Buffalo Sabres fans remember last summer all too well. There was so much hype and promise after billionaire, Terry Pegula, took over the ownership of the team earlier in 2011. It was made clear from day one that the Sabres for the first time in a long time had deep pockets.

Again this summer, the outlook is very positive at the First Niagara Center. The reason being is quite simple. The Sabres made some crafty moves not only at the trade deadline to acquire another 1st round draft pick (Paul Gaustad), but also by making some very shrewd picks at the draft table.

Buffalo picked up a dynamic Russian scorer in Mikhail Grigorenko and Latvian two-way center in Zemgus Girgensons.

The beauty of it for Sabres fans is that by mid-July both these two promising young prospects had already signed their entry level contracts. For Grigorenko, who was forecasted as a possible Top five draft pick, it was not so much of a surprise to have already inked his name to a contract. Although the story on Grigensons was somewhat unexpected, as he was going to enroll at the University of Vermont (Hockey East) this fall to embark on his NCAA career with the Catamounts.

Yet, many hockey experts close the USHL and followed the Dubuque Fighting Saints closely where Girgensons played last season thought there was a chance that this well-rounded two-way center would skip his collegiate stop at UVM. Girgensons has size and can skate really well. Has nice hands and can play a gritty game, too. He is known to have good leadership qualities and plenty of intensity in his game.

At the conclusion of Buffalo's prospects development camp last week, it was clear that Girgensons had that extra step in his game. He and the Buffalo management thought his skills sets and mental capacity were indeed ready to conquer the pro game. It is uncertain if he will stick in Buffalo and be able to earn a roster spot, but spending a season in Rochester seasoning his game might be the best course of action. One thing for sure, he will be attending training camp come September, just like Grigorenko .

As draft day drew closer the rumors ran rapid about Grigorenko from his poor work ethic to his birthdate being false. Regardless of the reasons, Buffalo snagged the Russian sniper 12th overall in this year's NHL Entry Draft.

This past season he imported in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL) to play under the tutelage for former NHLer Patrick Roy with the Quebec Remparts.

He was able to find the back of the net forty times in just 59 games and amass 85 points overall. The scouting report is that he is a big and strong player with very impressive puck skills and playmaking abilities. He doesn't bring that Russian Rocket explosion like Pavel Bure of the '90s but skates extremely well, is quite solid on his boots, and knows how to protect the puck well with his big frame and long reach. He possesses excellent vision and an elite level shot. Like many offensively gifted players, the defensive side of the puck could use some improvement.

Only time will tell, but on paper the Sabres look to be a contender again with some grade 'A' talent taken in the first round of the 2012 NHL Draft.