There is something especially appealing about drafting a blue chip prospect in the mid or late rounds. The notion that you have stolen something makes the player's success all the more satisfying. The three players discussed below were all drafted by organizations that consistently steal late round talent. These three prospects aren't ready now, but they should be watched very closely next season.

Alexander Avtsin, Montreal, RW, 4th round (109th overall), 2009

Avtsin was one of the youngest players in the AHL last season which partially accounts for his low production. Avtsin, 20, really needs to fill out as the 6'2, 198 pound winger looked like a beanpole on the ice last season. He was originally drafted from the KHL but moved to the AHL Bulldogs rather than spend time in junior. He has really nice all-around skills because he can skate well and has nice hands to go along with his size. Avtsin has what scouts refer to as a projectable frame, and once he fills out he could be a star. Last season's 20 points in 58 games was low, but he had an early shoulder injury and had to adjust to the culture, the language and the small rinks.

That Avtsin was so keen to come to North America so early in his development is a good sign. Another good sign was his performance at Montreal's development camp in Brossard, Quebec in early June. Avtsin was clearly the most skilled player at camp and to prove it, scored three times on one shift during a red-white scrimmage on day three. Avtsin has usurped Louis Leblanc as the Canadiens No. 1 fantasy pool prospect. Avtsin is still at least two years away from cracking Montreal's lineup, but look for him to contribute significantly in Hamilton this season.

Jerome Gauthier-Leduc, Buffalo, D, 3rd round (68th overall), 2010

Since 2005, Gauthier-Leduc is the fourth defenceman Buffalo has drafted from the QMJHL. T.J. Brennan, Marc-Andre Gragnani and Jordon Southorn were also drafted in that time span. Brennan is still a solid prospect and Gragnani led the Sabres in playoff scoring last season. Most NHL teams haven't drafted one defenceman from the "Q" in that time. It seems Buffalo has come through again as Gauthier-Leduc was the second leading scorer among defencemen in the "Q" last season. He has the vision to complement his 6'2, 195 pound frame that bodes well for a solid NHL career.

In June, Gauthier-Leduc was among 46 players selected for participation in Hockey Canada's U20 Summer Development Camp. The camp is Canada's starting point for building their entry for the 2010 World Junior Championship. Gauthier-Leduc will attend the camp for the second straight season and should have a serious shot at making Canada's World Junior team this winter.

Maxim Kitsyn, LA, LW, 6th round (158th overall), 2010

Kitsyn is a late round sleeper, but he's a fantasy prospect keeper. Like Avtsin, Kitsyn made the jump to North America last season. He moved from the KHL's Novokuznetsk Metallurg to the Mississauga St. Michael's Majors to get a taste of North American life and language. Also like Avtsin, Kitsyn is big (6'2, 195 pounds) with a skill set that allowed him to flourish in the 2011 World Junior Championships in Buffalo, NY. Kitsyn helped the Russians win the tournament, finishing third in goals with five and fifth in points with nine. He was the leading Russian goal scorer ahead of 2010 first rounders Evgeny Kuznetsov and Vladimir Tarasenko.

Kitsyn was taken very low in the draft because his second KHL season was a disastrous one as he scored only two points in 21 games. L.A. GM Dean Lombardi has a history of stealing good late round prospects and it appears he has done it again.