

Golden Knights Won't Pick Until Second Round

By Dave Lukow

The Vegas Golden Knights will have to wait this weekend.

Taking place June 22 and 23 at the American Airlines Arena in Dallas, the 2018 NHL Draft lacks intrigue in terms of which player goes first overall. Rasmus Dahlin, an 18-year-old Swedish defenseman, is certain to be grabbed by the Buffalo Sabres, the team owning the top pick in the proceedings.

Dahlin, who played with Frolunda in Sweden's best league this season, has been compared to the likes of Erik Karlsson, Victor Hedman and former Detroit stalwart Nicklas Lidstrom. In 41 games with Frolunda, Dahlin totaled seven goals, 20 points and 20 penalty minutes. A member of Sweden's Olympic team, he was the youngest player at the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea.

Buffalo, a team that hasn't qualified for the postseason since 2011, will add Dahlin to a foundation that includes centers Jack Eichel and Casey Mittelstadt.

"There aren't many holes in his game," one scout said of Dahlin. "He's got size, skill and smarts. He plays against men, and he's a dominant force. He can play the game almost any way you want."

"He's a little like a Peter Forsberg character," Tomas Montén, who coached Dahlin at the World Junior Championship, said. "He gets really mean. He has a high temper."

Forsberg played 708 games in the NHL between 1994-2011. He finished his career with 249 goals, 885 points and 690 penalty minutes. A forward, he had 171 points and 163 penalty minutes in 151 playoff contests.

The second pick in the draft belongs to the Carolina Hurricanes. Carolina seems poised to select forward Andrei Svechnikov, who spent 2017-18 with Barrie of the Ontario Hockey League (OHL). In 44 games, the 6-foot-3 Russian had 40 goals, 72 points and 67 penalty minutes. At the World Junior Championship (WJC), he had five assists in five games.

Vegas, barring a trade, will make its first choice late in the second round (61st overall). The Golden Knights sent their pick in Round 1 to Detroit in the deal that brought Tomas Tatar to Las Vegas. In 20 games with the Golden Knights, Tatar, 27, had four goals and six points. With the Red Wings, he scored 16 goals in 62 games. Taken in the second round by Detroit in 2009, Tatar has 228 points in 427 NHL games. He's reached the 20-goal mark four times.

Vegas is scheduled to make seven picks in Dallas.

The Montreal Canadiens are slated to pick third overall. Among the players who could go to the storied franchise are forwards Brady Tkachuk and Filip Zadina. The younger brother of Calgary's Matthew Tkachuk, Brady Tkachuk played at Boston University this season, registering 31 points and 61 penalty minutes in 40 games. In seven games at the WJC, he had nine points.

Zadina, of the Czech Republic, had 44 goals and 82 points for Halifax of the QMJHL. He scored seven goals in seven games at the WJC. The 6-foot-1 left wing reminds some of Marian Hossa.