Letang deal with Penguins still in limbo

By Josh Yohe

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Updated 9 hours ago

The Penguins knew this July 1 would be quieter than in previous years.

But this one was really quiet.

Kris Letang's contract remains in limbo almost 48 hours after an agreement nearly was reached. Forwards Pascal Dupuis, Matt Cooke, Craig Adams, Jarome Iginla and Brenden Morrow moved another day closer to unrestricted free agency.

The free agency signing period, which usually begins July 1 but has been moved back because of the season-delaying lockout, begins Friday.

Negotiations between general manager Ray Shero and Letang's agent, Kent Hughes, produced a monetary agreement during NHL Draft weekend in New Jersey.

However, a snag remains.

Letang wants a verbal guarantee that he will not be traded during the next 12 months should he sign the eight-year deal that the Penguins have offered. The contract would give Letang $7.25 million per season. It also would give him leverage with a limited no-movement clause, meaning he could be traded to 15 teams of his choice.

The catch is that the no-trade clause wouldn't be effective immediately. It is stated in the collective bargaining agreement that movement clauses may not be included in previously signed contracts, and the Penguins can't buy out the final year of Letang's most recent deal, which pays him $3.5 million annually.

Rather, the contract they are negotiating serves as an extension, as the Norris Trophy nominee must play out the final year of the four-year, $14 million deal.

This is different than deals negotiated by Shero with stars Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin. Although they still had one year remaining on their previous contracts, Crosby and Malkin immediately were permitted to trigger the no-movement clauses because they already had played out their years of restricted free agency.
Letang will not have accomplished that until the end of the 2013-14 season.

Shero and Hughes plan to meet again before Friday. The Penguins would like to have this situation cleared up before focusing their attention on a list of would-be free agents.

Three of the Penguins' impending free agents comprise the core of the team's penalty-killing unit. That group, which underachieved in the regular season but thrived in the playoffs, could have a different look next season.

Dupuis, Cooke and Adams are arguably the team's three best penalty killers. All could be gone in a matter of days, should Shero be unable to sign them.

Center Jordan Staal, who once joined the three free agents in coach Dan Bylsma's top four penalty-killing look, was traded last summer.

The Penguins still are involved in negotiations with Dupuis' agent, Allan Walsh. Although no deal has been reached — and Dupuis possibly could make more money on the open market — Walsh and Shero continued speaking Monday.

Shero also will be speaking with Adams' agent, Neil Sheehy, in the next few days.

Although Shero and Sheehy did not speak Monday, the agent expects talks to resume later this week. The Penguins would like to bring Adams back to play in the fourth-line role that has been his since he was claimed off waivers from Chicago in 2009.

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A year later, Penguins are pleased with drafted defensemen Maatta, Pouliot

By Josh Yohe

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Updated 10 hours ago

Penguins general manager Ray Shero insists that his preference is not to trade star defenseman Kris Letang.

If Shero is forced to deal Letang, who has just one year remaining on his contract, he will do so with the knowledge that more potential stars are in his franchise's pipeline.

Defensemen Derrick Pouliot and Olli Maatta are on their way.

“Looking back at last year,” Shero said, “yeah, I'm pretty happy with those two. I think we did very well.”
It remains to be seen when Pouliot and Maatta will make an impact with the Penguins. Both are eligible to return to their junior teams next season, and it is unlikely either will play in the NHL during the 2013-14 season.

But the organization is convinced both will make an impact at some point.

The Penguins believe those two represent a significant portion of their future.

Pouliot was selected with the eighth overall pick in the 2012 draft. That pick belonged to the Penguins only for a few moments before they made the selection; the Carolina Hurricanes had just parted with it as part of the Jordan Staal trade.

Pouliot, viewed as a pure power-play quarterback, has drawn comparisons to Florida's Brian Campbell and could project as an offensive star.

“We really like how Pouliot can work the power play,” Shero said. “He's just got that great vision.”

Pouliot produced 45 points in 44 games for the Portland Winterhawks of the WHL last season and has averaged nearly a point per game during his past two seasons. He is in the mold of past and present Penguins defensemen — Ryan Whitney, Alex Goligoski and Letang — who excel in the transition game and in the offensive zone.

While Pouliot is considered by many the top prospect in the Penguins' organization, he isn't on the rise like Maatta.

The Penguins acquired Maatta with the 22nd overall selection.

Maatta was considered a top-15 player in the draft, and, in fact, the Penguins had him pegged to be selected long before their 22nd pick.

When he was there, it didn't take them long to race to the podium.

“At 22,” Shero said, “that was a really solid pick.”

Randy Sexton, the Penguins’ assistant director of amateur scouting, is pleased with Maatta’s progress.

Maatta has emerged as a star, playing alongside another key Penguins prospect in defenseman Scott Harrington, for the Ontario Hockey League powerhouse London Knights.

“Obviously we couldn't have forecasted that Maatta was still going to be there with the 22nd pick,” Sexton said. “It's just that every team has a different philosophy to the draft, so you never really know what might happen. We were happy to get him there, that's for sure.”
Maatta produced 39 points in 58 games while logging huge minutes at London. He and Harrington have become shutdown defensemen under the tutelage of coach Dale Hunter in London.

Although Maatta played three games for Wilkes-Barre/Scranton in the AHL playoffs, at 18 he remains eligible to play in London next season.

“We are delighted with Olli,” Sexton said.

Shero won’t project when the duo will be ready for the NHL but remains pleased. Maatta and Pouliot will be present when the Penguins host their rookie camp this month.

“That's going to be a big camp for them,” Shero said. “I love what I see right now.”

Cheswick's Liberati says being drafted by Canucks 'surreal'

By Bill West

Published: Tuesday, July 2, 2013, 12:01 a.m.
Updated 9 hours ago

The Vancouver Canucks hat sat relatively untouched in the Liberati family's household for several years. It held no particular significance — just another item owned by a hockey-loving family.

On Sunday night, the cap became meaningful in a way the Liberatis barely had imagined. And Mario Liberati, 13, was wise enough to grab it and put it on when the time came to celebrate with his older brother, Miles.

Miles Liberati, 18, a Cheswick native, sat with his family and watched the NHL Draft on television Sunday night when his name popped up late in the seventh round, the No. 205 pick overall. Vancouver chose him, a 6-foot, 195-pound defenseman for the London Knights of the Ontario Hockey League who attended Central Catholic.

“I don't think it has sunk in yet,” he said. “It was really surreal seeing my name on the screen. I remember watching the draft in the past and wondering what it'd be like to see my name up there.

“I think it'll really sink in once I get out there” for rookie camp.

Liberati will head to Vancouver for camp, which begins Saturday. As the Canucks' final pick in the draft, he's no lock to earn a contract, a reality he acknowledges.
But he's closer to his dream than at any point in his hockey career, which started at age 5 with youth games at the Harmarville Blade Runners.

During the past year, Liberati skated as a rookie for the Knights. In the regular season, he played in 42 games, scored three goals, had six assists and was plus-5. In the playoffs, he earned time in 10 games for the Knights, who won the OHL title.

Getting drafted struck him as a possibility — 50-50 at best, he said. He checked the NHL's central scouting rankings, which at one point listed him as No. 88 among all North American position players other than goalies; he fell to 150 by the season's end. And his agent, Todd Reynolds, indicated several teams were interested, the Canucks chief among them.

All the information left Liberati uncertain. To find a distraction Sunday, he and a friend headed to Pittsburgh National Golf Club in Gibsonia for a round. Yet, he still checked for draft updates via Twitter.

Home after the round of golf, he settled in for the night, and as the draft reached its final round, he still hadn't received any news.

Then, with eight teams left to make choices — the Canucks were seventh from last — his cell phone went off because of a text message from Knights assistant general manager Rob Simpson, who congratulated Liberati for a reason that was not yet quite clear.

“As soon as he sent it, I told my parents, ‘I might've just got picked,’ ” Liberati said. “Then we looked at the screen, and the Canucks were up next.”

Congratulatory messages — some from close friends, others from guys who sharpened his skates or cut his grass — poured in via text message and Twitter for the rest of the evening. As Liberati soaked it all in, he also began to contemplate the challenge ahead.

“I got a little nervous,” he said. “I'm going to try to go into it with confidence. ... I think making the team would maybe be two or three years away.”

If he fails to earn a contract offer at camp, he'll continue to play for the Knights, who he hopes will entrust him with more ice time. Liberati said the Canucks have his draft rights for two years.

“It really was a confidence booster and good for me for going into next year,” he said of his selection. “I think next year with more ice time (in London), I'll be able to show them what I really can do.”

Kris Letang contract situation remains on hold
Is no news good news, bad news or no news at all concerning the ongoing Kris Letang contract negotiations? That's open to interpretation after NHL general managers, including the Penguins' Ray Shero, spent most of Monday delayed at Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey and not negotiating contracts.

The Penguins and Letang apparently are still working out the details of a long-term contract that would keep the defenseman in a Penguins uniform beyond the 2013-14 season. But the Penguins and Letang's agent, Kent Hughes, were mum on the subject Monday, one day after news broke that the two sides had agreed on the basic parameters of an eight-year contract that would pay Letang $7.25 million per season.

Shero did not speak with reporters the day after the draft because there was no news to report, according to a team spokesperson. This was partly due to the fact that Shero was delayed in his return to Pittsburgh because inclement weather wreaked havoc with air travel out of Newark.

Shero was not alone. Many other general managers and player agents met a similar fate as their Mondays turned into unproductive work days.

It was not a good time to be at the mercy of the airlines, especially for Shero, who faces a busy week. In addition to finalizing a deal with Letang, Shero has until Friday to work out deals with three players who will be unrestricted free agents by the end of the week.

Pascal Dupuis, Matt Cooke and Craig Adams can test the free-agent market Friday if they are not signed to contracts before then.

Allan Walsh, agent for Pascal Dupuis, said talks are ongoing.

"Nothing new to report at this time," Walsh said.

It should be noted that under terms of the NHL's new collective bargaining agreement, free-agents-to-be such as Dupuis, Cooke and Adams can speak to prospective employers for two days (Wednesday and Thursday) before the free-agent signing period begins.

This new clause in the collective bargaining agreement allows teams to gauge the interest free agents have in signing with them and to get a sense of what it would cost to work out a contract. Players can get a feel for how much interest there will be for them on the open market and, perhaps, what clubs would be willing to pay for them.

This is the first time the NHL has had such an audition period for free agents. In the past, such contact between players and teams before the start of the signing period would have constituted tampering.
To bolster their goaltending depth, the Penguins traded up in the 2013 NHL Draft in order to select Tristan Jarry of the Western Hockey League’s Edmonton Oil Kings. Pittsburgh sent picks No. 50 and 89 to the Columbus Blue Jackets to secure the 44th overall slot in the second round, where the Penguins took Jarry with their first selection of the draft on Sunday at Prudential Center in New Jersey.

“We see a potential starting goalie,” said assistant director of amateur scouting Randy Sexton of Jarry. “He’s got the technical foundation and the size we think to be a starter. So when he was still available, we asked Ray to make the trade to move up to get him.”

The Penguins have stockpiled a number of elite defensive prospects on their blue line over the last few years, and drafting Jarry has helped them do the same at the goaltending position. The Penguins now have four solid goaltending prospects with the addition of Jarry, and the team began building its depth at the position at last year’s draft in Pittsburgh – where they took a pair of goalies in Matthew Murray (Sault Ste. Marie) and Sean Maguire (Boston University) in the third and fourth rounds, respectively.

The Penguins then signed Eric Hartzell in April after the Hobey Baker Award (best college hockey player) finalist helped Quinnipiac earn the school’s first-ever Frozen Four berth and win several major awards this year along the way, including the USA Hockey College Player of the Year.

As of now, the Penguins goaltending tandem for next season is set. Veterans Marc-Andre Fleury and Tomas Vokoun are returning and general manager Ray Shero and head coach Dan Bylsma have emphatically voiced their support for both men.

But it’s Shero’s job to balance keeping the big picture in perspective while trying to win championships right now, and making sure the Penguins have players in the organization capable of stepping in between the pipes down the road is crucial to future success. And right now, the team believes they have that.

“We’re very pleased with the players that we have,” Sexton said. “Murray’s made good strides as has Sean Maguire at BU, and certainly we’ve got the college hockey player of the year with
Eric Hartzell. So we think by adding Tristan Jarry to that group, we finally have some good quality depth staggered in the pipeline at the goaltending position.”

Jarry has an abundance of potential, but first he must prove he can handle the starter’s role in Edmonton before even thinking about handling the starter’s role in Pittsburgh some day, as he has spent each of his two seasons in the Western Hockey League backing up Calgary Flames prospect Laurent Brossoit,

And Jarry will get that opportunity this season, as Brossoit will be moving on to the next step of his career with the Flames – leaving Jarry to assume the No. 1 role for the 2013-14 campaign.

“(Jarry) didn’t get a lot of ice time this year because he was playing behind a Calgary draft pick in Edmonton, but he will be the starter next year,” Sexton said. “We’d like to see him play at least 45-50 games as the starter in Edmonton. They’ll be strong again next year, so that will be good. We’ll see how he’s able to handle the full-time workload, but we have every expectation he’ll be just fine.”

Jarry believes that he will be.

“I think it will be fun for me,” Jarry said. “It will see what I can do and give me a chance to take the ball and run with it.”

Cranberry UPMC-Pittsburgh Penguins Sports Complex to Include Rinks for Tournaments, Retail Store and Concession Stand

Posted by Jessica Sinichak (Editor), July 2, 2013 at 09:10 am – Patch.com

It’s possible residents and visitors will catch a glimpse of Sidney Crosby and other hockey stars at the new UPMC-Pittsburgh Penguins sports medicine facility and ice rinks proposed for the Village of Cranberry Woods in Cranberry.

At Monday’s Cranberry planning commission meeting, developers detailed plans for the brick and glass sports complex slated to be located along Route 228.

The 57-acre site, which will be built out in five phases, also includes two hotels, a six-story apartment building, conventional townhouses, “live-work” townhouses, retail and office space.

Roger Altmeyer, director of community project development for UPMC, said the roughly 175,000 square-foot facility would include two rinks of equal size to be used as determined by the Penguins organization.
One rink will be private ice with no rink-side seating. The other rink will have seating for 1,500.

Altmeyer said the Penguins would use the rink with the seating for selected public practices.

Pens spokesman Tom McMillan also has said the rinks could be used for high school hockey tournaments, development camps for Penguins hockey prospects, skating classes, public skating sessions and other programs.

“The Penguins obviously want to promote hockey in this community as much as they possibly can, so they’re going to try to accommodate whatever programs they can in there,” Altmeyer said.

UPMC will build and own the facility, which will be similar in nature to the UPMC sports performance complex on Pittsburgh's South Side that's used by the Steelers and the University of Pittsburgh and also includes sports medicine, practice and training facilities.

The Penguins will lease the ice rink and other facilities from the hospital. Don Rodgers and FRA Development are developing the property.

Altmeyer said the complex would be the primary training facility for the Penguins, replacing the space the team currently leases at the Iceoplex at Southpointe in Washington County.

The team also would use the rink for practice during the regular season when the ice isn’t available at the Consol Energy Center in Pittsburgh.

An oval-shaped locker room similar to the one at the Consol center also will be available to the team at the Cranberry facility.

Altmeyer said there would be a separate entrance and parking lot with 50 spaces for Pens players only. A security fence will surround the private parking lot. An additional 450 parking spaces will be available for the public.

Also included in the plans are a retail store and concession stand to be located at the main entrance to the building. Altmeyer said he believes the store would sell Penguins gear.

There will be a separate entrance for the medical side of the complex. The sports performance facility will include concussion and orthopedic programs, Altmeyer said.

“We will have activities on the first and second floor,” Altmeyer said of UPMC. “The Penguins primary activity will be on the first floor, although there’s going to be a little area on top where the GM and owners can observe what’s going on the rink.”
Planning officials are tentatively expected to give a recommendation on the project at the August planning commission meeting. Next, the Cranberry Board of Supervisors would vote on whether to give final approval to the plans.

Altmeyer said he hopes to begin grading on the site in the fall. Construction on the development could begin taking place next spring.

“We want to be open in the summer of 2015,” he said.

He added UPMC and the Penguins conducted a “very significant” two-year search process before setting on Cranberry to build the sports complex.

“The access is great,” he said of Cranberry. “It’s a dynamic community.”

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**Bettman: Olympic talks continue in positive manner**

By Dan Rosen - NHL.com Senior Writer

NEW YORK -- National Hockey League Commissioner Gary Bettman said that a five-plus hour meeting Monday regarding potential participation in the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia was constructive, but there is still work to be done before an agreement can be completed to send NHL players to a fifth straight Olympics.

"Soon, very soon," Commissioner Bettman said when asked for a timeline to complete the agreement.

Commissioner Bettman and NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly met with representatives from the National Hockey League Players' Association and the International Ice Hockey Federation at the League's office. NHLPA Executive Director Donald Fehr and IIHF President Rene Fasel flanked Commissioner Bettman when he spoke to the media following the meeting.

"There are still some I's to dot and T's to cross," Commissioner Bettman said. "Rene has to report back to the IOC [International Olympic Committee], Don has a meeting with his executive board beginning next week. So while we're on track and things are moving along, I think it's fair to say we're not quite ready to announce it's done."

The NHLPA Executive Board is scheduled to meet in Chicago from July 8-10. Fasel is expected to take his report on the negotiations to the IOC and other national federations this week.
Commissioner Bettman has been granted permission by the NHL Board of Governors to make a deal on Olympic participation without further Board approval.

"We're on a compact schedule and everybody is working very hard," Commissioner Bettman said. "We seem to be pulling the oars in the same direction."

Fehr and Fasel echoed those sentiments.

"Certainly from my end, while we have made a lot of progress on a lot of issues, there are a few I dots and T crosses to do yet," Fehr said. "We have to turn it into final written documents and I do have to go back to my executive board as indicated, but things are moving along."

Fasel said he was "very happy and pleased" at the progress that was made in the meeting Monday.

"I'm confident that we will have a solution at the end," he said.

Draft recap: Breaking down eventful day by teams

Monday, 07.01.2013 / 2:56 PM / 2013 NHL Draft

By Adam Kimelman - NHL.com Deputy Managing Editor

The dust has settled on the 2013 NHL Draft, and the teams and scouts have returned home for some well-deserved time off.

It was an eventful day that saw 211 prospects join NHL organizations and eight players switch teams in 16 trades.

Each team arrived at Prudential Center with a plan in place and certain goals it wanted to accomplish. Here's a quick look at all 30 teams, what it was thought they would do, and what they left New Jersey with:

ANAHEIM DUCKS

The thought: They've invested heavily in young forwards recently, but with a draft deep in skilled forwards, would they look for another? Or would one of the rich crop of young blueliners be too much to pass on?

The results: The Ducks got a little of both. With their first-round pick they selected solid two-way blueliner Shea Theodore from the Seattle Thunderbirds of the Western Hockey League,
and in the second round got skilled Danish forward Nick Sorensen, who got stuck in a numbers crunch in 2012-13 with Quebec in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League. Finnish center Miro Aaltonen could turn into a steal in the sixth round if he recovers from a broken ankle.

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**BOSTON BRUINS**

**The thought:** Rumors swirled surrounding Tyler Seguin being a chip to get the Bruins back into the first round, but nothing came of those reported talks. With no immediate needs at the NHL level and no obvious deficiencies in the prospect pipeline, the Bruins could look to take the best player available with each of their six picks.

**The results:** Their first pick was Swedish defenseman Linus Arnesson, who spent most of the season with Djurgarden's top-level team in Sweden, also played for Sweden at the 2013 IIHF World Junior Championship and is a prospect to watch. Fourth-round pick center Ryan Fitzgerald will be watched closely -- he'll start at Boston College in the fall.

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**BUFFALO SABRES**

**The thought:** With two first-round picks and five in the top 69, the Sabres had a raft of options to fast-forward their rebuilding plan. There also was the option of looking to move forward Thomas Vanek and/or goaltender Ryan Miller to further sweeten any attempts to trade up, or acquire more NHL-ready assets.

**The results:** Buffalo held onto Vanek and Miller, and rather than move up, the Sabres stayed put and made a League-high 11 selections Sunday. They added a pair of behemoths on defense with their two first-round picks in 6-foot-4 Finnish blueliner Rasmus Ristolainen and 6-5 Russian Nikita Zadorov. They added another defenseman, Jamie McBain, along with a second-round pick, from the Carolina Hurricanes in exchange for defenseman Andrej Sekera. General manager Darcy Regier talked about building a bigger team and he did that at the draft -- eight of the 11 players they picked are at least 6-feet tall, and they were all at least 180 pounds.

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**CALGARY FLAMES**

**The thought:** With three first-round picks, it was thought the Flames would try to move up from No. 6 to land one of the big-four prospects. With the departures of Jarome Iginla, Jay Bouwmeester and Miikka Kiprusoff, the Flames had lots of holes to fill.
The result: The Flames kept all three first-round picks and used them to restock their forward depth, starting with strong, two-way center Sean Monahan at No. 6. Emile Poirier was considered a reach at No. 22, but scouts said he raised his level in the second half of the season. They netted a Calgary native at No. 28 in Morgan Klimchuk. Third-round pick Keegan Kanzig is a big, nasty, 6-7 blueliner. Fifth-round pick Eric Roy, a defenseman with the Brandon Wheat Kings in the Western Hockey League, has a high upside. Of their eight picks, they selected four forwards and four defensemen -- but no goalie, which was a bit of a surprise.

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**CAROLINA HURRICANES**

The thought: A team that's struggled defensively the last few seasons would use the fifth pick on one of the rich crop of nearly NHL-ready defensemen. There also were reports GM Jim Rutherford could use that pick as part of a trade for more immediate help.

The results: The Hurricanes kept the fifth pick and made a bit of a surprise with Swedish center Elias Lindholm. They added the defenseman they needed, sending McBain and a second-round pick to the Sabres for Sekera, who had 12 points in 32 games in 2012-13. Third-round pick Brett Pesce had a promising freshman season at the University of New Hampshire and was NHL Central Scouting's highest-rated NCAA player.

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**CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS**

The thought: With five picks and a prospect pipeline with no real deficiencies, the Blackhawks could look to add the best player available regardless of position when their name came up.

The results: The Blackhawks had a productive day in securing their present and building for the future. Trades of Dave Bolland and Michael Frolik landed the Hawks picks in the second, third, fourth and fifth rounds. The Hawks stayed local with a few of the picks, selecting Chicago resident Ryan Hartman, an agitating forward from the Plymouth Whalers of the Ontario Hockey League, in the first round and U.S. National Team Development Program center John Hayden, who was born in Chicago, in the third round. The Bolland and Frolik trades also opened enough salary cap space for the team to sign forward Bryan Bickell to a new four-year contract.

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**COLORADO AVALANCHE**

The thought: The Avalanche spent the days leading into the draft saying that the team would take Halifax Mooseheads center Nathan MacKinnon with the first pick, but at the same time
said they were entertaining trade offers for the top spot. So would the Avs go through with the MacKinnon pick? Or was it all a smokescreen to find a trade partner desperate to move up?

The result: The Avs stuck to the script and took MacKinnon at No. 1. Second-round pick Chris Bigras, a defenseman with the Owen Sound Attack of the Ontario Hockey League, was expected to go in the first round. Goaltender Spencer Martin, taken in the third round, is 6-2 and could develop into a solid player.

COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS

The thought: Much like Calgary, the Blue Jackets had three first-round picks and a desire to move up. But would they be able to find a partner?

The results: The Blue Jackets kept the three picks and used general manager Jarmo Kekalainen's knowledge of European prospects to bolster their forward depth. Swedish center Alexander Wennberg and Slovakian center Marko Dano sandwiched Windsor forward Kerby Rychel in the first round. The Jackets then picked up second- and third-round picks from the Penguins to slide back a few spots in the second round. With the third-round pick the Jackets could end up with the steal of the draft in Danish forward Oliver Bjorkstrand from the Portland Winterhawks. Bjorkstrand led all first-year WHL players with 31 goals and 63 points in 65 games, but measures in at 5-10 and 166 pounds.

DALLAS STARS

The thought: Would new GM Jim Nill hang onto a bunch of early-round picks? Or would he use them to try to move up? The Stars had a few needs, mostly at center, one of the draft's deeper positions.

The results: The Stars kept all their picks and added high-risk/high-reward Russian forward Valeri Nichushkin at No. 10. NHL Director of European Scouting Goran Stubb said the only reason Nichushkin wasn't the top-rated European skater was a lack of consistency. At No. 29, Guelph Storm forward Jason Dickinson is a goal scorer who just needs to get stronger. Second-round pick goalie Philippe Desrosiers turned heads at the 2013 IIHF World Under-18 Championship, backstopping Canada to a gold medal with a 0.80 goals-against average and .970 save percentage.

DETROIT RED WINGS
The thought: With a number of young defensemen ready to graduate from junior hockey to the American Hockey League, adding some blueliners to the early end of the prospect pipeline was a possibility.

The result: The Red Wings picked up an extra second-round pick from the San Jose Sharks to move back two spots, and at No. 20 selected Val-d’Or Foreurs forward Anthony Mantha, the only Canadian Hockey League draft prospect to score 50 goals. Second-round pick Zack Nastasiuk is a rising talent who showed a strong all-round game in 2012-13 with Owen Sound in the OHL. With the extra second-round pick from the Sharks, they picked up Guelph Storm left wing Tyler Bertuzzi -- nephew of Red Wings forward Todd Bertuzzi -- in the second round.

EDMONTON OILERS

The thought: GM Craig MacTavish said he didn't envision moving the seventh pick, but they were among the teams rumored to be the most active, with the No. 7 spot reportedly in play.

The results: The Oilers held onto the seventh pick and chose Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds defenseman Darnell Nurse, Central Scouting's No. 2-ranked North American blueliner and a big, strong, nasty player who it's easy to envision starting next season in a prominent spot on the Oilers' blue line. The Oilers moved back twice in the second round and picked up a pair of third-round selections, which they used on talented Russian forwards Bogdan Yakimov and Anton Slepyshev. At 6-5 and 202 pounds, Yakimov is an enticing project.

FLORIDA PANTHERS

The thought: GM Dale Tallon told NHL.com at the Scouting Combine he wanted a player who could help the Panthers immediately, and with the No. 2 selection in the deepest draft in a decade, he certainly was going to get that player.

The results: The Panthers pulled a bit of a shocker picking Finnish center Aleksander Barkov at No. 2, ahead of defenseman Seth Jones, but Tallon said he wanted to make the Panthers bigger and better down the middle. If Barkov's shoulder is 100 percent -- he had March surgery and has yet to be cleared to shoot pucks -- he should compete for a spot on the Panthers' second line. Second-round pick defenseman Ian McCoshen is a few years away, but is big, skilled and physical. Fifth-round pick Christopher Clapperton is 5-9, but is a talented playmaker that can fill the net.

LOS ANGELES KINGS
The thought: The Kings didn't have a first-round pick -- No. 27 went to Columbus last season for Jeff Carter -- but they had 10 in all, giving GM Dean Lombardi a chance to move back into the first round if he could find a willing partner.

The result: Baie-Comeau forward Valentin Zykov was No. 7 on Central Scouting's final ranking of North American skaters, but when he was still available in the second round, the Kings sent three picks to the Oilers to move up from No. 57 to No. 37. Zykov was named the Canadian Hockey League's best rookie after leading all first-year players with 40 goals in 2012-13. Fourth-round pick Hudson Fasching is a talented, mature power forward who will develop at the University of Minnesota. Fifth-round pick goaltender Patrik Bartosak was the top goalie in the CHL.

MINNESOTA WILD

The thought: The Wild didn't have a first-round pick, but did have eight selections, starting with No. 46 in the second round. The biggest organizational need was a young goalie following the departure of Matt Hackett, who went to the Sabres as part of the Jason Pominville deal.

The results: The Wild added a first-round pick by acquiring forward Nino Niederreiter, the fifth pick of the 2010 draft, from the New York Islanders in exchange for forward Cal Clutterbuck and a third-round pick. Four of their seven picks Sunday were defensemen, starting with second-rounder Gustav Olofsson. They did address the goaltender position, selecting Rouyn-Noranda's Alexandre Belanger in the seventh round.

MONTREAL CANADIENS

The thought: GM Marc Bergevin was armed with six picks in the first three rounds and an open mind. There were no glaring needs, but with so many strong prospects, moving up from No. 25 certainly was an option.

The result: The Canadiens made one minor trade, sending their 2013 seventh-round pick to Florida for a seventh-rounder in 2014. The Canadiens used those six high picks to get bigger and stronger -- four of the picks stood 6-1 or taller, topped by right wing Michael McCarron, a 6-5, 228-pound right wing with the USNTDP who is committed to Western Michigan University next season. Zachary Fucale, the draft's top-rated goaltending prospect, dropped into their laps in the second round. Another second-round pick, Finnish forward Artturi Lehkonen, is a solid two-way player with great hands. Third-round pick Sven Andrighetto is on the small side, but a strong scorer, and at age 20 can jump right into the American Hockey League in 2013-14.
NASHVILLE PREDATORS

The thought: The Predators desperately need a dynamic offensive performer, and with the fourth pick, they were sure to get a player who conceivably could step right into their lineup. And with 10 picks in all, tied for the most in the League, the Predators were poised to really pump up their prospect base.

The results: The Predators didn't get a forward at No. 4, but five years from now, they might end up with the best player in the draft in defenseman Seth Jones. They never found the forward they needed, but they got nastier on the back end with 6-5 Victoriaville blueliner Jonathan Ismael-Diaby, a third-round pick. Fourth-round pick Juuse Saros was rated the best European goalie in the draft.

NEW JERSEY DEVILS

The thought: The draft hosts entered the day with four selections -- No. 9 in the first round, and then one pick each in the second, fourth and sixth rounds. The best forward available was the most likely use of the ninth pick.

The result: The Devils flipped the draft on its ear by sending the ninth pick to the Vancouver Canucks for goaltender Cory Schneider, who eventually will replace Martin Brodeur. They picked up a third-round pick from the Phoenix Coyotes for sliding back three spots in the second round and picked defenseman Steven Santini, the best blueliner at the World Under-18 Championship. The Devils also ended the draft on a high, sending a 2015 seventh-round pick to the Kings for a seventh-round pick in 2013 and picking goalie Anthony Brodeur -- Martin's son.

NEW YORK ISLANDERS

The thought: After using all seven of their 2012 picks on defensemen, it appeared likely the Islanders would opt for a skilled winger who could develop into a solid top-six player. A young goaltender in the later rounds also would be an option.

The results: The Islanders got the forward they needed in Cal Clutterbuck in a trade with the Wild that saw 2010 first-round pick Nino Niederreiter leave the organization. At No. 15, the Islanders opted for yet another defenseman, Ryan Pulock from the Brandon Wheat Kings of the WHL. Waterloo goalie Eamon McAdam was picked with the third-round pick acquired from the Wild in the Clutterbuck deal. McAdam’s teammate and fellow third-round pick Taylor Cammarata is only 5-7, but he’s a fearless offensive dynamo.
NEW YORK RANGERS

The thought: With no picks in the first two rounds, the Rangers would have to wait a while, or get creative to move up. Picking the best forward available -- preferably a winger -- probably was going to be the best option.

The results: The Rangers got good value for their picks. Russian left wing Pavel Buchnevich, the second of three third-round picks, was highly regarded for his skill. The third third-round pick, left wing Anthony Duclair, got a good hockey education from Patrick Roy the past two seasons with the Quebec Remparts.

OTTAWA SENATORS

The thought: Ottawa GM Bryan Murray hoped to find a way to move up into the top 10, but said in no instance could he see moving back. Assistant GM Tim Murray said if the Senators stayed at No. 17, the pick likely would be a forward.

The results: The Senators couldn't find a partner to trade up with, and stayed true to their word at 17, picking versatile Edmonton Oil Kings forward Curtis Lazar. Third-round pick Marcus Hoberg is a 6-4 Swedish goalie. Fifth-round pick Vincent Dunn was a point-per-game scorer with Val-d’Or in the QMJHL.

PHILADELPHIA FLYERS

The thought: A beat-up defense needed help right away and in the future, so the thought would be Philadelphia would look that way. GM Paul Holmgren never has been one to sit tight at the draft, so rumors swirled that he could look to use the No. 11 pick to move up, or as part of a trade for an established NHL player -- Bobby Ryan of the Anaheim Ducks, a southern New Jersey native, is a name perennially linked to Philadelphia.

The result: Holmgren said he took a bunch of calls for the top pick, but the chance to select 6-6 Rimouski Oceanic defenseman Samuel Morin was too much to pass on. Swedish blueliner Robert Hagg could turn out to be a steal in the second round. Holmgren called third-round pick Tyrell Goulbourne, a left wing from the Kelowna Rockets, "Z2," a reference to instigator Zac Rinaldo.

PHOENIX COYOTES
The thought: The Coyotes would be looking for offensive skill at No. 12, and with four of the first 75 picks, the chance was there to add to the prospect pipeline.

The results: Selecting Max Domi adds other-worldly offensive skill, but he likely won't be NHL-ready for at least another season or two. Chicoutimi center Laurent Dauphin in the second round was a nice selection, and PEI center Yan-Pavel Laplante, if healthy from a shoulder injury that limited him to 18 games, could be a steal with the first pick of the third round. In the sixth round the Coyotes picked Portland goalie Brendan Burke, son of assistant to the GM and goalie coach Sean Burke.

PITTSBURGH PENGUINS

The thought: Trades for Jarome Iginla and Douglas Murray meant the Penguins didn't have picks in the first or second rounds. The team has shown a penchant for drafting defensemen, and with a draft rich in talented blueliners, there was no reason to think they would move from that trend.

The results: A pre-draft trade of forward Tyler Kennedy to the San Jose Sharks netted the Penguins a second-round pick, which the team then traded to the Edmonton Oilers, along with a third-round pick, to move up from No. 50 to 44 in the second round and pick Edmonton Oil Kings goalie Tristan Jarry, Central Scouting's third-rated North American goalie. They took a pair of defensemen in later rounds, both headed to NCAA hockey in the fall -- fourth-round pick Ryan Segalla (Connecticut) and fifth-rounder Dane Birks (Michigan Tech).

SAN JOSE SHARKS

The thought: With four picks in the top two rounds, including three in the second round, GM Doug Wilson said he thought he'd have the opportunity to be active. Joe Thornton and Patrick Marleau aren't getting any younger, so finding skilled forwards could be an option.

The results: Wilson was active, all right. One second-round pick went to the Penguins before the draft started for veteran forward Tyler Kennedy. Another went to the Red Wings to allow the Sharks to move up from No. 20 in the first round to No. 18 to pick Swiss defensemen Mirco Mueller. With the only second-rounder they kept, the Sharks picked Baie-Comeau left wing Gabryel Paquin-Boudreau.

ST. LOUIS BLUES
The thought: GM Doug Armstrong didn't enter the draft with a first-round pick -- the No. 22 selection belonged to Calgary from the Jay Bouwmeester trade -- but thought it would be possible to move up.

The results: Armstrong couldn't get into the first round, but was able to pick up an additional second-round pick to grab Cape Breton Screaming Eagles left wing William Carrier, a solid two-way player who also can score, at No. 57. With their first pick, at No. 47, the Blues picked 6-2 high school defenseman Thomas Vannelli, who is committed to the University of Minnesota next season.

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING

The thought: The Lightning were looking for an impact player, likely a forward, and that need became even greater when the team announced it would be buying out Vincent Lecavalier's contract.

The results: Tampa got the forward it needed at No. 3 with Halifax left wing Jonathan Drouin, who had 105 points in 49 games in 2012-13, and was named MVP of the QMJHL and the CHL's player of the year. At No. 33, Quebec left wing Adam Erne is a mature power forward who can skate well and is built like a wrecking ball (6-foot, 210 pounds).

TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS

The thought: Coming off their first appearance in the Stanley Cup Playoffs in nine years, the belief was the Maple Leafs would look to add to their pool of young forwards, especially at center.

The results: The Maple Leafs got better up the middle in the present and in the future. In the first round, Rimouski product Fredrik Gauthier is a big, strong, speedy center lauded for an outstanding two-way game. Later, they sent second- and fourth-round picks in 2013 and a fourth-rounder in 2014 to the Blackhawks for Dave Bolland, who last week scored the Stanley Cup-winning goal.

VANCOUVER CANUCKS

The thought: With six picks, the Canucks firmly were believed to be in best-player-available mode as they look to replenish a prospect pool that soon will have to start replacing some aging core players. And then there was solving their goalie situation.
The results: Well, the Canucks certainly solved the goalie issue, but not in the way anyone expected -- sending Cory Schneider to the Devils for the ninth pick while holding onto Roberto Luongo and the nine years left on his contract. At No. 9 the Canucks picked London Knights center Bo Horvat, considered by many to be the best faceoff man in this year's draft class, as well as a potential 30-goal scorer. At No. 24 they added talented but undersized scoring whiz Hunter Shinkaruk, who was Central Scouting's sixth-rated North American skater. In the fourth round they picked Belleville Bulls defenseman Jordan Subban, the youngest of three hockey-playing Subban brothers.

WASHINGTON CAPITALS

The thought: Addressing their depth at forward likely was going to be the team's path, but GM George McPhee said he wasn't married to picking players at any particular position, and said he would evaluate any and all trade offers that came his way.

The results: First-round pick Andre Burakovsky showed well with Malmo's top team in Sweden. Second-round defenseman Madison Bowey comes from the same Kelowna team that has produced a number of recent top-end blueliners, from Shea Weber and Duncan Keith to Luke Schenn and Tyler Myers. The Caps then traded a trio of picks to the Winnipeg Jets for an extra second-round pick, which they used on 6-3 left wing Zachary Sanford, who can skate well but will need time to develop the rest of his game. He'll play in the USHL in 2013-14, and then move to Boston College the following season.

WINNIPEG JETS

The thought: With 10 picks in all, including six in the first three rounds, the Jets would have ample opportunities to stockpile prospects, or use those picks to move up or add more NHL-ready talent.

The results: The Jets got help for today and the future. They sent third- and fifth-round picks to the Blackhawks for Michael Frolik, who emerged as a speedy penalty killer. They recouped those picks by sending a second-round pick to the Capitals for a trio of later-round selections, and still ended up making 10 picks. Joshua Morrissey at No. 13 is smart and offensively skilled. In the second round, center Nicolas Petan had a 100-point season, but needs to get bigger. Fellow second-round pick, Tri-City goalie Eric Comrie, was No. 2 on Central Scouting's list despite missing most of the season with a hip injury. Third-round pick J.C. Lipon, 20, had 89 points in 2012-13 with Kamloops of the WHL and could jump into a top-six role in the AHL in 2013-14.
The free-agent frenzy is scheduled to begin at noon ET on Friday, and with as many as two compliance buyouts available to all 30 teams this summer, some additional intriguing players are now expected to hit the open market.

Here are 13 of the most notable potential unrestricted free agents that will likely be available on Friday (they're listed in alphabetical order):

**Danny Briere**

A compliance buyout casualty from the Philadelphia Flyers, Briere is 35 years old and coming off his worst season in over a decade with 16 points and a minus-13 rating in 34 games. However, few forwards have excelled in the Stanley Cup Playoffs as well as Briere has over his career. He has 109 points in 108 career playoff games, including 30 points in 23 games during the Flyers' run to the Stanley Cup Final in 2010.

Briere reportedly has a lot of teams interested in him, and it has to do in part with his performance in the playoffs. He's also two seasons removed from scoring 34 goals.

**Ilya Bryzgalov**

It will be interesting to see if any team takes a flyer on the eccentric ex-Flyers goalie, who was issued a compliance buyout despite having seven years and $35.5 million left on what turned into an albatross nine-year, $51 million contract.

Bryzgalov became known for his brutal honesty, his wild opinions, his unique interests and beliefs as well as his feuds with the media in Philadelphia. He also won 52 games over two seasons, but he couldn't help the Flyers reach the Stanley Cup Playoffs in 2012-13, when he appeared in 40 of 48 games and posted a 2.79 goals-against average and .900 save percentage.

The Edmonton Oilers reportedly pushed for Cory Schneider before the Vancouver Canucks traded him to the New Jersey Devils, so maybe they'll be in the market for Bryzgalov. The New York Islanders haven't re-signed Evgeni Nabokov, so it's conceivable that if he walks they could inquire about Bryzgalov.

**David Clarkson**
Clarkson scored 15 goals in 48 games in 2012-13 and 30 goals in 80 games in 2011-12. He is reliable and resilient, having missed two games over the past three seasons. He's also coming off a three-year, $8 million contract, which was somewhat of a bargain for a 30-goal scorer who brings a physical element as well.

The Devils want Clarkson back, but it's possible he hits the open market on July 5 to see what his value is. For comparison purposes, Clarkson is a slightly cheaper option than Nathan Horton. Clarkson is from Toronto and the Maple Leafs could use a player like him.

Ryane Clowe

Clowe, a rugged left wing, is coming off multiple concussions, but when healthy he is a top-six forward with a history of performing well in the playoffs.

The New York Rangers would like to re-sign Clowe, but it may not be possible because of their cap situation and the fact that Derek Stepan, Carl Hagelin, Ryan McDonagh and Justin Falk all need new contracts. Clowe is coming off a four-year contract that paid him $3.625 annually.

Clowe had 19 points in 40 games split between the San Jose Sharks and Rangers in 2012-13. He had three goals and five assists in 12 games after being traded to the Rangers, but was injured for most of the playoffs and appeared in two of 12 games. He has 46 points in 70 career playoff games.

Pascal Dupuis

Dupuis was so good on a line with Sidney Crosby that he may have priced himself out of Pittsburgh. He scored 20 goals in 48 games in 2012-13 after scoring 25 goals in 82 games the previous season. Dupuis, who was making $1.5 million in each of the past two seasons, did it without a regular role on the power play.

He's trying to negotiate to stay in Pittsburgh, but he wants a longer-term deal and it's understandably hard for the Penguins to make that commitment now with Evgeni Malkin, Kris Letang, Chris Kunitz and Brandon Sutter all getting or expected to get raises for the 2014-15 season. As much as Dupuis wants to stay in Pittsburgh, this also could be his last chance at a big payday.

Andrew Ference

The Bruins have some younger, cheaper defensemen on the rise (Torey Krug, Matt Bartkowski, Dougie Hamilton) and a need to replace two right wings in Nathan Horton and Jaromir Jagr, so it would appear that Ference's days in Boston are over. He had quite a ride, winning the Stanley Cup in 2011, getting back to the Stanley Cup Final last month, and becoming one of the most community-driven athletes in the city.
Ference is 34 years old and coming off a three-year contract that paid him $2.25 million annually. He can still play in a top-four role and brings a little bit of everything to the table. There should be teams lining up to sign him to a short-term deal.

**Valtteri Filppula**

Filppula is interesting for teams seeking a second-line or third-line center. He earned $3 million annually on a recently completed five-year contract with the Detroit Red Wings, who are in the market for Vincent Lecavalier, a sign they could be willing to let Filppula walk.

Filppula has played center for most of his career, but spent a good portion of 2012-13 at left wing in a top-six role. He struggled with 17 points in 41 games before scoring six points in 14 playoff games.

**Nathan Horton**

Horton has told the Bruins that he wants to test free agency. He should be a sought after power forward even though he needs surgery to repair a dislocated shoulder.

Horton spent most of his time in Boston playing on a line with David Krejci and Milan Lucic. He struggled in 2012-13 with 13 goals and 22 points in 43 games, but he rebounded in the playoffs with 19 points in 22 games. His 2010-11 and 2011-12 seasons were cut short by concussions.

**Jaromir Jagr**

At 41 years old, Jagr can still play. He wasn't as productive as he was hoping to be during the Bruins playoff run (no goals, 10 assists), but he was still dangerous with his strength and ability to control the puck on the right wing.

Jagr wants to play in the NHL again next season and it's a good bet that he will get another one-year contract. He had 35 points in 45 games split between the Dallas Stars and Bruins in 2012-13, when he played for $4.5 million.

**Vincent Lecavalier**

He's already guaranteed north of $30 million for the next 14 years from the Tampa Bay Lightning because of his compliance buyout, but Lecavalier has his pick of roughly a dozen teams that are interested in signing him to a new contract. Lecavalier may agree in principle with a team prior to the opening of the free-agent signing period.

Lecavalier spent most of this past weekend meeting with multiple teams, including the Detroit Red Wings, Dallas Stars, Montreal Canadiens, Philadelphia Flyers, St. Louis Blues, Toronto Maple Leafs, Washington Capitals and Calgary Flames. They all pitched their organization and their city to the former Lightning captain, whose head was likely spinning after all the sitdowns.
There is obviously little doubt among NHL general managers that Lecavalier can still be at least a No. 2 center at 33 years old. He had 10 goals and 32 points in 39 games in 2012-13. He has 135 points in 168 games over the past three seasons.

**Mike Ribeiro**

Ribeiro was the best center scheduled to hit the market before Lecavalier was bought out by the Lightning. It's debatable if anything has changed considering Ribeiro, who like Lecavalier is 33 years old, is coming off a better 2012-13 season. He had 49 points in 48 games with the Washington Capitals, who could probably use him again as a No. 2 center but have so far balked at his contract demands.

Ribeiro reportedly wants a five-year deal. Some of the same teams that are after Lecavalier could also be interested in Ribeiro.

**Rob Scuderi**

All Scuderi does is play for winning teams. He won the Stanley Cup in 2009 with the Pittsburgh Penguins and again in 2012 with the Los Angeles Kings, who are desperate to keep the veteran stay-at-home defenseman.

Scuderi is 34 years old and coming off a four-year contract that paid him $3.4 million annually. He has not addressed his contract situation publicly, but part of the reason why Kings general manager Dean Lombardi traded goalie Jonathan Bernier to the Toronto Maple Leafs was to make sure there was enough room under the salary cap to make a run at re-signing Scuderi.

**Stephen Weiss**

The long-time center for the Florida Panthers was limited to four points in 17 games in an injury-plagued 2012-13 because of a wrist injury. He was considered potential trade bait until the injury derailed his season in early March.

Weiss, who made $18.6 million on a recently completed six-year contract, has played 654 games with the Panthers and has 145 goals and 249 assists for 394 points. He could be a slightly cheaper option for teams looking for help at center that don't want to pay Lecavalier or Ribeiro.