



NORTH AMERICAN SKATERS

GAVIN McKENNA

Left Wing | Penn State (NCAA)

Born: Whitehorse, Y.T.

No. 1-Ranked North American Skater

* McKenna finished fifth in scoring across the NCAA as a freshman after tallying 15-36—51 (35 GP) – 32 of which came in his final 17 games after the NHL's mid-season rankings was released. Every player above him has already been drafted to an NHL team. McKenna topped the league in assists per game (1.03) and finished second in points per game (1.46).

* Won NCAA Rookie of the year, Big 10 Freshman of the Year and was a two-time National Rookie of the Month.

* Named the CHL David Branch Player of the Year in 2024-25. At just 17 years, 5 months, and 24 days old, McKenna became the [third-youngest recipient of the award](#), behind **Sidney Crosby** and **John Tavares** (who both did so at age 16).

* Finished the 2024-25 season with 41-88—129 in 56 GP and riding a 40-game point streak. He later extended that streak to 54 games during the 2025 WHL Playoffs, establishing a modern CHL record (since 2000) for the longest single-season point streak across the regular season, playoffs, and Memorial Cup.

* Led the WHL in assists (88) and plus-minus (plus-60) during the 2024-25 season.

* His 2024-25 trophy case included CHL and WHL Player of the Year as well as being named to the CHL, WHL and Memorial Cup First All-Star Teams.

* Helped Medicine Hat win the 2025 WHL Championship and finished the playoffs third in the league and first on his team in points (9-29—38 in 16 GP).

* In 2023-24, McKenna was named CHL and WHL Rookie of the Year after posting 34-63—97 in 61 GP.

* On the international stage, McKenna has represented Canada at the 2026 World Junior Championship, where he finished the tournament second in scoring (4-10—14 in 7 GP) while helping his country earn bronze and at the 2025 World Junior Championship (1-0—1 in 5 GP).

* He also represented Team Canada at the 2024 Hlinka Gretzky Cup (3-3—6 in 6 GP) and at the 2024 Under-18 World Championship, where he led the tournament in goals (10) and scored a hat trick in the championship game to help Canada rally for the gold-medal victory over Team USA.

* Wore a vest [honoring his indigenous heritage](#), which was made by his grandmother, to all of Canada's games at the 2025 World Juniors. He became the first Indigenous *player from the Yukon* to represent Canada at the World Juniors.

* A native of Whitehorse in Canada's Yukon Territory. Only six players out of the Yukon have been selected in the NHL Draft and/or appeared in an NHL game: **Max Graham** (No. 139 in 2024 by NJD; currently in PIT organization), **Dylan Cozens** (No. 7 in 2019 by BUF; currently plays for OTT), **Gerard Dicaire** (No. 162 in 2002 by TBL; did not play in NHL), **Bobby House** (No. 66 in 1991 by CHI; did not play in NHL), **Peter Sturgeon** (No. 36 in 1974 by BOS; 6 GP in NHL) and **Bryon Baltimore** (undrafted; 2 GP in NHL).

* Grew up playing on an outdoor rink in his backyard built by his father, **Willy**. McKenna spent at least an hour a day, almost every day, out on that ice in temperatures at times as low as -20 to -30 Celsius (-4 to -20 Fahrenheit).

* Was a big Blackhawks fan growing up and lists **Patrick Kane** among his favorite players. He watched Kane highlights on YouTube daily as a kid.

SCOUTING REPORT

Shows exceptional poise and maturity in his game, demonstrating a high hockey IQ that allows him to dictate play. His skating stride is fluid and efficient, giving him the ability to separate in transition and maintain speed through tight areas. He consistently makes smart reads, showing strong puck distribution instincts and the confidence to hold onto the puck under pressure. Projects as a player with pro-level pace and vision, someone who can drive a line and elevate those around him.

CHASE REID

Defense | Sault Ste. Marie (OHL)

Born: Pontiac, Mich.

No. 2-Ranked North American Skater

* Finished second across the OHL in points-per-game among defensemen (tied; 1.07) after recording 18-30—48 in 2025-26. Reid missed the remaining 17 games of the regular season due to injury, but has contributed 3-3—6 through eight postseason appearances.

* Topped all rookies in assists and rookie defensemen in points across the OHL in 2024-25 after posting 7-33—40 in 39 GP.

* Represented Team USA at the 2026 World Junior Championship, his first time representing his country at a major international tournament (2-2—4 in 5 GP).

* Was initially a forward but switched to defense when he reached the Detroit HoneyBaked AAA program.

* His mother, **Magyn**, was a competitive dancer who now teaches dance up to five days a week.

SCOUTING REPORT

A take-charge type of defenseman that dictates the game. He plays a ton of minutes in all situations. A smooth skater with good edges and an effortless glide. He displays elite hockey sense and composure, with the ability to read and execute plays anywhere on the ice. He can jump up to lead the rush, knows when to pick his spots and has excellent recovery when transitioning from offense to defense. He is not afraid to mix it up and play physical and finish checks. No holes in his game, the complete package.

CARSON CARELS

Defense | Prince George (WHL)

Born: Brandon, Man.

No. 3-Ranked North American Skater

* Recorded 20-53—73 (58 GP) for the second-highest point total in a single season by a defenseman in Prince George Cougars history. Carels finished tied for fourth in scoring among all blueliners across the WHL, a campaign highlighted by a 17-game point streak, tied for the fourth longest run by any player in the WHL in 2025-26.

* Named captain of Team West for the 2026 WHL Prospects Game, where he tallied four assists.

* Recorded 6-29—35 (60 GP) during his rookie season in 2024-25 to finish fifth in scoring among rookie defensemen across the WHL.

* Became the fifth-youngest defenseman to play for Team Canada at the 2026 World Junior Championship, trailing: **Jay Bouwmeester** (2000, 2001), **Chris Joseph** (1987), **Matthew Schaefer** (2025) and **Scott Niedermayer** (1991). He earned a bronze medal at the tournament (0-1—1 in 5 GP).

* Won gold at the 2025 Under-18 World Championship, silver at the 2024 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge with Team Canada Red and a bronze at the 2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup.

* Works on his family farm in Cypress River, Man., which has over 500 cows. He also grew up raising goats.

SCOUTING REPORT

A unique, all-round defenseman who has offensive talent and brings a physical element while playing sound defensively. Can play big minutes and is deployed in all situations with the ability to run a power play. An excellent puck transporter and distributor who drives offense and shows some elite offensive skill. Skates very well with excellent mobility and agility and can defend with speed. Plays with his head on a swivel in the defensive zone and is good at taking away passing and shooting lanes. A potential top pair defenseman.

KEATON VERHOEFF

Defense | Univ. of North Dakota (NCAA)

Born: Fort Saskatchewan, Alta.

No. 4-Ranked North American Skater

* A 6' 3.5" freshman with the Univ. of North Dakota, Verhoeff leads all draft-eligible defensemen in the NCAA this season with 6-14—20 (36 GP). He helped North Dakota make it to the NCAA Frozen Four Semifinal.

* Played for the Victoria Royals in 2024-25 and finished the season with the most goals and the third-most points among rookie defensemen in the WHL after posting 21-24—45 (63 GP).

* A four-time medalist on the international stage, Verhoeff helped Canada win gold at the 2025 Under-18 World Championship and 2024 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge. He also has bronze medals from the 2026 World Junior Championship and 2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup, where he captained his country.

* Verhoeff was coached by Hockey Hall of Fame forward **Jarome Iginla** at RINK Hockey Academy in Kelowna and billeted with the Iginla family during that time.

* His cousins are **Colton** and **Kirby Dach** – he calls the two of them his inspiration and his role models. Verhoeff skates and trains with them in the summers.

* Verhoeff started as a goaltender before moving to defense – he played his last game in net at age 11.

SCOUTING REPORT

Elite defenseman who finished his first NCAA season at North Dakota. Combination of size and skill has him in the conversation for the top prospect in the 2026 NHL Draft. Displays an ability to make all of the necessary plays to get the puck out of his defensive zone whether making a quick first pass or transporting the puck up ice on a rush. Has an innate ability to make the right play at the right time whether a big hit or a shot that challenges the opposing goaltender. Type of defenseman that can play big minutes and get stronger as the game goes on. Can impact the game from his position like few in this draft class. Very complete player.

DAXON RUDOLPH**Defense | Prince Albert (WHL)****Born: Lacombe, Alta.****No. 5-Ranked North American Skater**

* Finished third in scoring among defensemen across the WHL after tallying 28-50—78 (68 GP). His point total was boosted by a 13-game point streak where he amassed 11-13—24, including a run of six straight multi-point games. Rudolph currently is atop the WHL in playoff scoring by blueliners (tied).

* Finished fourth in scoring among rookie defensemen in 2024-25 across the WHL after tallying 7-34—41 (64 GP). Rudolph averaged over a point per game during the playoffs to finish with the most assists by a WHL rookie blueliner (11) and the second-most points (12).

* Has three medals while representing Team Canada on the international stage, including gold at the 2025 Under-18 World Championship and 2024 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge. He also has a bronze from the 2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup, where he tallied 2-2—4 (5 GP) and wore an 'A'.

SCOUTING REPORT

A top defender used in all situations who logs big minutes. A strong and agile skater who plays a heads up, intelligent game. Ability to control the game, showing poise beyond his years. An excellent QB on the power play who generates scoring chances and quality shots from the point. He brings a calm and confident game under pressure with the ability to evade forecheckers. He makes plays in all three zones and can transport the puck with a commanding presence every shift while impacting both ends of the ice. Strong defensive positioning, ability to break up plays - a complete two-way NHL prospect who plays a take-charge game.

CALEB MALHOTRA
Center | Brantford (OHL)
Born: Victoria, B.C.
No. 6-Ranked North American Skater

* As a rookie, Malhotra finished second across the OHL in assists (55) and second in points among rookies after posting 29-55—84 (67 GP). His season has been highlighted by a five- and four-point performance as well as 24 multi-point games.

* Malhotra currently has the most points by a rookie in the 2026 OHL Playoffs with 8-5—13 (8 GP), the most goals (tied) overall, as well as three multi-goal outings and a five-point performance.

* Currently tops all rookies in playoff scoring with a 1.86 points-per-game average (8-5—13 in 7 GP).

* Skated in the BCHL with the Chilliwack Chiefs in 2024-25 where he posted 8-18—26 (44 GP), the most points by a rookie on his team that season.

* His father is **Manny Malhotra**, who was drafted seventh overall by the Rangers in 1998 and went on to play 16 seasons and 991 NHL games. Malhotra spent the past decade coaching professional hockey – he was an assistant coach with the Canucks and Maple Leafs for seven years and has been head coach of the AHL's Abbotsford Canucks for the past two campaigns, leading them to a championship last season.

* His sports roots run deep. His mom, **Joann**, was a soccer star at the University of Victoria, while his uncle is two-time NBA MVP **Steve Nash**.

SCOUTING REPORT

A first-year center selected 8th overall in the 2024 OHL Draft. He made his mark right away on a deep Brantford team producing very good offensive numbers. He has a good combination of size, skating ability, and does everything well with and without the puck. He has excellent hockey sense, plays a responsible 200-foot game, and knows how to create and finish offensively. The type of player you want on the ice in any situation and plays the pro-style game with high end skills, work habits and compete.

TYNAN LAWRENCE

Center | Boston University (NCAA)

Born: Fredericton, N.B.

No. 7-Ranked North American Skater

* Missed the majority of 2025-26 with a knee injury. He recorded 2-5—7 in 18 games with Boston University and is one of just five players to be 17 the entirety of the NCAA season.

* Finished second in rookie goals and third in scoring across the USHL in 2024-25 after posting 25-29—54 (56 GP) – a point total benefitted by an 11-game point streak and a four-point game.

* Lawrence led the USHL in playoff scoring, posting 8-10—18 (14 GP) helping Muskegon win the 2025 USHL Clark Cup Championship. He earned Clark Cup MVP honors.

* Won gold with Team Canada White at the 2024 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge (3-3—6 in 5 GP) and a bronze at the 2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup (1-2—3 in 5 GP).

SCOUTING REPORT

A very smart and skilled center that can drive offense for himself and his teammates. Plays a two-way game and has an all-around set of tools that make him a very prized prospect.

NIKITA KLEPOV

Right Wing | Saginaw (OHL)

Born: Deerfield Beach, Fla.

No. 8-Ranked North American Skater

* Tallied 37-60—97 (67 GP) to top the league in scoring as a rookie and earn the OHL's Rookie of the Year award. The 17-year-old became the third player in OHL history to win both rookie of the year and the OHL's top scorer in the same season, joining **Patrick Kane** (2006-07) and **Jack Valiquette** (1973-74).

* Set a Saginaw Spirit record for most assists and points in a season by a rookie, besting **Cole Perfetti** (37 A & 74 P in 2018-19).

* Spent majority of the 2024-25 season with the USHL's Sioux City Musketeers, where he collected 12-19—31 (59 GP) and scored three game-winning goals before he notched 1-1—2 in five playoff games. Only two rookies since 2002-03 have finished a regular season with more game-winning goals for the Musketeers than Klepov: **Robert Carpenter** (6 in 2014-15) and **Dylan James** (5 in 2021-22).

* Represented Team USA at the 2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup, and finished with the championship-clinching goal, as the country rallied from a Preliminary Round defeat against Sweden to capture a gold medal at the tournament for the first time in 22 years.

SCOUTING REPORT

Plays a high energy, offensive game. Always dangerous every time he has the puck and is the "go to" shooter on the power play - one of the best one-timers in this Draft class. He gets involved all over the ice, plays physical and in the trenches. He has a high hockey IQ with his elite puck skills and knows how to find the back of the net.

ETHAN BELCHETZ**Left Wing | Windsor (OHL)****Born: Oakville, Ont.****No. 9-Ranked North American Skater**

* Averaged over a point per game with the Windsor Spitfires tallying 34-25—59 (57 GP), helping his team finish second in the Western Conference and tied for their third-highest win total in a single season in franchise history.

* Finished 10th in rookie scoring across the OHL in 2024-25 after posting 17-21—38 in 56 GP. His season was highlighted by a four-goal and six-point outing – that night he became the first Spitfires 16-year-old rookie to score four goals in a game since **Taylor Hall** on Mar. 6, 2008.

* Named to the 2024-25 OHL Second All-Rookie Team.

* Selected first overall in the 2024 OHL Priority Selection by the Windsor Spitfires.

* Won gold with Team Canada White at the 2024 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge, where he averaged a point per game (4-1—5 in 5 GP), as well as a bronze at the 2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup, where he finished tied for fifth in tournament scoring (4-3—7 in 5 GP).

SCOUTING REPORT

A combination of size, strength and skill who projects as a power forward. He's made noticeable improvements to his footwork, agility and overall quickness. He is a player that is tough to handle down low and is a beast in front of the net. He has really good offensive hockey sense and can think the game with smart players. Good anticipation, good hands and a good shot to generate chances. Two-way game combined with work ethic gives him a very high ceiling.

ILIA MOROZOV**Center | Miami (NCAA)****Born: Moscow, Russia****No. 10-Ranked North American Skater**

* Tallied 8-12—20 in 36 GP with Miami Univ. and finished tied for second in points among players 17 or younger in the NCAA this season.

* One of the youngest players in the NCAA and just one of five 17-year-olds. He graduated from high school early after returning home to Russia in the summer to take one last course prior to joining Miami Univ.

* Topped USHL's Tri-City Storm in rookie scoring in 2024-25 after posting 11-11—22 (59 GP)

SCOUTING REPORT

A highly intelligent two-way forward who brings pace and precision to his game. He shows excellent awareness off the puck, supporting plays responsibly while positioning himself to create scoring opportunities in transition. His combination of strong edges, quick hands and a deceptive release makes him a consistent offensive threat, particularly on entries and in tight spaces. His compete level, versatility, and ability to elevate the play of those around him project well for success at the pro level.



INTERNATIONAL SKATERS



IVAR STENBERG

Left Wing | Frolunda (SWEDEN)

Born: Gothenburg, Sweden

No. 1-Ranked International Skater

* Leads all teenagers in Sweden's top professional hockey league in scoring with 11-22—33 in 43 GP – he finished the campaign five-points ahead of **Anton Frondell** (No. 3 overall by CHI in 2025). Stenberg finished the campaign with the most assists and points by an SHL junior and helped his club win the Champions Hockey League championship.

* Stenberg concluded 2025-26 with the fifth-highest single-season point total ever by a player age 18 or younger in the SHL behind **Daniel Sedin, Markus Naslund, Tomas Sandstrom** and **Henrik Sedin**. Stenberg's 22 assists matched Henrik for the highest single-season total in SHL history by a player age 18 or under.

* In 2024-25, he spent half of the season with Frolunda's junior team where he topped Sweden's highest junior league in points per game (min. 3 GP) after operating at a 1.96 P/GP pace and posting 26-27—53 (27 GP).

* Made his professional hockey debut in 2024-25, playing in 25 SHL games (1-2—3) and finishing tied for the third-most points by a teenager in the playoffs (3-3—6 in 12 GP).

* Won gold with Team Sweden at the 2026 World Junior Championship where he tied for the fifth-most points in the tournament and the team lead (4-6—10 in 7 GP). He has silver medals from the 2025 Under-18 World Championship and 2024 World Junior A Challenge, a tournament he led in goals (7) and points (11).

* He also has two bronze medals in international competition: 2024 Hlinka Gretzky Cup and 2023 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge, topping both tournaments in goals.

* His brother, **Otto**, was selected in the first round of the 2023 NHL Draft (25th overall). He spent last season and the first half of this campaign skating in the AHL with the Springfield Thunderbirds and has since been skating with the Blues.

SCOUTING REPORT

Has established himself as a top prospect, already playing regular minutes with powerhouse Frölunda in the Swedish Hockey League. His blend of speed, first-step quickness, and balance makes him a dangerous, dynamic skater who can both create and finish plays. Offensively, he displays elite hockey IQ and patience with the puck, often distributing with precision on the power play and in tight spaces. His vision and timing enable him to open up lanes and create high-quality scoring chances, as demonstrated by his multi-assist performances at both club and national levels. Also contributes defensively, maintaining clever positioning and showing a mature awareness uncommon for his age. Though still physically developing, his compete level and confidence make him effective in board battles and transition play.

ALBERTS SMITS

Defense | Munchen (Germany)

Born: Valmiera, Latvia

No. 2-Ranked International Skater

* Skates for Jukurit in Finland's top professional league where he has produced 6-7—13 in 38 GP, the second-most points by a player age 18 or younger in Liiga this season (at any position). Smits finished third among teenage defensemen in scoring, behind two drafted skaters.

* Smits started 2025-26 averaging two points per game in Finland's top junior league (6-4—10 in 5 GP) and finished the campaign by being loaned to Munchen in the Germany's top men's league, where he contributed 2-4—6 in 10 postseason appearances.

* Played for Team Latvia at the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 (0-2—2 in 4 GP).

* Finished tied for the third-highest point-per-game pace (1.00; 10-10—20 in 10 GP) among defensemen in Finland's Under-18 league in 2024-25. He also played 21 games for Jukurit's junior team (4-5—9 in 21 GP) and made his professional debut (1-1—2 in 9 GP).

* Has represented his country on the international stage two other times – at the 2026 World Junior Championship, where he averaged a point per game (1-4—5 in 5 GP) and 2025 Under-18 World Championship.

* Could become the highest-selected Latvian player in NHL history, a distinction currently held by **Zemgus Girgensoons** (14th overall in 2012).

* Moved away from his family in Latvia to pursue hockey in Finland at the age of 13.

SCOUTING REPORT

Has emerged as one of the standout young defensemen in Finland's Liiga, combining size, mobility, and poise far beyond his years. At just age 18, he has logged over 20 minutes of ice time regularly, with dominant performances that showcase confidence and control throughout. A strong skater with excellent balance and surprising acceleration, he transitions smoothly from defense to offense, often leading the rush himself. His hockey IQ is exceptional, as evidenced by his ability to read plays, make intelligent first passes, and position himself effectively in both zones. He plays a physical yet clean game, utilizing his size and reach to win battles and neutralize one-on-one attackers. Offensively, Smits is dangerous from the blue line, with a heavy, accurate one-timer and the instincts to quarterback the power play. His calmness under pressure and maturity on the puck make him look like a seasoned pro rather than a teenager.

OLIVER SUVANTO
Center | Tappara (FINLAND)
Born: Turku, Finland
No. 3-Ranked International Skater

* Spent the majority of 2025-26 playing in Finland's top pro league with Tappara, where he concluded the campaign with the most points by a player age 17 or younger in Liiga with 2-9—11 (48 GP).

* Spent the 2024-25 season playing in Finland's Under-18 league where he posted 11-31—42 (42 GP), won the league championship and was named Best Forward in the league.

* Represented his country internationally three times: 2026 World Junior Championship (2-0—2 in 7 GP), 2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup (2-2—4 in 5 GP), 2024 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge (0-2—2 in 4 GP).

* His father, **Harri**, played professional hockey in Europe for over a decade.

SCOUTING REPORT

One of the most complete and mature 17-year-old centers seen in Finland's Liiga since Aleksander Barkov. He has already been trusted in key roles for powerhouse Tappara. His strong skating, balance, and physical strength make him highly effective in faceoffs, battles and defensive coverage. A natural two-way player, he combines reliability and intelligence, rarely making mistakes while consistently supporting both ends of the ice. Offensively, can create space for teammates with intelligent positioning and strong puck protection, often generating second chances or assists through simple but effective plays. Forechecking and work ethic stand out, and he plays with pro-level consistency and awareness.

VIGGO BJORCK

Center | Djurgarden (SWEDEN)

Born: Stockholm, Sweden

No. 4-Ranked International Skater

* After recording 1-4—5 in 4 GP with Djurgardens' junior team, Bjorck has been skating in the Swedish Hockey League where he led all players age 17 or younger (6-9—15 in 42 GP) in scoring and finished with the seventh-most points by a teenager.

* Set single-season records in Sweden's junior league in 2024-25 for assists and points after registering 27-47—74 (42 GP). He also helped Djurgarden's junior team win the league title, finishing second in postseason points with 4-11—15 (9 GP).

* Made his professional hockey debut in 2024-25 and was the only 16-year-old in Sweden's second division to score that season (1-0—1 in 1 GP).

* Won gold at the 2026 World Junior Championship and finished the tournament tied for the second-highest point total on his team (3-6—9 in 7 GP). He also medaled at the 2025 Under-18 World Championship (silver), 2024 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge (bronze) and 2024 Hlinka Gretzky Cup (bronze).

* His brother, **Wilson**, was selected 143rd overall by the Canucks in 2025 and is currently playing in the NCAA for Colorado College. Last season, Viggo and Wilson played on a line together. His father, **Jesper**, played professional hockey in Sweden for nearly two decades.

* His aunt, **Charlotte Perrelli**, is a famous singer and television host in Sweden.

SCOUTING REPORT

Displays elite skating and creativity, standing out as one of Sweden's most dynamic young forwards. His acceleration and edgework allow him to separate instantly from defenders, while his hockey IQ shines through clever puck movement and spatial awareness in tight areas. He plays with confidence and flair, using deceptive hands and a quick release – particularly on his wrist shot – to generate dangerous scoring chances. Has strengthened his lower body, demonstrating improved balance and competitiveness in board battles. He contributes effectively on both special teams, managing the puck well on breakouts and serving as a deceptive playmaker on the power play. His energy, forechecking, and two-way commitment make him a valuable all-situations forward. With his blend of speed, skill, and evolving physical maturity, projects as an A-level prospect.

ELTON HERMANSSON

Right Wing | MODO (SWEDEN-2)

Born: Ornskoldsvik, Sweden

No. 5-Ranked International Skater

* After collecting 3-6—9 (13 GP) playing with MoDo's junior team, Hermansson made his pro debut and concluded 2025-26 with the most points by a 17-year-old in Sweden's second division (11-10—21 in 38 GP). He also finished fifth in scoring by teenagers.

* Spent majority of 2024-25 playing in Sweden's top junior league where he amassed 17-19—36 (41 GP). He finished with the third-most goals (17) and fourth-most points (36) among 16-year-olds across the league that season.

* A two-time medalist internationally, earning silver at the 2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup, where he finished second in goals (6) and points (tied; 11), and bronze at the 2024 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge.

* His father, **Lennart**, played professional hockey in Europe for 15 years. His brother, **Simon**, also has been playing hockey in Sweden for over a decade.

SCOUTING REPORT

Showcases elite puck-handling and offensive creativity, standing out as one of the most technically skilled prospects in Europe this year. Ability to carry the puck through traffic and create space for teammates makes him a constant threat, particularly on the power play, where his one-timer and quick release are deadly. Demonstrates vision and patience, often manipulating defenders with deceptive stickhandling and creative passing plays. His offensive instincts consistently put him in high-danger scoring areas. His skating is smooth and agile. His experience in Sweden's second division suggests he can adapt to higher levels as he gains strength and pro habits. Projects as a player with first-round potential, blending flair, intelligence, and a high offensive ceiling that promises significant upside.

JUHO PIIPARINEN

Defense | Tappara (FINLAND)

Born: Lahti, Finland

No. 6-Ranked International Skater

* Spent the majority of 2025-26 playing professional hockey in Finland, where he skated in 29 GP and finished with the most points by an Under-18 defenseman (0-3—3). He also skated in 15 games with Tappara's junior team (1-12—13 in 15 GP).

* In 2024-25, Piiparinen played for Tappara's junior team and tallied 2-14—16 (40 GP). He topped the league in assists and scoring (tied) by players age 16 or younger. He also helped their Under-18 team win the league's championship, collecting 3-9—12 (9 GP).

* Represented Team Finland at the 2026 World Junior Championship, 2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup – where he wore an 'A' – 2025 Under-18 World Championship and the 2024 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge.

* His father, **Jarkko**, played professional hockey in Finland for a decade.

SCOUTING REPORT

Quickly established himself as one of the most improved young defensemen in the Finnish Liiga, holding a regular spot on Tappara's roster at just 17 years old. Plays with poise and confidence, showing excellent hockey sense and a calm approach under pressure. His skating and mobility are solid, featuring good balance and top-end speed once he is in motion. Reads the game very well, moving the puck effectively and joining the rush when opportunities arise while staying disciplined defensively. Uses his size and strength well in board battles and one-on-one situations, rarely getting outmuscled despite his youth. Offensively, he has started to show flashes of playmaking skill and composure with the puck, though his shot and offensive assertiveness are still developing. His maturity, consistency, and improving two-way presence make him an A-level prospect.

MALTE GUSTAFSSON
Defense | HV71 (SWEDEN)
Born: Vackelsång, Sweden
No. 7-Ranked International Skater

* Tallied 4-8—12 (19 GP) playing in Sweden's top junior league before making his professional hockey debut in the SHL. Gustafsson has the second-most points among 17-year-olds in the SHL, the only player with more is fellow draft-eligible prospect, **Viggo Björck**, who is a forward (0-3—3 in 27 GP).

* Skated the majority of the 2024-25 season with HV71's junior team, where he finished with the second-most points among defensemen age 17 or younger across the league (2-6—8 in 36 GP).

* Wore an 'A' as part of his country's silver-medal entry at the 2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup, where he averaged over a point per game (2-4—6 in 5 GP) as well as two bronze medals at the 2025 World Junior A Challenge and 2024 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge.

* His brother, **Viggo**, was selected 77th overall in the 2024 NHL Draft by the Nashville Predators.

SCOUTING REPORT

Shows remarkable composure and confidence beyond his age. He skates well, handles the puck cleanly, and doesn't look nervous even in the SHL. His mobility and poise under pressure stand out, allowing him to contribute effectively in both zones. His decision-making generally reflects maturity and game awareness. Defensively, he is strong positionally, using an active stick and body to close space and win battles. He demonstrates control and calm when quarterbacking the power play, distributing crisp passes, and showing the ability to create offense from the blue line. His performance typically showcases his offensive upside, blending skill and vision with physical reliability. His skating agility and balance for a player of his size make him a modern two-way defenseman with legitimate top-pair potential.

MARCUS NORDMARK

Left Wing | Djurgarden Jr. (SWEDEN-JR.)

Born: Stockholm, Sweden

No. 8-Ranked International Skater

* Spent the majority of 2025-26 in Sweden's top junior league, where he finished with the sixth-most points by under-18 players (14-24—38 in 25 GP). He also made his professional debut and was one of just three 17-year-olds with points in the SHL (0-1—1 in 8 GP).

* In 2024-25, he split the season between Djurgarden's Under-18 team (22-24—46 in 27 GP) and their junior team (9-9—18 in 17 GP), helping both clubs with gold.

* Earned silver at the 2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup and led the tournament in goals (7) and points (12) – in fact, only five players in that tournament's history have recorded more points. Nordmark also earned bronze medals at the 2025 World Junior A Challenge (1-4—5 in 5 GP) and 2024 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge, where he topped the tournament with 2.00 points per game (5-3—8 in 4 GP)

* His father, **Robert**, was selected 59th overall by the St. Louis Blues in 1987 – he played two decades of professional hockey, including 236 NHL games for the Blues and Vancouver Canucks. His brothers, **Eric** and **Steven**, are both playing professional hockey in Sweden.

SCOUTING REPORT

Combining size, skill, and creativity to drive his team's offense. His blend of strength and refined technique makes him dangerous at times, particularly on the power play, where he orchestrates plays from his off-wing. He showcases both playmaking and finishing abilities, threading smart passes and unleashing accurate shots that consistently creates scoring chances. He plays with high confidence and flair, occasionally holding onto the puck too long, but his growing team awareness has improved his overall effectiveness. With strong hands, good skating, and offensive instincts, he gets in scoring positions. His offensive toolkit and poise make him one of the most complete forwards in his age group. Overall, Nordmark projects as a top-line, two-way scoring forward and a legitimate A-prospect with first-round potential.

GLEB PUGACHYOV**Right Wing | Nizhny Novgorod Jr. (RUSSIA-JR.)****Born: Almaty, Kazakhstan****No. 9-Ranked International Skater**

* Collected 10-14—24 in 33 GP skating in Russia's top junior league. He also made his professional hockey debut, skating 13 GP in the KHL and finishing with the most points by a player age 17 or younger (2-1—3). He also played 15 GP in Russia's second-highest league and concluded the campaign with the second-most points among players of that age group (1-4—5 in 15 GP).

* Spent the majority of 2024-25 in the MHL, where he collected 5-12—17 in 42 GP. He was the second-highest scoring 16-year-old on his team. In the postseason, Pugachyov finished second in the league in scoring among players age 16 or younger (5-6—11 in 14 GP).

* Named to the 2025-26 MHL All-Star.

SCOUTING REPORT

He is a big, strong top-line winger with smooth skating mechanics at top speed, strong puck protection, and the ability to drive play through size and skill. He can win pucks, backcheck hard, and create offense with quick passes, smart separation moves, and the ability to beat defenders 1-on-1. His shot is powerful, his hands are good in tight areas, and he shows natural instincts on the cycle, making him effective as a playmaker on the power play. His pace and skating techniques have improved a lot during the season and nowadays he is a hardworking skater all over the ice. He competes well, plays big minutes in all situations, and shows flashes of high-end upside thanks to size, skill, and hockey IQ.

SIMAS IGNATAVICIUS**Right Wing | Geneve (SWISS)****Born: Memphis, Tenn.****No. 10-Ranked International Skater**

* Spent the majority of the 2025-26 season skating in Switzerland's top professional league, where he finished with the most points by a skater age 18 or younger (7-6—13 in 52 GP). He was also loaned to HC Thurgau, where he played eight games in the country's second division (7-4—11 in 8 GP) as well as four games playing in the Under-21 league (4-3—7 in 4 GP).

* Topped Switzerland's junior league in goals and points (both tied) after tallying 23-27—50 (25 GP) in 2024-25. He also made his professional debut, after being loaned to EHC Visp in Switzerland's second-highest league, where he skated in three games.

* Was born in Memphis, Tenn., but is a Lithuania national and has represented Lithuania six times on the international stage. He won gold at the 2025 World Junior Championship Division 2 A, finishing with the most goals (8), assists (6) and points (14) in the tournament, and the 2023 Under-18 World Championship Division 2 A. He also earned silver at the 2024 and 2025 Under-18 World Championship Division 1 B and the 2024 World Junior Championship Division 2 A.

SCOUTING REPORT

A 6'3 center/winger who generally shows his best moments by using strength and body positioning to protect the puck before delivering smart passes to the slot. Even when his execution hasn't been the best, his ideas are consistently strong, as he repeatedly tries to attack the middle and make plays under pressure. His game is highlighted by his vision, processing speed, and composure, including cutbacks along the goal line and creative passes. While his straight-line foot speed is getting better during the season, he is improving his pace management and can generate speed through effective crossover use. Defensively, he remained reliable, often covering for pinching defensemen and showing mature positioning in his own zone. He brings a versatile, pro-ready toolkit with size, puck protection, battle ability, and intelligent puck management, even if higher-end offensive skill flashes are still developing.



NORTH AMERICAN GOALIES



BRADY KNOWLING

Goaltender | USA U-18 (NTDP - USHL)

Born: Toronto, Ont.

No. 1-Ranked North American Goalie

* Bolstered a 12-11-1 record in 2025-26 with USA Hockey's National Team Development Program Under-18 team, which marked a 10-win improvement over his first season with the program.

* Played for USA Hockey's NTDP Under-17 team in 2024-25 (2-8-1).

* Committed to Boston Univ. for the 2027-28 season.

* Won gold with Team USA at the 2025 Hlinka Gretzky Cup and represented his country at the 2026 World Junior Championship.

SCOUTING REPORT

Has a big pro presence with excellent positional play. Doesn't leave much room for shooters. Plays most of the game at the top of the paint and square to the shots. Plays with a lot of confidence. Well balanced strong stance. Excellent butterfly and leg extension, sealing the ice and far corners. Very tough to beat in the low portion of the net. Keeps his body upright when down in the butterfly to protect the upper corners. Very smart at reading the pass across plays. Solid in tight situations and on wraparound attempts. Tracks the pucks well through traffic and he does well with rebound control. Lateral crease play is very efficient. Excellent NHL potential

MICHAL ORSULAK**Goaltender | Prince Albert (WHL)****Born: Pilsen, Czechia****No. 2-Ranked North American Goalie**

* Led the WHL in goals against average (2.22) as a rookie and topped all rookie netminders in wins after posting a 28-4-4 record.

* Currently leads the WHL Playoffs in wins, holding an 8-1-0 record (1.55 GAA, .919 SV%).

* Played in Czechia's junior league in 2024-25 posting a 14-20-0 record.

* Has two silver medals from international competition with Czechia from both the 2026 World Junior Championship and the 2024 Hlinka Gretzky Cup. He also represented his country at the 2023 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge and 2025 Under-18 World Championship.

SCOUTING REPORT

Playing in his first full season in the WHL. Big pro presence that catches with his right hand . Has a very good command of his crease area. Plays an aggressive style - challenges smartly and shows very good reaction and recovery quickness. Quick and strong in his power lateral pushes. Quick reflexes to flare out the pads on the low corner attempts. Capable of making the big saves for his team. Had a very good and consistent season. Very efficient crease lateral movements - square to shots and he doesn't leave much room for shooters. Good overall rebound control and he has a good catching glove. Played extremely well for the Czechia team at the World Juniors helping his team earn the silver medal. Really like his pro upside - there is a lot to work with.

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