NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **APRIL 15, 2025**

SCHAEFER LEADS TIGHT RACE FOR TOP-RANKED NORTH AMERICAN SKATER AS NHL RELEASES FINAL DRAFT RANKINGS PRESENTED BY BODYARMOR SPORTS DRINK

Swedish forward Frondell ranks first among international skaters

NEW YORK/TORONTO (April 15, 2025) – **Matthew Schaefer** (Hamilton, Ont.), a defenseman for the Erie Otters of the Ontario Hockey League, ranks No. 1 among North American skaters, edging Saginaw Spirit center **Michael Misa** and Boston College freshman **James Hagens** for top spot as NHL Central Scouting released its final NHL Draft rankings presented by BODYARMOR Sports Drink. **Anton Frondell** (Stockholm, Sweden), a forward for Djurgarden in Sweden's second division, tops the list of international skaters ahead of the 2025 Upper Deck NHL Draft set for June 27-28 in the city of Los Angeles at L.A. Live's Peacock Theater.



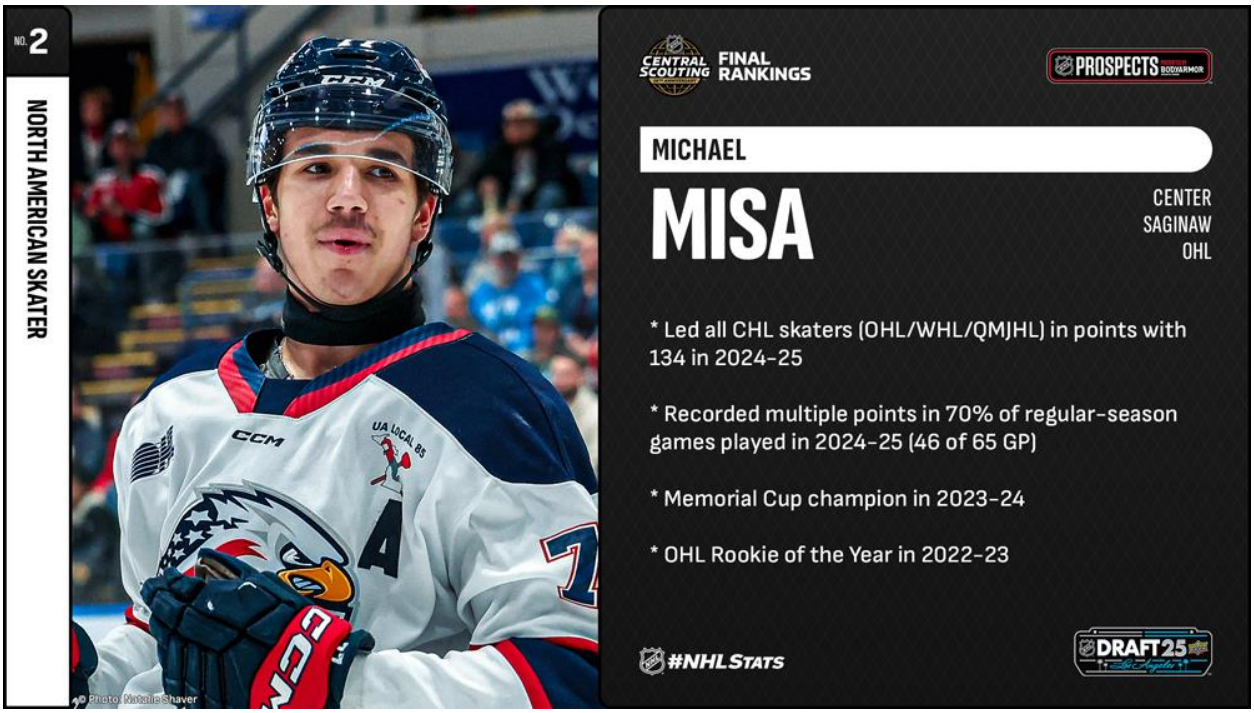
Schaefer produced 7-15—22 in 17 GP with Erie of the OHL this season and added 1-1—2 in two games for Canada at the 2025 World Junior Championship where he sustained an injury that kept him out for the remainder of the regular season. Schaefer's 1.29 point-per-game rate ranked third among OHL defensemen in 2024-25 (min. 15 GP) and best among draft-eligible blueliners. Schaefer could become the second Erie player to be selected with the first-overall pick after **Connor McDavid** (2015) a decade earlier – McDavid is also the last OHL player to be taken with the first pick. Over the last quarter century (since 2000), four defensemen have been selected with the first overall pick in the NHL Draft: **Owen Power** (2021), **Rasmus Dahlin** (2018), **Aaron Ekblad** (2014) and **Erik Johnson** (2006).

NHL COMMUNICATIONS
1 MANHATTAN WEST, 395 NINTH AVE., NEW YORK, NY 10001 **T:** 212-789-2000
50 BAY ST., TORONTO, ON M5J 2X8 **T:** 416-359-7900
MEDIA.NHL.COM • RECORDS.NHL.COM • @PR_NHL

“Matthew Schaefer is the No. 1 defense prospect in this Draft Class,” says Vice President of NHL Central Scouting **Dan Marr**. “He is the complete package playing a dynamic style that generates results and influences the outcome of games. Schaefer easily projects as a future All-Star in the NHL.”



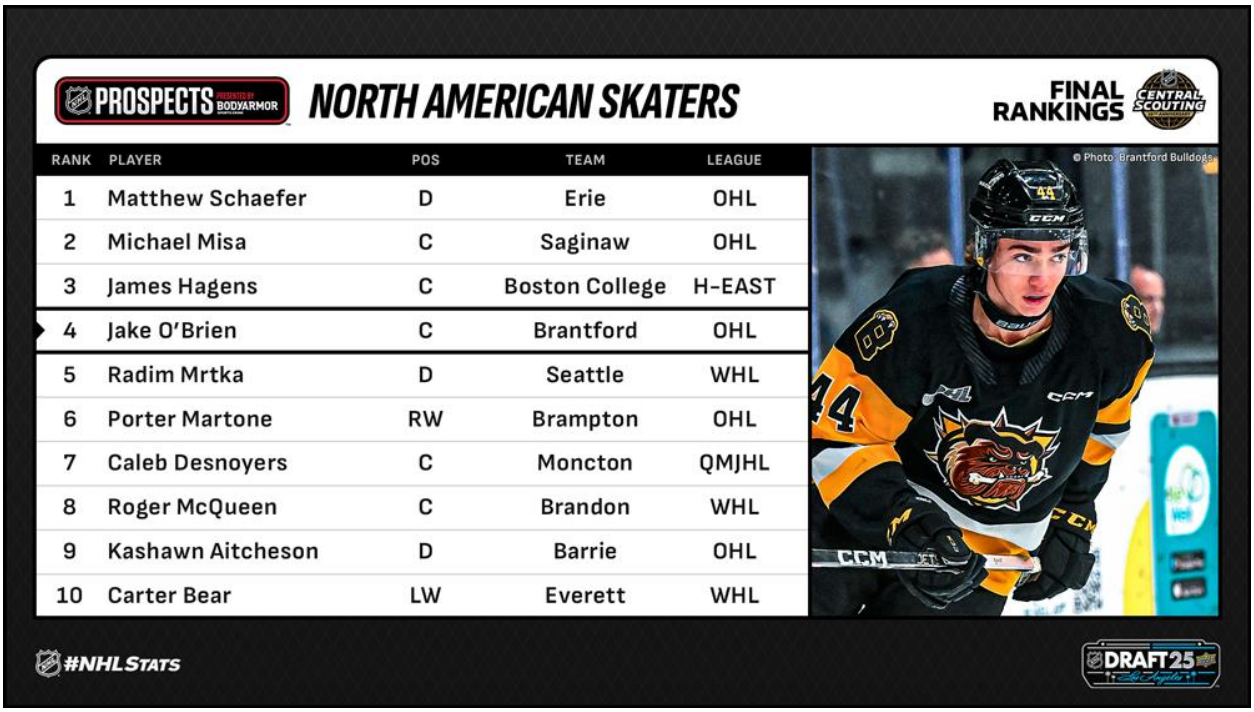
Misa (Oakville, Ont.) won the OHL scoring race by a 10-point margin (62-72—134 in 65 GP) and recorded the league’s highest single-season point total since **John Tavares** and **Patrick Kane** in 2006-07. Misa was granted “exceptional player” status to enter the OHL early, helped Saginaw win the Memorial Cup in 2023-24 and served as the Spirit’s captain in 2024-25. His brother, **Luke Misa**, was a fifth-round pick by the Flames in the 2024 NHL Draft (150th overall).



Hagens (Hauppauge, N.Y.) ranked fourth among NCAA Division 1 freshmen in points with 11-26—37 in 37 GP with Boston College, playing on a team stacked with players already selected in the NHL Draft including **Gabriel Perreault** (No. 23 in 2023 by NYR) and **Ryan Leonard** (No. 8 in 2023 by WSH). The trio also teamed up on a line to help Team USA win gold at the 2025 World Junior Championship, with Hagens producing 5-4—9 in 7 GP including a goal in the gold medal game. **Noah Hanifin** (No. 5 in 2015) is the only player who has been a top-five NHL Draft pick selected out of Boston College.



Rounding out the top five North American skaters are No. 4-ranked **Jake O'Brien** (Whitby, Ont.), a forward with Brantford who finished tied for seventh in OHL scoring with 32-66—98 in 66 GP and No. 5-ranked **Radim Mrtka** (Havlickuv Brod, Czechia), a 6'5" defenseman who patrols the blueline for Seattle of the Western Hockey League.

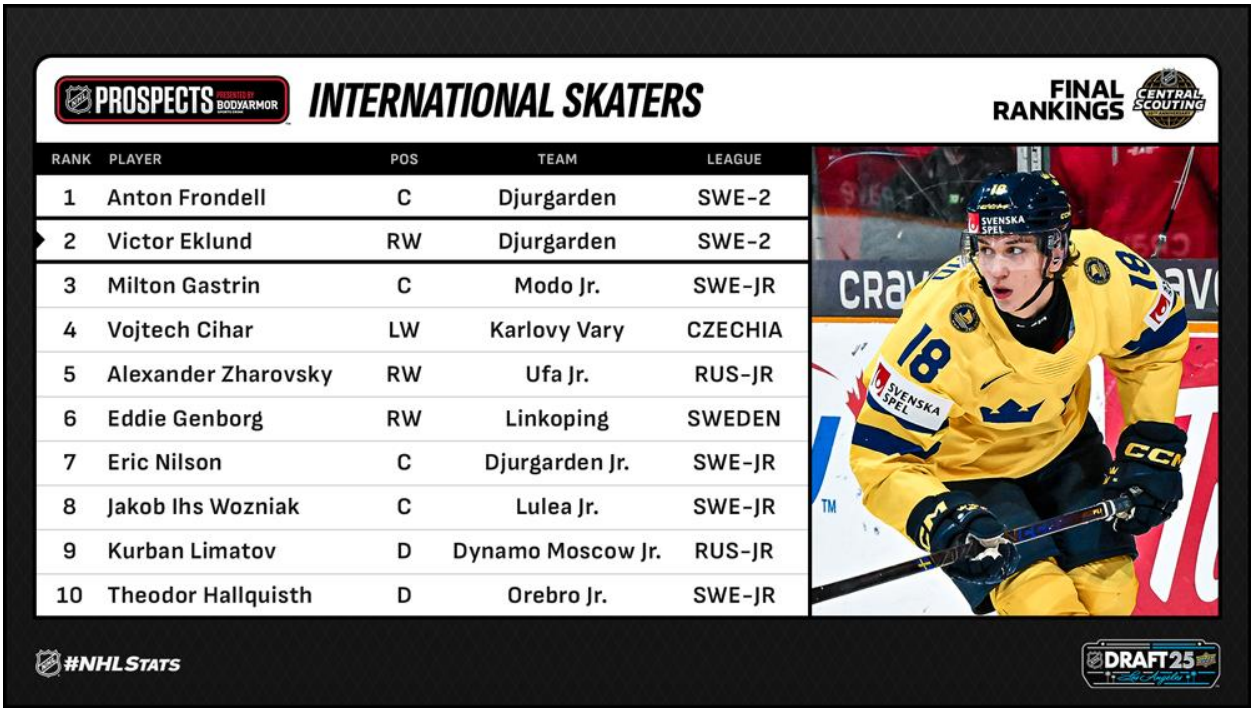


RANK	PLAYER	POS	TEAM	LEAGUE
1	Matthew Schaefer	D	Erie	OHL
2	Michael Misa	C	Saginaw	OHL
3	James Hagens	C	Boston College	H-EAST
4	Jake O'Brien	C	Brantford	OHL
5	Radim Mrtka	D	Seattle	WHL
6	Porter Martone	RW	Brampton	OHL
7	Caleb Desnoyers	C	Moncton	QMJHL
8	Roger McQueen	C	Brandon	WHL
9	Kashawn Aitcheson	D	Barrie	OHL
10	Carter Bear	LW	Everett	WHL

A pair of forwards from Stockholm skating for Djurgarden in Sweden's second division top the list of international skaters, led by 17-year-old **Anton Frondell** followed by 18-year-old **Victor Eklund**. Frondell produced at a near point-per-game pace (11-14—25 in 29 GP) finishing with the second-most points ever recorded by a player age 17 or younger in Sweden's second division behind **William Nylander** in 2013-14. Eklund, the brother of Sharks forward **William Eklund** (No. 7 in 2021), finished with 19-12—31 in 42 GP marking the most points in that league by a player age 18 or younger since **Elias Pettersson** in 2016-17.



The remaining top five on the international skaters list include: No. 3-ranked **Milton Gastrin** (Ornskoldsvik, Sweden), a forward for Modo's junior team; No. 4-ranked **Vojtech Cihar** (Chomutov, Czechia), a forward skating for Karlovy Vary in Czechia's top men's league who helped his country earn bronze at the 2025 World Junior Championship; and No. 5-ranked **Alexander Zharovsky** (Klin, Russia), who finished tied for the 10th-most points in Russia's junior league with 24-26—50 in 45 GP.



RANK	PLAYER	POS	TEAM	LEAGUE
1	Anton Frondell	C	Djurgarden	SWE-2
2	Victor Eklund	RW	Djurgarden	SWE-2
3	Milton Gastrin	C	Modo Jr.	SWE-JR
4	Vojtech Cihar	LW	Karlovy Vary	CZECHIA
5	Alexander Zharovsky	RW	Ufa Jr.	RUS-JR
6	Eddie Genborg	RW	Linkoping	SWEDEN
7	Eric Nilson	C	Djurgarden Jr.	SWE-JR
8	Jakob Ihs Wozniak	C	Lulea Jr.	SWE-JR
9	Kurban Limatov	D	Dynamo Moscow Jr.	RUS-JR
10	Theodor Hallquisth	D	Orebro Jr.	SWE-JR

Joshua Ravensbergen (North Vancouver, B.C.) of Prince George (WHL) is the No. 1-ranked North American goaltender and **Pyotr Andreyanov** (Volsk, Russia) of CSKA Jr. (RUSSIA-JR.) tops the list of international goaltenders.

The final rankings feature the top 224 skaters and 32 goaltenders in North America as well as the top 140 skaters and 15 goaltenders internationally.

Celebrating its 50th year of operation, NHL Central Scouting provides evaluation and scouting of draft-eligible players to NHL member clubs. Headed by Vice President of Central Scouting **Dan Marr**, NHL Central Scouting employs eight full-time scouts throughout North America. To report on prospects playing internationally, the NHL employs the services of **J-P Vuorinen** and his staff at European Scouting Services based in Finland.

For NHL Draft history visit https://records.nhl.com/draft.

Full rankings and additional prospect profiles are available in the attached documents.

(04/15/25)