Sportlytix

NHL Expansion Draft Analysis

Web Mock Drafts / Golden Knights Strategy

Perspective + Look Ahead

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Introduction

- **Sportlytix collected fan-generated mock expansion drafts entered after the trade deadline and before the expansion draft**

  - Only feasible mock drafts, meeting ALL constraints considered → 307 in total

- **Sportlytix's analysis compared those to the Vegas Golden Knights' actual expansion draft selections**

  - Plus trades conducted at the time of the draft

- **Objectives of this report:**

  - Assess the accuracy of the mock drafts

  - Gain insights into the Golden Knights' strategy

  - Examine the various strategies of the 30 incumbent teams

  - Possible next steps for 30 incumbent teams

NHL Expansion Draft: Vegas Golden Knights' Picks

Atlantic

Boston	Colin Miller	D
Buffalo	William Carrier *1	F
Detroit	Tomas Nosek	F
Florida	Jonathan Marchessault *2	F
Montreal	Alexei Emelin	D
Ottawa	Marc Methot	D
Tampa Bay	Jason Garrison *3	D
Toronto	Brendan Leipsic	F

Central

Chicago	Trevor van Riemsdyk *8	D
Colorado	Calvin Pickard	G
Dallas	Cody Eakin	F
Minnesota	Erik Haula *9	F
Nashville	James Neal	F
St. Louis	David Perron	F
Winnipeg	Chris Thorburn *10	F

Metropolitan

Carolina	Connor Brickley *4	F
Columbus	William Karlsson *5	F
New Jersey	Jon Merrill	D
NY Islanders	Jean-Francois Berube *6	G
NY Rangers	Oscar Lindberg	F
Philadelphia	Pierre-Eduoard Bellemare	F
Pittsburgh	Marc-Andre Fleury *7	G
Washington	Nate Schmidt	D

Pacific

Anaheim	Clayton Stoner *11	D
Arizona	Teemu Pulkkinen	F
Calgary	Deryk Engelland	D
Edmonton	Griffin Reinhart	D
Los Angeles	Brayden McNabb	D
San Jose	David Schlemko	D
Vancouver	Luca Sbisa	D

* Plus additional considerations. See next page.

NHL Expansion Draft: Vegas Golden Knights' Picks

Additional Considerations:

1. Vegas also acquired a 2017 6th round pick from **Buffalo**

2. Vegas also acquired Reilly Smith from Florida; traded their 2018 4th to **Florida**

3. Vegas also acquired Nikita Gusev, a 2017 2nd, and a 2018 4th from **Tampa Bay**

4. Vegas also acquired a 2017 5th round pick from **Carolina**

5. Vegas also acquired David Clarkson, a 2017 1st, and a 2019 2nd from **Columbus**

6. Vegas also acquired Mikhail Grabovski, Jake Bischoff, a 2017 1st (15th overall), and a 2019 2nd from the **New York Islanders**

7. Vegas also acquired a 2018 2nd from **Pittsburgh**

8. Vegas traded van Riemsdyk and a 2018 7th to **Carolina** for Carolina's 2017 2nd

9. Vegas also acquired Alex Tuch from **Minnesota**; traded a 2017 or 2018 3rd to Minnesota

10. Vegas also acquired 2017 1st (13th overall) and a 2019 3rd from **Winnipeg**; traded their 2017 1st (24th overall) to Winnipeg

11. Vegas also added Shea Theodore from **Anaheim**

Takeaways:

- Vegas converted 30 picks into **36 players** *plus* **8 additional picks** in the next 4 drafts

NHL Expansion Draft: Top Mocked Players

% of Appearances in 307 Mock Drafts
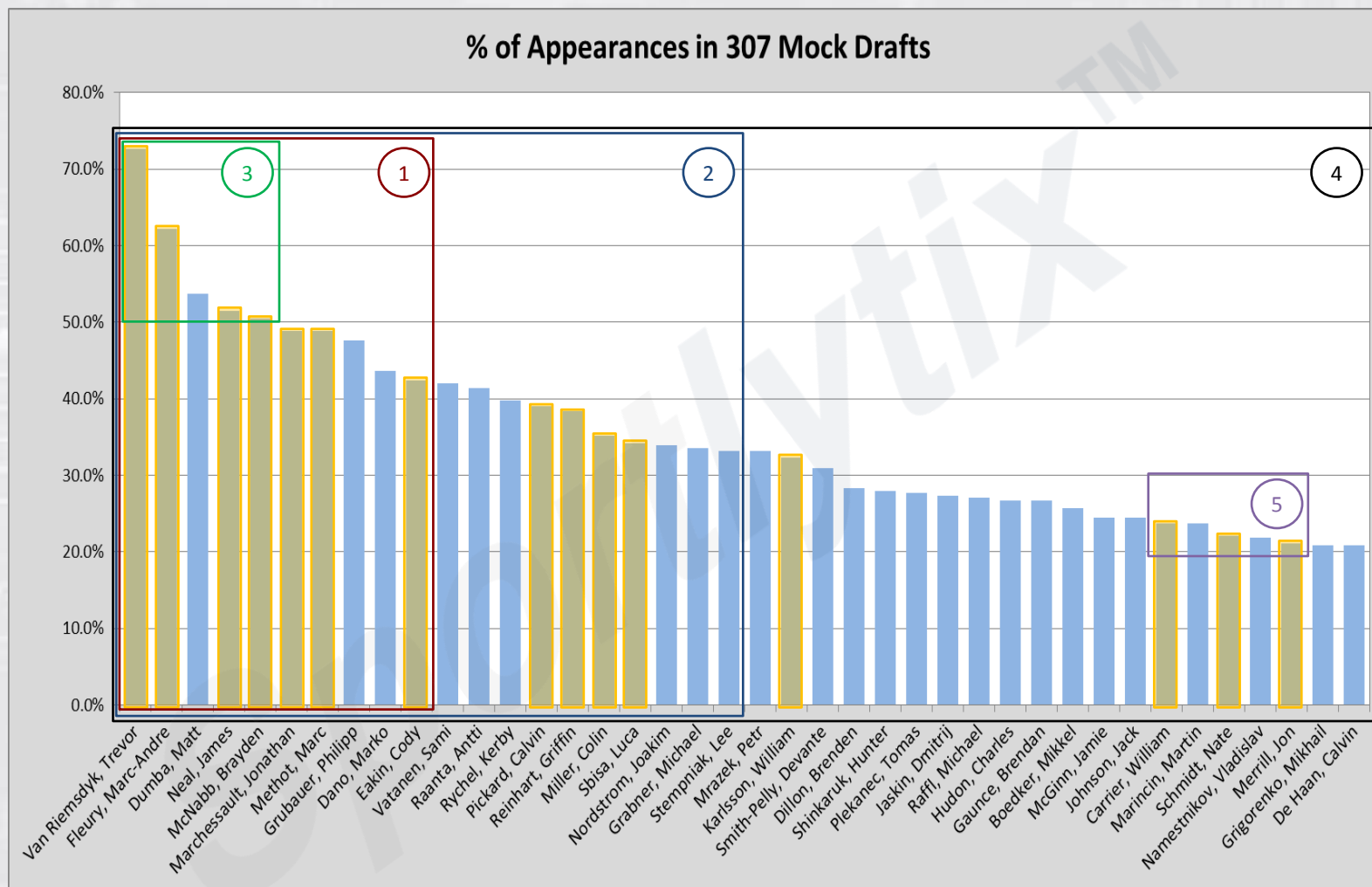
Golden Knights expansion draft pick

NHL Expansion Draft: Top Mocked Players

Takeaways:

1. 7 of the top ten mocked players were selected by the Golden Knights

2. 11 of the top 20 mocked players were selected

3. 4 of 5 players named in at least 50% of mock drafts were selected

4. Only 15 of top 40 mocked players were selected

5. Of the top 40 players mocked, only 3 of 17 named in less than 30% of drafts were selected

6. Half of Vegas' selections (15) were named in fewer than 20% of mock drafts (not shown)

NHL Expansion Draft: Vegas Golden Knights' Picks

Golden Knights Selection Rank Among Mock Drafts

Legend: ▬ Position of Golden Knights' pick among mock drafts, e.g., 1 indicates top prediction of mock drafts, blue color bar indicates player taken was not mocked in any of 307 feasible mock drafts studied

X-axis teams: ANA, ARI, BOS, BUF, CAL, CAR, CBJ, CHI, COL, DAL, DET, EDM, FLO, LA, MIN, MTL, NAS, NJD, NYI, NYR, OTT, PHI, PIT, SJ, STL, TB, TOR, VAN, WAS, WPG
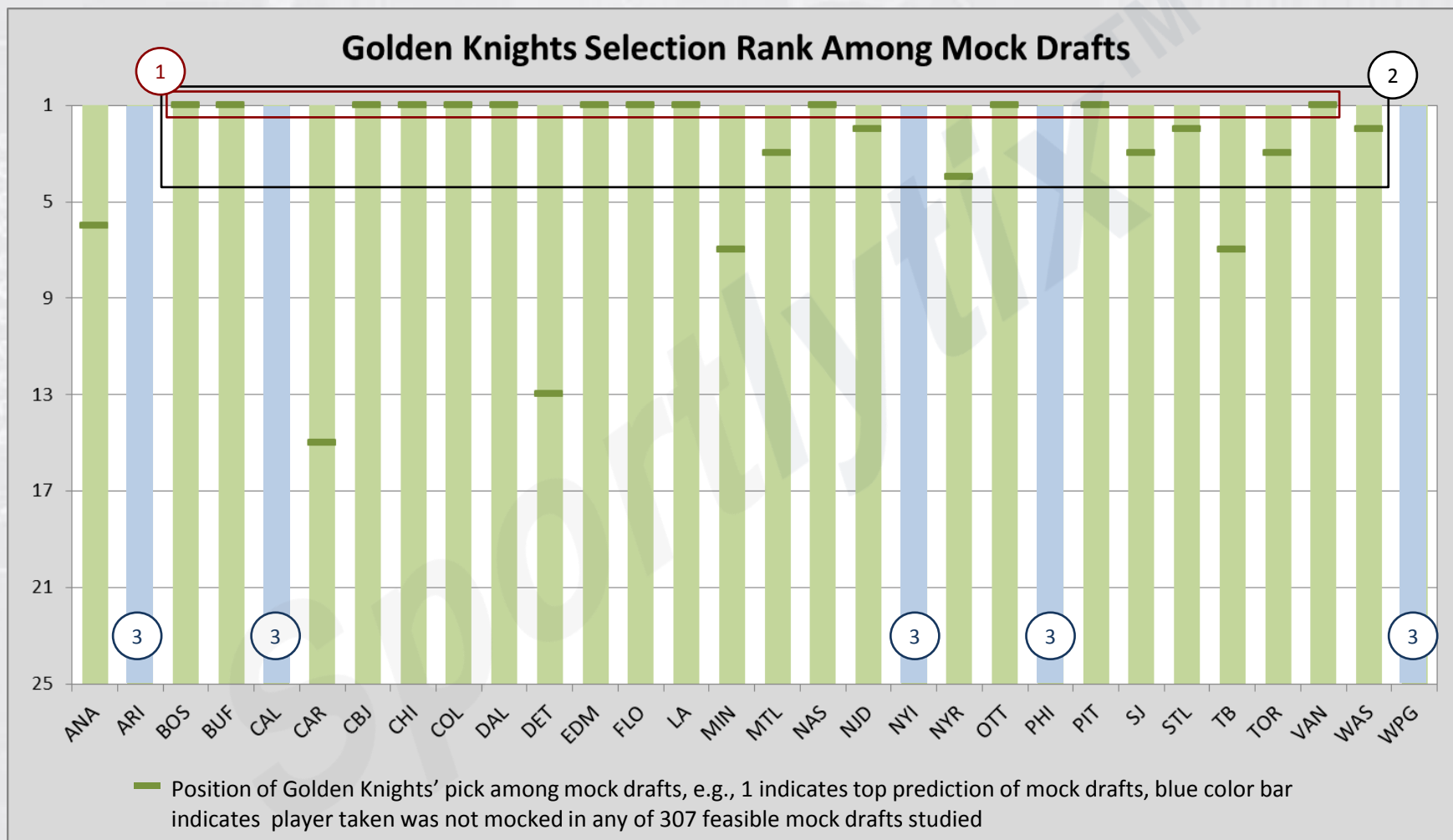
NHL Expansion Draft: Vegas Golden Knights' Picks

Takeaways:

1. 13 of Vegas' picks were mocked in the top position of their respective teams

2. 20 of the Golden Knights' selections were mocked in positions 1 – 4 of their respective teams

3. Vegas selected players from 5 teams (ARI, CAL, NYI, PHI, and WPG) that were not mocked (blue bars on chart)

NHL Expansion Draft: Vegas' Picks by Category
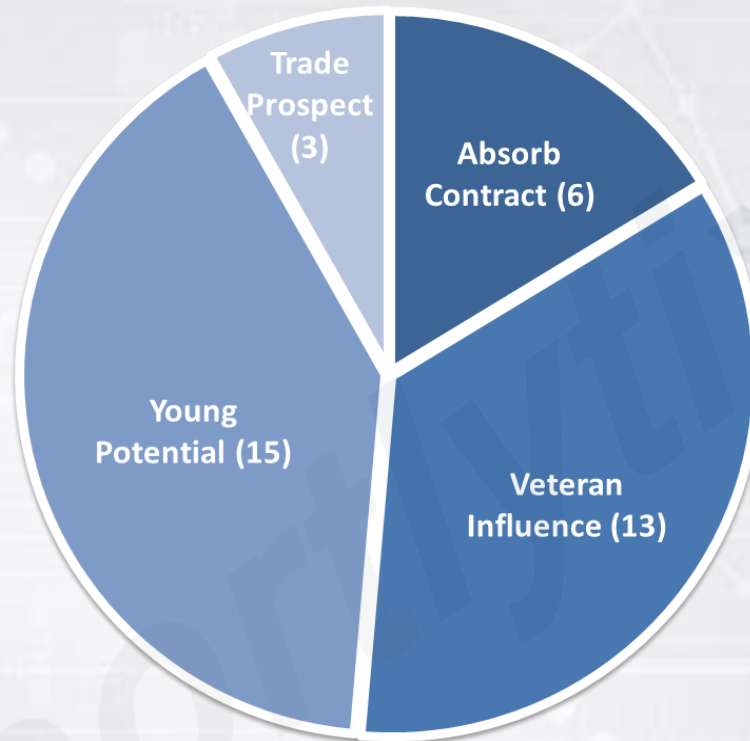
- 37 players acquired on Draft Day, 3 since traded*

- Roughly evenly split between youth (25- years old) / experience (26+ years old)

- Available salary cap space was used to absorb unwanted contracts (6) of incumbent teams

- Each "absorbed contract" also came with a young prospect and, in some cases, draft picks

* At time of report compilation

Insights, Conclusions, Open Questions

- **Overall mock drafts offered reasonable insight into actual draft – 20 of 30 picks were mocked in positions 1 -4 of their respective team**

- **Mock draft accuracy hampered by inability to model trades**
  - Could mean the next expansion draft might have constraints limiting the "side deals."
  - Did NHL envision this type of outcome (encourage side deals) or did they miss something here?

- **Stronger the mock draft sentiment about a given player correlated with that player being chosen**
  - 4 of 5 mocked over 50% / 7 of 12 mocked over 40% were chosen
  - Incumbent teams can use this next time around for insight into potential side deals. You take this guy, we'll trade for him, etc.

- **Mock draft accuracy diminished greatly with diminishment of sentiment**
  - Only 8 of 28 mocked under 40% / 3 of 17 mocked under 30% were chosen

- **Vegas used its unique position to acquire a significant number of additional players, draft picks to build for the future**
  - Will the NHL add constraints to the next expansion draft to hinder or encourage?

Insights, Conclusions, Open Questions (cont.)

- **Rather than go best player available across the board, Vegas split almost evenly between youth / experience**

  - Incumbent teams would do well to brainstorm on Expansion Team's execution for insights to employ to their franchises

- **Vegas used available salary cap space to absorb expensive contracts of veterans from several teams**

  - Absorbing expensive vets is probably more valuable to incumbent teams than VGK anticipated

- **In return, the Golden Knights received at least one young prospect, and in some cases draft pick(s)**

  - How, if at all, does VGK's execution differ from your own franchise?

- **By stockpiling future draft picks, Vegas**

  - Mitigates immediate risks
  - Ensures it will receive extended value from a "one off" event
  - Incumbent teams would do well to study VGK in detail for insights about the league it contains

- **Going forward, implementing of decision-making analytic structure will offer significant advantages for high-impact decisions**

Sportlytix... deep experience, proven results

Mike Musuris

Co-Founder / CEO

- 20+ years of technology product development, management, and marketing
- Successfully developed, launched and grew multiple products in markets from Internet software to semiconductor equipment
- Sports industry since 2009
- MSME, Stanford University / BSME, University of Utah

Theodore Forsman

Co-Founder / CTO

- Management consultant since 1990 – quantitative modeling
- Pioneering implementations of predictive revenue management models in the rental car, container shipping, and time-share residences
- Developed sports software and products since 1980
- BS Mathematical Sciences / MS Operations Research, Stanford University

Sportlytix Background

- **The use of advanced analytics in sports is changing the games by providing insights that improve athletic performance and affect coaching / management decisions.**

- **Sportlytix specializes in the highest-impact decisions facing the Sports Industry -- using the ever-expanding set of available player data.**

- **The Sportlytix Big Data, Predictive Analytics and Optimal Decision-Making System is built upon elements of**
  - Mathematics & Statistics
  - Portfolio Theory
  - Data Science / Machine Learning
  - Decision Theory
  - Large-Scale Computing
  - Control Systems Engineering

- **Sportlytix technology is based on 40 years combined experience applying advanced analytics to industry problems**

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