic plays, but you have to be careful -- from a fantasy perspective – that you don't overrate a player such as Hamonic.

Hamonic still has value, but you have to look at the aspects of his skill set that will help you. Hamonic is a rugged, right-handed shooting defenseman whose offensive skills have blossomed since entering the WHL at 16. At the world junior tournament, Hamonic was part of Canada's top shutdown duo with Marco Scandella, but there is some offensive skill there and the fact that he's a right-handed shot will help. Only about 30 per cent of NHL defensemen are right-handed shots, but half of the jobs require a defenseman to work on the right side of the ice. This makes it easier to defend the boards against clearing passes and reduces the amount of time a player has to play the puck on his backhand. Being a right-handed shot also helps if a player has some offensive skill or a big shot because they can become an extra weapon with the man advantage. A power-play point tandem that combines a left-handed and right-handed shot is more dangerous because it opens up the cross-ice pass for the one-timer.

Hamonic is a classic late bloomer and is a good example of how defenseman can have offensive skill – but not show the production you'd expect at the time they're drafted.

Hamonic was listed as six-feet tall and 192 pounds when he was drafted, but he's grown. The WHL website has him listed at six-foot-two, 215 pounds and the Team Canada roster at the world juniors said he was six-feet tall and 219 pounds.

Hamonic had just five goals and 17 assists when the Islanders drafted him in the second round of the 2008 draft. His production surged in 2008-09 with Moose Jaw the next season and 13 goals and 27 assists in 57 games. This past season, it took another big jump and he finished with 11 goals and 33 assists in just 41 games. He followed up with four goals and seven assists in 15 playoff games

Hamonic came up big for the Memorial Cup host Brandon Wheat Kings last night (May 21st), scoring a goal and two assists. His goal was a blast from the point on the power play that tied the game with 11 seconds left in the second period and the Wheat Kings went on to win in overtime.

Hamonic has very good hockey sense and can move the puck. He doesn't have the top-end speed or mobility of Brandon teammate Colby Robak, but his skating is good enough and he has quick feet that allows him to work well in tight spaces. He has been an intimidating presence in the WHL and has amassed 322 penalty minutes in 181 games while earning the

respect of teammates and foes alike.

An interesting tidbit about Hamonic is that he was the final player invited to the 2008 NHL Scouting Combine. His approach to that opportunity tells you quite a bit about him. Here's what the St. Malo, Man., native told Mike Morreales of NHL.com about the combine.

"Everything I've proven on the ice to reach this point, I wanted to prove with just as much passion in the interview rooms and in the workouts (at the combine). I wanted to prove my work ethic and allow these scouts and general managers to see that I'm a well-spoken man. I went to the combine wanting to back everything up that I've accomplished all year, proving my professionalism and leadership."

In the story, Morreales commented about the "humility and conviction in Hamonic's voice" and that no doubt impressed the staff of the 15 teams that interviewed him.

And those scouts that did the extra legwork to find out other details were rewarded. Peter Sullivan, who scouts the WHL for NHL Central Scouting, told Morreales that Hamonic missed a month of his draft year with a broken jaw, but finished the game in which he suffered the injury.

Hamonic has been a key contributor to several successful teams. He played for the silver-medal winning Manitoba team that went up against the stacked Team Ontario at the Canada Winter Games in 2007. He helped Canada win a gold medal at the 2008 World Under-18 Championship in Kazan, Russia. He earned a silver medal at the world juniors this past season and tomorrow (May 23rd), he will be trying to help the host Wheat Kings win the Memorial Cup over the heavily favored defending-champion Windsor Spitfires.

Hamonic is the type of player who is honest with himself and responds to coaching. He knows what he needs to do to make it at the next level and has proven that he will put in the work to make it happen.

I'll put my money on him being a fixture on the Islanders' blueline.

Upside: 10-30-40, with 100+ PIMs