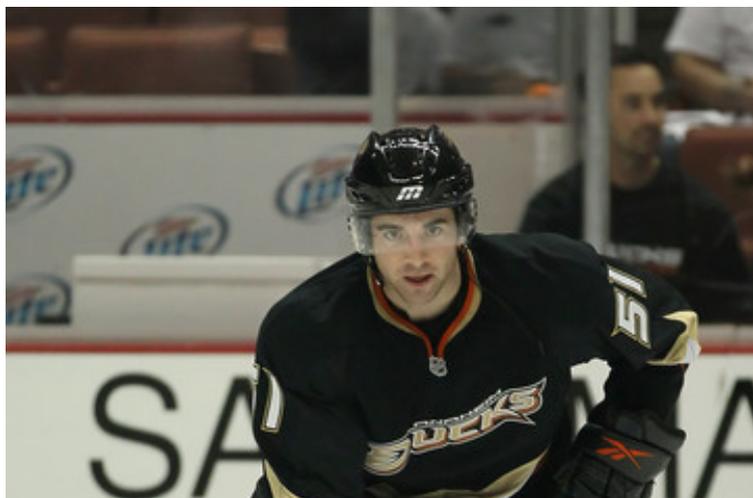


Palmieri Powers Up

Written by Jeffrey Renaud

Saturday, 10 December 2011 11:57 - Last Updated Sunday, 11 December 2011 15:16



After making the Anaheim Ducks out of training camp last season, Kyle Palmieri managed just one goal in 10 games before being returned to the AHL Syracuse Crunch.

The 20-year old American prospect must have found a heck of a Krav Maga instructor back in his home state because after scoring 29 goals in 62 AHL games in 2010-11, he has exploded this season, pouring in a near-superhuman 17 goals in 18 games – good enough to be leading the AHL.

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(Our old friend Jeff Renaud covers Stu's Slant while Stu McDonald takes a temporary leave)

The productivity earned Palmieri a call-up Friday and the mercurial right winger is expected to dress for the Ducks Saturday against the Nashville Predators.

Prospect Prescription connected with Syracuse Crunch Assistant GM Bob Ferguson following the news and he shared his thoughts on why this time around, Palmieri may be nestling in for a long winter in Orange County.

"Kyle's so dangerous when he's in the offensive zone with the puck on his stick," offered Ferguson point blank. "He's got a knack that a lot of people wish they had and that's a sensibility to get in scoring areas. He anticipates very well. And you combine that with the fact that he can really shoot a puck, it all adds up to – and this sounds cliché – but a real dynamic player."

Noting the elite talent has scored 46 goals in 80 AHL games before his 21st birthday, Ferguson

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added that while Palmieri – compared favorably to Chris Drury – may possess a hard, heavy wrist shot that he can get away quick, he needed to work on the "little intangibles" necessary to be a complete player at the NHL level.

"That's what he was down here to work on," explained Ferguson. "He knows it. And he's been doing a good job of it. His plus/minus is +15, which speaks volumes to his play in his own end and his play away from the puck. He's doing the things that will make him a complete player."

Ferguson admitted Anaheim brass has considered moving its 2009 first round draft pick to the left side, considering megastar Corey Perry and surefire hall-of-famer Teemu Selanne occupy the right wing slots on the Ducks' top two lines but for now, the plan is to keep Palmieri at his natural position.

"He's going to get his opportunity but he's playing behind two pretty good players right now," quipped Ferguson. "So as far as moving to the off-wing, I guess it's something that possibly could be looked at but for right now, no, the emphasis is just on making him more of a complete player, up-and-down, the right side."

With just 75 penalty minutes in 80 AHL games, the five-foot-11, 193-pound forward would hardly be considered a bruiser but Ferguson said Palmieri plays without any fear.

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"He competes. He's got a little bit of an edge to him. And he's really willing to mix it up," said Ferguson. "He gets involved in the traffic areas. He's definitely not a perimeter player. And he's definitely not one of these players that just hangs around on the outside, waiting for his center to get him the puck. He's more than willing to go get it. And he's got a little feistiness in him, too."

And that's a quality he shares with Anaheim's new head coach, Bruce Boudreau.

"Gabby [Boudreau] wants to open it up a bit and he's more than willing to let his players show some creativity, and that's what Kyle can bring to the table," said Ferguson. "The biggest question for Kyle regarding whether or not he stays or even how long he stays, is the other intangibles that help you win hockey games. If he does those, I am sure he's going to get a real good look while he's up this time."

"And if it's not this time, again, it will be because he is playing behind two pretty good right wingers. Kyle is pretty mature for a 20-year old kid. And he knows his time will come. In a perfect world, this will be it. I hope, for his sake, he goes up there and continues to score and continues to show the same dedication and effort, he's shown down here with us."

It's interesting to note that Ferguson called Palmieri "mature" as just last year, when he was a 19-year old freshman at Notre Dame, following a night of drinking, Palmieri was charged with

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two counts of resisting arrest and minor alcohol consumption. He also, allegedly, went after the officer's taser.

E.P.T.A. (ESTIMATED PROSPECT TIME OF ARRIVAL): 2011-12