

The next Stratford Streak

Written by Ryan Van Horne

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There will never be another Stratford Streak to rival Howie Morenz -- known in his heyday as the Babe Ruth of hockey.

But there's this kid from Stratford -- Joey Hishon -- whose playing style makes you want to call him the Stratford Streak, even though his talent does not rival that of Morenz.

A comparable NHL player talent-wise to Hishon might be the Strathroy Streak – Andy McDonald – because they are both about the same size and have the same skill set. For the record,

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McDonald is listed as 5-10, 190 pounds while Hishon is listed at just under 5-10 and 170 pounds. By the time Hishon bulks up for the pro game, he should be about the same size as McDonald.

Hishon is in his fourth year in the OHL with the Owen Sound Attack, so don't focus too much on his gaudy stats so far this season. The stats are not so much an indication of his ability, but they do show that he's back on track after an injury-plagued and inconsistent draft year. Many thought the nifty centre would be a top-10 pick in the 2010 draft, but he fell to the Colorado Avalanche at 17. Some thought he should have fallen even further than that. ISS had him ranked No. 46 on their final rankings and our own Matt Bugg had him at No. 52 in his mock draft. Both of those low rankings are a testament to how much Hishon struggled last year.

Hishon adjusted quickly to the OHL and put up excellent numbers in his first two years, but last year was hobbled by a pelvis injury in the preseason and broken foot early in the season that limited him to just 36 games.

When he's healthy, he's an offensive dynamo. He has amazing puck skills and hockey sense, skating and offensive instincts are all very good. His passing skills are better than his shot, but he has a good, accurate snap shot and is a good finisher in tight thanks to his soft hands.

A rinkrat who used to spend time in the Stratford rink where his dad worked, Hishon has a creativity born from lots of unstructured time on the ice. He makes great passes and has excellent vision and can make plays at top speed. It's always nice when a speedy prospect's hands and head can keep up with his feet.

He has a great compete level and his work ethic will make sure that he adds the necessary bulk and defensive skills as he moves up to the pro ranks. Despite his size, he doesn't shy away from high traffic areas and when he goes into a scrum, he comes out with the puck more often than not.

Hishon is a student of the game and even in minor hockey watched a lot of videos to improve and learn about other players. Despite not playing against AAA players until he was a teenager, Hishon's dedication to honing his skills in his backyard rink or elsewhere make him a good old-fashioned rink rat.

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