According to the Chinese Zodiac , the year of 2012 is the Year of the Dragon. In the hockey world, the 2012 NHL Entry Draft is shaping up to be loaded with top calibre defenseman, one of which just happens to be a (London) Knight and looking to battle the 2012 draft class dragons all the way to the top of the list. *The Dean's List* continues to highlight top prospects eligible for the 2012 NHL Draft and this week our attention turns to the first overall selection in the 2011 CHL Import Draft – Finnish defenseman Olli Määttä.

The London Knights have been the class act of the Ontario Hockey League ever since the Hunter brothers grabbed the reigns and it's been a franchise known to be very aggressive in acquiring talent. On June 29th, London continued their pursuit of top notch talent and made a bold trade with the Barrie Colts to acquire the first overall selection of the 2011 CHL Import Draft. Many people believed that 2012 top prospect Mikhail Grigorenko was their target but Mark Hunter passed over the budding star forward as well as Carolina Hurricanes' prospect Victor Rask to select Olli Määttä - the young defender from Jyvaskyla, Finland. Selecting Määttä was a good choice for the young London Knights franchise as Määttä had expressed his interest in coming to Canada to pursue his NHL dream. Celebrating his seventeeth birthday a few weeks ago, London gets several years out of Määttä rather than potentially losing a player like Grigorenko after one season.

Olli Määttä's stock has been rising quickly since being named to his country's team for the 2011 Under-20 World Junior Championship last year as the youngest player ever for Team Finland. While his minutes were limited as a freshman, Määttä was able to briefly display his his calm, cool and collected style of play that scouts have come to love about him. In the same year, Määttä played a more vital role for the 2011 Under-18 Finland team where he registered a goal and four points (in six games) on his way to being named as one of Finland's top three players. The six-foot-two-inch defenseman projects to be a solid two-way defender capable of doing it all – hitting, defending and contributing offensively when needed as well. Olli has shown that his strongest assets are his size, physicality and ability to keep his opponents in check using very good body positioning. Määttä will certainly need to improve his skating for him to fully reach his potential as his acceleration and top end speed are quite average at this point.

Coming into the 2011-12 OHL season, Olli will have a chance to earn valuable ice time alongside either Jarred Tinordi (Montreal Canadiens prospect) or Scott Harrington (Pittsburgh Penguins prospect) to hone his skills and adjust to the North American game. Since arriving in London for training camp, the reports on Olli Määttä have been promising. Määttä has been one of the Knights' better players throughout training camp and a few exhibition games. The jury is still out on Olli Määttä's offensive upside but he does show flashes of productivity and has proved to be an effective puck moving defenseman with strong puck skills leaving something for fantasy owners to chew on as this young defenseman continues to develop. The big Finn prides himself on being a complete defenseman and while none of his skills are "elite", Olli Määttä's rounded game will be extremely attractive as NHL General Managers prepare for the 2012 NHL Draft. *The Dean's List* has little doubt that Määttä will become a first round draft pick but he's a player who could sneak into the Top 10 with a strong rookie season in the Ontario Hockey League this year.

Be sure to follow *The Dean's List* on twitter @rossyyoungblood and at DobberHockey.com as he releases features on future players of the NHL.