

Draft Stock Watch - Impressions from the 2012 WJC

Written by Brendan Ross

Saturday, 14 January 2012 12:21 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 January 2012 23:59



The Dean's List would like to congratulate Sweden on winning the Gold Medal in a thrilling fashion against the defending champions, Team Russia, as both nations provided us prospect junkies with plenty of talented players to watch. Despite Canada not competing in a Gold Medal match for the first time in eleven years the Sweden-Russia final was just as exciting as if the Canucks were actually there. Prior to the 2012 Under-20 World Junior Championship (WJC), The Dean's List [took an in-depth look at a few 2012 NHL draft eligible](#) players representing their home nations in the competition.

These teenage hockey players showcased their talents and showed the world why they are considered the elite of the upcoming draft class. Every year in the WJC, players use the opportunity to improve their draft stock while others struggle to leave their mark and see their stock decline. On top of the risers and fallers, there are always a few lesser-known draft eligible players that catch the eyes of the scouts improving their draft stock and the 2012 draft class is

Draft Stock Watch - Impressions from the 2012 WJC

Written by Brendan Ross

Saturday, 14 January 2012 12:21 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 January 2012 23:59

no different. The Dean's List recaps the performances of several elite players entering the 2012 NHL Entry Draft as well as introduces you a few players relatively unknown. Beginning with the lesser-knowns, let's get on with it...

Andrei Vasilevski (G, Tolpar Ufa/Russia)

When an underage netminder nudges out two older goaltenders for the starting position on the defending World Junior Championship roster then it is time to take notice. Andrei Vasilevski is a '94-born goaltender starting to gain a reputation as a clutch goaltender on the international stage coming into the tournament but he's solidified that now. Blessed with great size at six-foot-three-inches, Vasilevski posted a tournament leading .953 save percentage and 2.01 goals-against-average (2nd) and two shutouts to lead the tournament. In the semi-final game versus Canada Coach Bragin relieved Vasilevski during Canada's surging comeback and replaced him with teammate and 2012-eligible Andrei Makarov (no slouch either) but the young Russian Vasilevski should hold his head high as his two player of the game nominations and impressive showing at the 2012 WJC will certainly improve his draft stock.

Draft Stock: Riser (Top 2 Round Pick)

Teodors Blugers (C/W Sattuck St. Mary's HS/Latvia)

Draft Stock Watch - Impressions from the 2012 WJC

Written by Brendan Ross

Saturday, 14 January 2012 12:21 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 January 2012 23:59

As an August baby, "Teddy" Blugers enters the 2012 NHL draft as one of the youngest players eligible but the Latvian-born Shattuck St. Mary's forward left quite the impression with scouts at the recent WJC. Coming from a high school hockey program that features hard working players such as Sidney Crosby, Zach Parise and Jonathan Toews it really is not surprising that the six-foot center/winger comes with an admirable work ethic. In his first World Junior Championship, Blugers potted a goal and two assists as Latvia's second youngest player. Scoring 33 points in 20 games for Sattuck St. Mary's, Blugers is starting to receive some draft attention and the versatile forward has shown some great faceoff skills early on in his career too. After a strong WJC showing, TDL expects Teodors Blugers to receive attention as a mid-to-late round draft pick and he could end up as a potential steal if he goes too late.

Draft Stock: □ Riser (Mid-Late Round Pick)

Christoph Bertschy (C/RW, Bern/Switzerland)

Undersized forward (5'9", 161 lbs) Christoph Bertschy took over for Switzerland when Calgary Flames prospect Sven Bartschi suffered an injury and really did wonders to improve his draft

Draft Stock Watch - Impressions from the 2012 WJC

Written by Brendan Ross

Saturday, 14 January 2012 12:21 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 January 2012 23:59

stock. Bertschy showed a real fiestiness and a nose for the net providing the spark that Switzerland needed to "get up" against the deeper and more talented opponents. With two goals and two assists in six games Christoph Bertschy has cemented himself as one of Switzerland's top prospects for the '12 draft.

Draft Stock: Riser (3rd/4th Round)

Radek Faksa (C, Kitchener Rangers/Czech Republic)

Climbing the draft boards quickly is big centre Radek Faksa of the Kitchener Rangers and he came into the WJC red hot. Faksa did not exactly dominate (2 goals) as some may have hoped but he continued to play a responsible game and showed that he can be counted on in a penalty kill role as well. As an underaged player, Faksa displayed a willingness to challenge his opponents on every shift and demonstrated to the world his good passing and shooting skills as well. Faksa plays a very North American game and NHL teams likely see him as one of the safer picks of this draft class.

Draft Stock Watch - Impressions from the 2012 WJC

Written by Brendan Ross

Saturday, 14 January 2012 12:21 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 January 2012 23:59

Draft Stock: □ Holding Steady (Mid 1st Round Pick)

Tomas Hertl (C, Slavia Praha/Czech Republic)

Hertl had an impressionable WJC competition as he tied Petr Holik for the Czech scoring lead with three goals and five points. The elder draft eligible is the top rated Czech playing outside of North American and scouts like Hertl's combination of playmaking skills and his ability to engage in the cycle as seen a lot in North American hockey. The question surrounding Hertl has been his skating ability but skating is an area that can be improved so do not expect that to discourage NHL teams too much.

Draft Stock: Riser (Late 1st/Early 2nd Round Pick)

Draft Stock Watch - Impressions from the 2012 WJC

Written by Brendan Ross

Saturday, 14 January 2012 12:21 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 January 2012 23:59

Olli Maatta (D, London Knights/Finland)

Unfortunately, Maatta was not able to finish his first game of the WJC after being nailed by Canada's Boone Jenner causing him to miss the remainder of the tournament with a concussion. The draft eligible blueliner was expected to take on a big role for Team Finland and the injury really hurt his chances of improving his draft stock.

Draft Stock: □ Fell Slightly (1st Round Pick)

Ville Pokka (D, Karpat/Finland)

With the absence of Maatta, Ville Pokka was the recipient of valuable icetime on a young

Draft Stock Watch - Impressions from the 2012 WJC

Written by Brendan Ross

Saturday, 14 January 2012 12:21 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 January 2012 23:59

Finnish roster and quite frankly he flourished. In fact, Pokka improved his draft stock as much or more than any draft eligible competing in the 2012 WJC leading all Finnish blueliners in points with one goal and four points in seven games. Pokka displayed his ability to make clean crisp outlet passes out of the defensive zone and played solid defensively throughout the WJC.

Draft Stock: Riser (Late 1st/Early 2nd Round Pick)

Zemgus Girgensons (C, Dubuque/Latvia)

Draft eligible prospects starring on below-average WJC teams such as Latvia tend to have an uphill battle to prove themselves given that the teams usually lack a supporting cast to help the "star" player. Moreover, the star player can be more easily contained by the opposing team's top defensive tandem as the lack of Latvia's team depth did not garner much attention elsewhere. Girgensons played strong throughout the competition but teams successfully contained his offensive output for the most part (2 goals). Zemgus did exhibit the ability to fight through checks and was able to display his pro-calibre shot several times but overall the Latvian star did not improve his stock too much despite being named one of Latvia's top players.

Draft Stock: Falling slightly (Top 15 Pick)

Ryan Murray (D, Everett Silvertips/Canada)

For the casual viewer, Ryan Murray may have left a bitter taste in the mouths of some (especially disappointed Canadians) after struggling through Canada's semi-final loss to the Russians. In that game, Canada's only first year draft eligible player ran into some unfortunate luck where he had an offensive zone turnover lead to the Russian's opening goal which was followed by a few more quick goals that seemed to all deflect off of Murray's stick, leg or foot. However, during Canada's third period comeback Don Hay knew how important the young defender was to Canada's success and Murray logged huge minutes alongside Scott Harrington and only finished minus-one after a horrific start. In the Bronze Medal game, Murray was fantastic and was able to show why he was the youngest captain named in Everett Silvertips history as he controlled the play with his superb skating and tremendous puck confidence. Ryan Murray is one of the elite of the 2012 NHL draft class.

Draft Stock: Holding Steady (Top 5 pick)

Draft Stock Watch - Impressions from the 2012 WJC

Written by Brendan Ross

Saturday, 14 January 2012 12:21 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 January 2012 23:59

Jacob Trouba (D, US NTDP, USHL/United States)

The only draft eligible player on a USA team that left Alberta severely disappointed after a seventh place finish, Trouba was one of the few bright spots for the Americans. Jacob cracked the roster mainly due to the pre-tournament injury to 2013 draft eligible prospect Seth Jones but he showed fans why he has been ranked so high by NHL scouts. The 2012 WJC marked Trouba's official "coming out party" as he performed like a veteran, especially defensively, as USA's youngest player. Trouba finished the competition with two assists in six games and with his booming shot and physicality he should become a hot commodity for the upcoming draft.

Draft Stock: Riser (Solidly in Top 10, Pushing Top 5)

Filip Forsberg (C, Leksand/Sweden)

Draft Stock Watch - Impressions from the 2012 WJC

Written by Brendan Ross

Saturday, 14 January 2012 12:21 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 January 2012 23:59

Forsberg was lucky enough to bring Sweden home a Gold Medal for the first time in 31 years and it occurred participating in his first World Junior Championship. The Swedes had good depth of veteran forwards but the coaching staff showed a ton of trust in Filip as he skated during critical moments of the game over some of the more "experience" Swedish players. Statistically, Forsberg did not light up the gamesheet as he notched only one point in seven games of action but it was easy to observe why scouts are raving about his "potential". Blessed with good size and better hockey instincts, Filip Forsberg is another player capable of controlling the game on his own. It is clear that Forsberg has a well-developed defensive aspect of his game and it shouldn't be too long before his offensive game takes flight.

Draft Stock: Small Riser (Top 5 Pick)

Sebastian Collberg (RW, Frolunda/Sweden)

Collberg was another draft eligible player competing for Sweden and identifying his strengths were easy - blazing speed, good hands and a wicked shot. In fact, there are people that believe Collberg is a better prospect than Forsberg but the rankings have disagreed with that assumption. The Dean's List feels that the rankings accurately reflect the potential of each player. Collberg's strengths were easier to notice during the WJC given his offensive production (7 points) but TDL believes that Sebastian is a player that is better suited as a complementary player rather than the go-to guy.

Draft Stock: Riser (Top 15 Pick)

Mikhail Grigorenko (C, Quebec Remparts/Russia)

Yakupov's biggest competitor for the number one status is Russian countrymate Mikhail Grigorenko. In the WJC, Grigorenko teamed up with linemates Nikita Kucherov and Nikita Gusev (who should be drafted as well after a very strong tournament) and the line displayed tremendous chemistry. Unfortunately, Grigorenko injured himself in the second tournament game and played sparingly the remainder of the competition. The big (6'3") centre is an attractive player for NHL teams considering NHL teams like the idea of building around a big centreman that can carry the pace of the game. Grigorenko has great puck protection skills and, despite nursing an injury throughout the medal rounds, Mikhail was very noticeable and still effective at times for Team Russia.

Draft Stock: Holding Steady but missed an opportunity to really push Yakupov for 1st overall (Top 3 pick)

Nail Yakupov (RW, Sarnia Sting/Russia)

The player favoured (by most) to go first overall in the 2012 NHL Entry Draft, Nail Yakupov was making headlines throughout the tournament. Whether it was scouts critiquing his game, Yakupov chirpin' in broken English to the media after beating Canada 6-5 or the knee injury in overtime of the Gold Medal game, Yakupov was part of a story. Yakupov entered the competition with high expectations and the hockey world was watching closely to get their first glimpse of the budding star. Russia boasted a talented and deep roster where every player (save Kuznetsov) had to earn their opportunity for ice time and Yakupov was not able to play the "star" role as he's become accustomed to in Sarnia. Yakupov is without Sarnia Sting teammate Alex Galchenyuk as his set-up man due to injury but Nail has shown his adaptability by honing his playmaking skills and increasing his assist totals as a result. Yakupov's playmaking style of play continued in the WJC as Yakupov tallied a tournament leading nine assists for Russia. Fans quickly learned why Yakupov is projected to go first overall with his dazzling puck skills and skating ability that complement his tireless puck pursuit skills. Unfortauntely, Nail Yakupov injured his knee in overtime of the Gold Medal game and the MRI results indicate that he will miss the next three to four weeks which is good news considering no surgery is required.

Draft Stock: □ Holding Steady (Top 2 Pick)

Draft Stock Watch - Impressions from the 2012 WJC

Written by Brendan Ross

Saturday, 14 January 2012 12:21 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 January 2012 23:59

Note: Draft eligible players Pontus Aberg (Sweden) and Martin Frk (Czech Republic) were injured before the competition nixing their participation in the 2012 Under-20 World Junior Championship.

As the season continues to chug along, the pressure to perform consistently at elite levels remain high for these draft eligible players. The slightest slump can alter their draft stock and these teenagers are well aware of the consequences. Fortunately, draft eligible players who have had a lack luster opening to their draft season or suffered injuries still have plenty of time to redeem themselves and much of the scouting world is just getting started in preparation for the upcoming 2012 NHL Entry Draft.

The next stop for The Dean's List in viewing the 2012 draft class is in Kelowna, British Columbia as the 2012 CHL Top Prospects Game is set for February 1st.

Be sure to follow The Dean's List on twitter @rossyoungblood for all the latest prospect and CHL news.

Draft Stock Watch - Impressions from the 2012 WJC

Written by Brendan Ross

Saturday, 14 January 2012 12:21 - Last Updated Saturday, 14 January 2012 23:59
