If you like following the story of a long shot, hitch your wagon to Brendan Ranford.

When the Flyers took Ranford with the 209th – and second-to-last – pick in the 2010 draft, there probably wasn't anybody paying attention and undoubtedly there were no expectations. It is just a few months later though, and the savvy Ranford is tearing up the WHL for the Kamloops Blazers. Ranford is second in the league in scoring and will likely pass Los Angeles prospect Linden Vey, who will miss some time while attending Team Canada's world junior tryout camp.

The nephew of former NHL goalie Bill Ranford has scored 24 goals and 20 assists in just 26 games in his third WHL season. Ranford notched 29 goals and 36 assists in 72 games last year, but didn't get attention from some scouts because of a deadly combination – less than average size and average skating.

Red Line Report pegged Ranford as a fourth-rounder (108th overall) and ISS ranked him 136th

(fifth round). Red Line compared Ranford's playing style to another former Western leaguer -- Kris Versteeg.

Most saw the offensive skill that Ranford is flashing this year, but obviously, there were concerns about his ability to use it at the next level. He battles hard and doesn't shy away from the physical play, but his size prevents him from winning many puck battles.

The plucky left winger has a knack for creating turnovers a la Pavel Datsyuk and turns them into scoring opportunities. He has decent quickness in tight spaces, but you'd like to see more speed from a smallish, skill player. He has a great shot and soft, quick hands for working with the puck.

He is a smart, versatile player that can be used at centre or the wing and is a valuable contributor to both special teams.

The Flyers got good value with their 7th round pick and while I'm still a concerned about Ranford's ability to score at the next level, I'm encouraged by his development this year. If he's able to add some strength – especially to his legs and core – he will be faster and tougher to knock off the puck.

Ranford just looks like a hockey player and his appearance – combined with his missing tooth -- reminds me a little Jordan Eberle and his gap-toothed grin. Don't get too excited, but if you're the kind of investor who likes to buy penny stocks and then look like a genius when they pan out, I'd rate Ranford as a buy.

Upside: 25-25-50.

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