

The 2013 Draft: Swedes are a Good Investment

Written by Brendan Ross

Friday, 16 November 2012 18:08 - Last Updated Sunday, 18 November 2012 11:10



There has always been something about drafting Swedish hockey players that excites *The Dean's List*.

The excitement could originate because most Swedish players play such a similar North American-style of hockey that us Canadians play. Or, maybe it is the fact that Swedes have a long tradition of proving to be reliable and contributing NHL players. Either way, *The Dean's List*

has a tendency to favour Swedish talent, and until they prove us wrong then we will remain captivated.

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Led by the Borje Salming in 1973, the first European to journey over to the NHL, many great Swedes have followed suit, including Hakan Loob, Kent Nilsson, Niklas Lidstrom, [Peter](#)

[Forsberg](#)

[arkus Naslund](#)

, [M](#)

[Mats Sundin](#)

[Daniel Alfredsson](#)

[Henrik Zetterberg](#)

and, most recently, Niklas B

ä

ckstrom. In recent NHL Entry Drafts,

[Victor Hedman](#)

(2009),

[Gabriel Landeskog](#)

(2011),

[Adam Larsson](#)

(2011),

[Mika Zibanejad](#)

(2011), Jonas Brodin (2011), Hampus Lindholm (2012), and Filip Forsberg (2012) will continue following in the footsteps of these Swedish hockey greats. And the flow of talent will not stop with these players as the 2013 draft class will continue to add some Swedish gems in the first round at the Prudential Centre in New Jersey next spring.

This week, *The Dean's List* focuses on a trio of Swedish forwards looking to crack the first round at the 2013 NHL Entry Draft.

Elias Lindholm , C (Brynäs, SEL)

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The 17-year-old Brynäs scoring star has quickly become the next player to watch from Sweden, scoring five goals and 14 points through 22 Elitserien games, including 10 points in his first 10 games. To put those numbers into perspective, Swedish stars [Peter Forsberg](#) and Nicklas Bäckstrom posted 17 points (23 games) and 26 points (46 games), respectively, in their draft years. Good hockey bloodlines run deep in Elias Lindholm's lineage as he is the son of former Los Angeles Kings' forward Mikael Lindholm, and cousin of Detroit Red Wings' prospect Calle Järnkrok. In fact, Järnkrok and Lindholm sit first and second in Brynäs team scoring.

Lindholm is a great two-way player that possesses tremendous hockey intelligence, above-average skating, great puck-handling and a physical element in his game. His ability to engage aggressively in puck battles and maintain possession is fantastic for a player with average physical attributes (6'0", 192 pounds). NHL scouts absolutely fancy Lindholm's complete package of skill, intelligence and drive as he projects to be one of the more well-rounded players taken in the 2013 draft.

Often compared to [Peter Forsberg](#) for his mature two-way skilled game, Lindholm has tremendous potential and is a name that will continue to creep up in discussions for the 2013 draft class' top five. Beyond Lindholm's mature game, lofty comparisons and accolades (2011/12 J20 SuperElit Top Forward and Most Points Award), he is a player that offers good versatility with his ability to play at center or on the wing.

Call it a gut feeling but *The Dean's List* believes Lindholm could develop into an NHL superstar much in a similar way that [Jonathan](#)

Toews

. He

just has that "it" factor.

Like the Blackhawks captain, Lindholm competes hard, understands the game at an elite level, adapts to almost any situation and, most importantly, improves his teammates around him. Much like his Swedish NHL predecessors did, Elias Lindholm definitely possesses franchise forward potential. Look for Elias Lindholm to leave his impression when North Americans are exposed to him as a member of the upcoming 2013 World Junior Swedish roster. Currently, *TD* *L* as Lindholm ranked just outside the top five, but he will definitely challenge the likes of Aleksander Barkov, Jonathan Drouin and Sean Monahan for a top five spot.

Early Professional Projection (Upside): Finesse first line forward

{youtube}tQVR-1g5XUE{/youtube}

André Burakovsky, LW/RW (Malmö, Allsvenskan)

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While some people might be leery of his lack of offensive production, it is important to understand that statistics are not the sole indicator of future success.

The lanky Austrian-born winger has represented Sweden several times early in his career and has shown that his excellent hockey sense, powerful skating stride and competitive nature make him a constant threat on either side of the puck. At the 2012 Under-17 World Challenge, Burakovsky was among Sweden's most potent players, finishing third in team scoring with four goals and eight points in six tournament games.

Burakovsky shows good promise offensively, but it is his attention to detail that projects such great pro upside. He can be particularly useful on the defensive side of the puck. It is this "potential" that has Burakovsky sitting as a potential draft board climber. When this Swede realizes his own potential, watch out.

Through 19 games in Sweden's Allsvenskan league, Burakovsky has scored one goal and added three assists for Malmö. TDL has Burakovsky ranked 15th in an extremely deep first round.

Early Professional Projection (Upside): Top-six cerebral winger

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Jacob de la Rose, C/W (Leksand, Allsvenskan)

The Dean's List first caught Jacob de la Rose live last year at the Under-17 World Challenge in Windsor, Canada. This versatile winger showed great pro potential as a 16-year-old.

Jacob was one of Sweden`s top players at the tournament and showed a great power game that is derived from a strong skating stride, great puck control and a clever instinctual approach to the game.

Shift after shift of watching de la Rose compete, it is easy to see that he lacks that game-breaking offensive skill that so many Swedes possess. However, it is de la Rose's impressive compete level that scouts are so enamored with. His physical pursuit of the puck and willingness to battle makes him a difficult forward to contain. But in a draft class with great depth at the offensive forward position, de la Rose is currently straddling the fine line between a first and second round selection right now.

The Dean's List will continue to keep a close eye on this budding two-way forward, but until he shows more offensive prowess he will remain on the outside of the first round (33

rd

) in our rankings.

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Follow [@RossyYoungblood](#) on Twitter as he continues to follow prospects and the #2013NHLDraft class. Read his work on [DobberProspects](#) as well.

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