

PLAYER NOTES BY #NHLSTATS: FINLAND



#NHLStats for each player who will represent Finland at the 4 Nations Face-Off in February 2025. Each federation named six players in June, indicated by an asterisk below. All stats through Dec. 3, 2024.

GOALTENDERS



Kevin Lankinen, G, Vancouver Canucks

Lankinen made his Liiga debut in 2013-14 and played in Finland's top professional league until 2017-18, when a 10-3-2 regular-season campaign helped him secure an NHL contract with Chicago. After spending the 2018-19 campaign in the AHL, Lankinen led Finland to a gold medal at the 2019 World Championship where he posted a 7-1-0 record as the nation's starting goaltender. His NHL debut came two seasons later when he was Chicago's starting goaltender and finished the 2020-21 campaign with the [second-most wins among rookies](#). His 2024-25 campaign began with a nine-game point streak (7-0-2), tied for the longest to begin a season by a goaltender in Canucks history. On Dec. 1, he became the first goaltender in NHL history to win each of his first 10 *road appearances* in a season.

Ukko-Pekka Luukkonen, G, Buffalo Sabres

The Sabres made Luukkonen the first international goaltender picked in the 2017 NHL Draft (No. 54; the second netminder overall after [Jake Oettinger](#)) and six months later he was playing in Buffalo as Finland's starting goaltender at the 2018 World Junior Championship. In 2018-19, Luukkonen secured OHL Goaltender of the Year and Most Outstanding Player honors to go along with a gold medal at the 2019 World Junior Championship, where he was named to the tournament all-star team. He posted five shutouts in 2023-24, the [most by a Sabres goaltender since 2011-12](#), and has started more than 75% of Sabres games in the 2024 calendar year.

*Juuse Saros, G, Nashville Predators

In 2014, Saros backstopped Finland to its first World Junior Championship gold medal in more than 15 years, securing a spot on the tournament All-Star Team in the process (with [Esa Lindell](#) patrolling the blueline in front of him). Later that year he claimed one of his two silver medals with Finland at the World Championship (also 2016). Over three seasons as the go-to starting goaltender for the Predators, Saros ranks [second in the NHL in wins](#) and was a Vezina Trophy finalist in 2021-22.

DEFENSEMEN



Jani Hakanpää, D, Toronto Maple Leafs

The oldest defenseman on Finland's roster, the 32-year-old is in his sixth NHL season and first with Toronto, where he signed after three seasons with the Stars – skating alongside 4 Nations teammates [Miro Heiskanen](#), [Esa Lindell](#) and [Roope Hintz](#). In fact, Hakanpää has been teammates with all but one member of the Finnish defensive group ([Juuso Välimäki](#)). A gold medal winner at the 2019 World Championship and 2017-18 Liiga champion, Hakanpää posted the best plus-minus in Finland's top professional league in both 2017-18 and 2018-19 before making his NHL debut in 2019-20 – nearly a decade after the Blues picked him 104th overall in the 2010 NHL Draft. Hakanpää ended up scoring his first NHL goal against the club that picked him in the draft, tallying in his [fifth career game on March 11, 2020](#). He has the [most hits among all Finnish players](#) since the start of the 2019-20 season.

*Miro Heiskanen, D, Dallas Stars



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After representing Finland at the 2017 World Junior Championship, Heiskanen completed a rare trifecta in international play in 2018 by representing his country at the World Junior Championship, Olympics and World Championship in the same season (all as an 18-year-old). He has since won a World Championship gold medal (2022), helped the Stars reach at least the Conference Finals three times in the past five seasons (including a run to the 2020 Final when he posted the highest playoff point total [ever by a Finnish defenseman](#)) and climbed into the top 10 in franchise history for career goals, assists and points by a defenseman. [He is the highest-scoring Finnish defenseman since 2018-19](#), when he burst onto the scene by setting a [Stars team record for goals by a rookie defenseman](#). An [#NHLStats Pack published ahead of the 2024 NHL Global Series Finland presented by Fastenal](#) includes more information on Heiskanen and other Finnish players.

*Esa Lindell, D, Dallas Stars

A two-time gold medalist with Finland, Lindell helped his country to titles at the 2014 World Junior Championship and 2022 World Championship, where he also has claimed a silver medal (2016). The gold medal in 2014 was secured alongside **Juuse Saros** (and others joining him at 4 Nations Face-Off), representing Finland's first title at the event since 1998. His international resume also includes an appearance with Finland at the World Cup of Hockey 2016, while his NHL career includes the [best plus-minus rating by a defenseman in Stars franchise history](#). Lindell ranks among the top three for [goals](#), [assists](#), [points](#) and [time on ice per game](#) by *Finnish defensemen* since his first full NHL season in 2016-17 – Stars and 4 Nations teammate **Miro Heiskanen** is the only player ahead of him *on all four of those lists*.

Olli Määttä, D, Utah Hockey Club

One of eight [Finnish defensemen in NHL history to play at least 700 games](#), Määttä is a two-time Stanley Cup champion (2016 & 2017 PIT) and an Olympic medalist (bronze in 2014). He is one of four Finnish players with multiple Stanley Cup wins, alongside **Esa Tikkanen** (5x), **Jari Kurri** (5x) and **Reijo Ruotsalainen** (2x). Määttä, 30, has [persevered through a cancer diagnosis](#) during a career that also includes a World Championship silver medal (2021), two OHL titles (2011-12 & 2012-13) as well as appearances at the World Junior Championship (3x; 2011-2013) and World Cup of Hockey 2016.

Niko Mikkola, D, Florida Panthers

Mikkola is one of two defensemen on Finland's roster who was not selected in the first three rounds of the NHL Draft (also **Jani Hakanpää**), and one of two who has won the Stanley Cup (also **Olli Määttä**). A fifth-round pick by St. Louis in 2015 (No. 127), Mikkola is one of three [Finnish defensemen from that draft class](#) who cracked the NHL and the only one still in the League. Since his first full NHL season in 2022-23, Mikkola ranks in the [top five among all Finnish skaters in time on ice](#) and [hits](#). He also is a champion internationally, claiming gold at both the 2016 World Junior Championship (a roster stacked with current NHL stars) and 2019 World Championship.

Rasmus Ristolainen, D, Philadelphia Flyers

Ristolainen is the [highest-scoring Finnish defenseman since entering the League in 2013-14](#) and ranks among the [top 10 all time in NHL scoring among Suomi blueliners](#). He scored in overtime during the gold medal game at the 2014 World Junior Championship, giving Finland a victory against rival (and tournament host) Sweden and securing his nation's first gold at the event since 1998. Ristolainen also was named best defenseman and secured a tournament All-Star team selection at the event. He played in all three games for Finland at the World Cup of Hockey 2016.

Juuso Välimäki, D, Utah Hockey Club

Välimäki was the second Finnish defenseman selected in the 2017 NHL Draft (No. 16), following **Miro Heiskanen** (No. 3), marking the first time multiple blueliners from the country were picked in Round 1 (part of a draft class that saw [11 Finnish blueliners taken overall](#) including four in the first round – both records for the country). He has captained Finland at various tournaments, including to a gold medal victory at the 2016 Under-18 World Championship when he was part of a blueline that included six future NHLers (also **Miro Heiskanen**, **Henri Jokiharju**, **Urho Vaakanainen**, **Markus Niemelainen** and **Robin Salo**).

FORWARDS



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***Sebastian Aho, F, Carolina Hurricanes**

Among the most consistent producers in the NHL since entering the League, Aho has scored at least [20 goals in each of his eight seasons](#) – including an active run of [three straight 30-goal seasons](#) (and a Carolina record [five 30-goal campaigns overall](#)). He ranks third in Hurricanes franchise history in goals, assists and points, and has led the team to playoff series victories in six straight seasons (including two trips to the Conference Finals). Internationally, Aho helped Finland secure a gold medal on home soil at the 2016 World Junior Championship (alongside the likes of **Mikko Rantanen**) and has since represented his country at three World Championships and the World Cup of Hockey 2016.

Joel Armia, F, Montreal Canadiens

Now in his 11th NHL season, Armia is coming off a 2023-24 campaign in which he tallied a career-high 17 goals and will look to add a 4 Nations title to a resume that already includes a World Championship gold medal with Finland (2022) and Liiga championship in his home country. A shorthanded specialist, Armia ranks among the top 10 in [Canadiens history](#) for career shorthanded goals and also places in the top five [among all players since 2016-17](#) (his first season as an NHL regular). Armia has been part of making NHL history on Bell Centre ice, his home arena since 2018-19: on Nov. 1, 2018, he scored two seconds after teammate **Max Domi** to mark the [fastest two goals in NHL history](#).

***Aleksander Barkov, F, Florida Panthers**

Barkov became the first Finnish player to captain a Stanley Cup champion when he led the Panthers to their first championship earlier in the year, sharing the team lead with 22 points in the playoffs (including a franchise record-tying four game-winning goals). A two-time Selke Trophy recipient, including in 2023-24, Barkov is one of seven players in NHL history to win both the Selke and Stanley Cup in the same season (countryman **Jere Lehtinen** is also on that list). Barkov has represented Finland at many tournaments, including the World Cup of Hockey 2016, and has medaled at the Olympics (bronze in 2014) and World Championship (silver in 2016).

Mikael Granlund, F, San Jose Sharks

During his decorated hockey career, Granlund has captained Finland at multiple events, claimed three medals at the World Championship (gold in 2011 and 2022; silver in 2016), bronze at the Olympics (2014) and a Liiga championship (2010-11). After claiming Liiga Rookie of the Year honors in 2009-10, Granlund was a top-10 pick in the NHL Draft (No. 9 in 2010) and has since placed himself among the top dozen [Finnish scorers in NHL history](#) and become the ninth Finn to [400 NHL assists](#). A Lady Byng Memorial Trophy finalist in 2016-17, Granlund has dazzled fans globally for more than a decade – including an unforgettable lacrosse-style goal at the 2011 World Championship – which became a cultural sensation when a Finnish electronic music artist set announcer **Antero Mertaranta's** call of the play to music. The song, dubbed "[Taivas Varjele](#)," which translates to "Good heavens," reached No. 2 on Finland's singles chart. Granlund played in all three games for Finland at the World Cup of Hockey 2016, and in 2023 was part of a trade that sent Swedish rival **Erik Karlsson** to Pittsburgh.

Erik Haula, F, New Jersey Devils

Haula has by far the most career points among active Finnish players *selected outside the first two rounds* of the NHL Draft, cementing himself as a consistent scorer across 12 seasons since the Wild chose him in the seventh round in 2009 (No. 182). He has represented Finland at the 2011 World Junior Championship (second in team scoring), 2014 World Championship and appeared in Finland's opener against Team North America at the World Cup of Hockey 2016.

Roope Hintz, F, Dallas Stars

One of eight Finnish nationals in NHL history to record at least three consecutive 30-goal seasons (with a chance to make that four straight in 2024-25), Hintz ranks among the top five in both [goals](#) and [points](#) among Finnish players since 2018-19 when he entered the League. Hintz has excelled in meaningful games in a condensed timeframe before as he holds the Stars record for [points in a playoff series](#) (2023 R1: 5-7—12 in 6 GP). He also scored three goals at the 2016 World Junior Championship when he helped [Finland win gold on home soil](#), part of a roster stacked with future NHL stars and 4 Nations teammates.

Kaapo Kakko, F, New York Rangers

A three-time gold medalist with Finland, Kakko has secured championships with the Suomi at the 2018 Under-18 World Championship (tied for team lead in points, including goal in gold medal game), 2019 World Junior Championship (when he scored the gold-clinching goal) and 2019 World Championship (when at age 18 he



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topped teenagers in goals and finished two off the overall tournament lead). Kakko's clinching goal at the 2019 World Junior Championship came with 1:26 remaining in regulation (with the primary assist to **Anton Lundell**) after the United States had rallied from a 2-0 deficit in the third period to tie the game. That goal came a few months before he became the [fourth Finnish player ever to be picked among the top two in the NHL Draft](#).

Patrik Laine, F, Montreal Canadiens

After scoring in his Canadiens debut Dec. 3, Laine ranks fourth in [goals among Finnish players since 2016-17](#) when he broke into the NHL following a season for the ages. During the 2015-16 campaign, during which he celebrated his 18th birthday, Laine won a gold medal on home soil at the 2016 World Junior Championship (where he tied **Auston Matthews** for the tournament lead in goals), claimed a Liiga title (along with other honors including playoff MVP) and then secured a silver medal at the 2016 World Championship (where he tied for the tournament lead in goals and was named MVP).

Artturi Lehkonen, F, Colorado Avalanche

Lehkonen has a knack for scoring clutch goals, with four series-clinching goals to his credit in the Stanley Cup Playoffs – the most among active players and the most ever by a European player (tied with **Peter Forsberg**, **Jaromir Jagr** and **Jari Kurri**). Lehkonen (2022) and Kurri (1987) are the only Finnish players with a Cup-clinching goal. In addition to his Stanley Cup, Lehkonen's resume includes an SHL championship (in 2015-16 when he led the playoffs in goals and points), along with a gold medal at the 2014 World Junior Championship when he helped Finland defeat rival (and tournament host) Sweden for its first title at the event since 1998. He also captained the Suomi at the World Juniors in 2015.

Anton Lundell, F, Florida Panthers

Lundell led the Panthers with five assists in the 2024 Stanley Cup Final, the fourth Finnish player ever with at least five helpers in the championship series, following **Mikko Rantanen** (8 in 2022), **Ville Leino** (6 in 2010) and **Jari Kurri** (3x; most: 6 in 1985). Lundell also has the most career regular-season assists among Finnish players currently under the age of 24. A four-time medalist with Finland, Lundell's international resume includes gold (2019) and bronze (2021) medals at the World Junior Championship – claiming bronze as both captain and team scoring leader. He last represented the Suomi at the 2021 World Championship when he led the team in scoring.

Eetu Luostarinen, F, Florida Panthers

A Stanley Cup champion and gold-medalist at the 2019 World Championship, the 26-year-old forward has cemented himself as both an offensive contributor and as a penalty-kill specialist. Since his first full season with Florida in 2020-21, Luostarinen [paces all Panthers forwards](#) (and ranks [among the League leaders](#)) in shorthanded time on ice.

***Mikko Rantanen, F, Colorado Avalanche**

Part of two Finnish entries at the World Junior Championship and four at the World Championship, Rantanen has twice medaled at those events, claiming World Junior gold on home soil in 2016 (when he captained a squad loaded with future NHL stars) and following that up with silver at the Worlds a few months later. After helping the Avalanche win the 2022 Stanley Cup, Rantanen (2x) has joined **Jari Kurri** (6x) and **Teemu Selanne** (4x) as the only Finnish players with a 100-point NHL season; they also are the only Finnish 50-goal scorers in NHL history. He has the second-highest [career points-per-game rate in NHL history among Finnish players](#), behind only Kurri.

Teuvo Teravainen, F, Chicago Blackhawks

After posting [one of the best playoff performances by a rookie in Blackhawks history](#) in helping the club win the Stanley Cup in 2015, Teravainen became a full-time NHL player in 2015-16 and ranks among the [top five in scoring among Finnish players since](#). A four-time 20-goal and 60-point scorer in the NHL, Teravainen has a lengthy international resume that includes stops at the World Cup of Hockey 2016 and 2018 World Championship (where he ranked second in team scoring behind **Sebastian Aho**). Wearing the captain's "C" at the 2014 World Junior Championship, Teravainen assisted on every Suomi goal in the gold medal game, including **Rasmus Ristolainen**'s overtime winner, to help defeat rival (and tournament host) Sweden. Teravainen led that tournament in scoring and helped secure his nation's first gold at the event since 1998.

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