

garbage-variety goals simply from second-efforts. Has more offensive upside than he himself seems to realize. Power forward in the making.

11. Gustav Olhaver/LW — Rögle Jr. 6-6/214. 03 Jul 97.

Enormous winger has taken gradual steps all season. Two-way forward with a mix of skill, poise and determination. Eats up ground with long strides which are steadily gaining power and stability. Acceleration is improving, but as with most huge players needs polishing. More coordinated and stronger on his edges than last season. Makes smart plays in traffic and protects the puck well along the boards, aided by monster reach. Nice stickhandling technique and makes smart, quick plays in scoring areas. Hustles hard in puck pursuit, backchecks well and is reliable in own zone. Needs to be more aggressive and take better advantage of his size.

12. Kevin Stenlund/RC — HV 71 Jr. 6-4/205. 20 Sep 96.

Tall, rangy playmaker with slick hands and tricky 1-on-1 moves, aided by huge wingspan. Good passer is able to finesse accurate feeds through traffic, displaying imagination. Unloads accurate snapshots at full speed with a quick release. Has soft hands. Skates well for a player his size, but needs work on his acceleration and lacks a top-end gear. Too passive defensively and doesn't take full advantage of his size in the physical aspect of the game. Sometimes looks lackadaisical and just floats around during his shift, then wins the game with a 1-timer next shift.

13. Mattias Elfström/LW-C — Malmö Jr. 6-3/194.

08 Jan 97. Long, lanky body with perfect frame to fill out. Skates very well for his size. Agile and versatile with good two-way skills and instincts. Talented playmaker who protects the puck well in traffic and drives the net, utilizing soft hands and long reach. Hard working and sound defensively. Makes biggest impact when playing an aggressive power style. Needs to add power to his stride and get stronger on his edges, but will advance quickly as strength fills in.

14. Andreas Käberg/G-L — Färjestad Jr. 6-2/181.

16 Jun 97. Has emerged as the top '97-born Swedish goaltender. Having a very solid season. Usually unflappable and calm which instills confidence in teammates. Sharp reflexes and a lightning-fast glove hand. Drops down on most shots but is gradually developing better patience and staying up longer. Sometimes gets caught too deep in his crease and can be vulnerable up top. Covers net well and does a good job staying square to shooters.

15. Felix Sandström/G-L — Brynäs Jr. 6-2/187. 12 Jan 97.

Lots of talent but has been hampered all season with injuries and mono. Has only played 14 games, including five with the National Team, so hard to get a good read on him. Maintains body control and has a natural explosiveness in his reactions and movements. Difficult to beat down low, tidy butterfly. Needs to get healthy for a longer stretch and play himself back to form.

16. Fredrik Forsberg/RW — Leksand Jr. 6-0/174.

12 Dec 96. Younger brother of Nashville's NHL rookie sensation Filip. Not as tall or explosive, but otherwise plays a very similar style. Very strong with the puck from the hashmarks in, poised and waits for openings to release very quick wristers pinpointed to top corners. Strong on the PP where he connects on hard 1-timers. Needs to work on his acceleration and has a bad looking stride. Somewhat 1-dimensional, but goal scoring is a good dimension to have.

17. Simon Brännvall/LW — Luleå Jr. 6-1/192. 04 Sep 97.

Hard working power-forward with good size and a thick body. Loves to hit hard and often; a no-nonsense, feisty style of play. Drives net hard and competes well around the boards. Getting stronger and more determined on the puck. Shoots and then attacks the net. Keeps his feet driving, putting on heavy forechecking pressure and drawing penalties. Needs to work on his acceleration.

(Editor's Note: Last month's CHL Top Prospects Game was a nice measuring tool in the season-long evaluation process. Red Line's Chief Scout was in attendance, and filed the following reports. Players are listed in the order of our preference in this particular game, by position.)

TEAM ORR:

Travis Konecny — Ottawa. While one game exhibitions don't normally outweigh a full season's body of work, his electric performance here went a long way toward alleviating our concerns over his frequently lacklustre regular season play to date. Skated with great jump and created loads of good opportunities - far more active away from the puck than he's been all year. Was the single most dominant force in the game, and his two goals showed the hands and finishing ability we loved so much last season. Superb release on his second goal, which was a bar down laser beam. We hope this game will be a catalyst for the rest of his season.

Timo Meier — Halifax. Joined with McDavid and Konecny to dominate the game. Absolutely wired his goal with a heavy wrister just under the crossbar from the high slot. Spotted Konecny and made a great lead pass for a clear breakaway goal. Most encouraging is that he had his head up carrying the puck on the rush — he's looking over his options better now, and seeing more of the ice. Used big, strong frame to grind in the corners and dominate down low.

Jansen Harkins — Prince George. Very quick with a fluid stride and excellent speed. Explosive first step. Didn't hit the scoresheet, but was active and played at a high tempo while also showing defensive responsibility. Came back hard to help out down low numerous times and corraled loose pucks, making his defencemen's jobs easier.

Paul Bittner — Portland. Huge winger with long strides and reach. Snapped off a couple of great, really heavy wristers, including the game's final goal. But much like the rest of his season, left us wanting more — just didn't engage enough. Backchecked well and was usually around the puck in the thick of the action, but didn't accomplish much until his late goal. Needs to become more forceful and impose his will on defenders.

Nicolas Roy — Chicoutimi. Repeatedly stood out in all the wrong ways. Consistently overhanded the puck in his own end and got stripped. Bad turnovers led to several dangerous chances against. Looked hesitant having to think too much as a centre - we think he's better suited on the wing. Also didn't handle a centre's defensive responsibilities well.

Thomas Chabot — Saint John. Might have had the most impressive two-way game of any blue-liner here. Really smart puck movement and made all his decisions early so forecheckers could never get in on him. Got the puck to the right spots every time on the breakout, and if there wasn't an opening, showed patience moving it smartly from D-to-D. Nothing fancy, but steady and effective. Also showed glimpses of his offensive game with a couple of well-timed rushes and pinches in the offensive end.

Jeremy Roy — Sherbrooke. Skated with lots of jump all night and showed off his outstanding offensive ability. Made a series of rocket passes up the middle - long leads that hit forwards right in stride and led to several dangerous chances. Also has great wheels and stickhandling ability to carry the puck out of the zone by himself under pressure. His defensive zone coverage was spotty - often in the right place, but not aggressive enough in moving or tying up his check. Blocked a shot high and showed character by finishing the shift and game.

Ivan Provorov — Brandon. Almost every time he was on the ice he did something to make us take notice. He was aggressive both physically and with the puck. Moves the puck well, pivots well, works the defensive corners and used the body often around his own net. Threw a great check at his blue line to separate his check from the puck. Forced the play intelligently at both ends.

Guillaume Brisebois — Acadie-Bathurst. Teamed up with Meloche to form a steady tandem that was rarely in trouble in their own end all night. Played a safe, conservative game and didn't try to do too much. But was always in the right place and broke up a lot of plays with good anticipation and an active stick. Clean skater is light on his edges and closes gaps well.

Nicolas Meloche — Baie-Comeau. Rarely noticed him all game, but in his case that's a good thing. He joined Brisebois in clearing the zone quickly and efficiently. Showed good strength to pin and seal his man along the walls. Removed opposing forwards from the puck easily. Made very good outlets and decisions both with and without the puck. Made intelligent plays in all three zones.

Liam Herbst — Ottawa. An eye-popping performance by the big netminder. Has had a ton of adversity early in his career with two knee injuries and two hip injuries. But made the most of his chance here when Mackenzie Blackwood had to back out. Stood on his head time after time. Stopped all 21 shots he faced - the most of the four goalies to play. Battled hard to preserve the shutout right until the final buzzer. Couple this with recently registering his first OHL shutout, and he has put himself back on the map.

Nick McBride — Prince Albert. Did not look sure of himself on several of the saves he made, but ultimately stopped all 11 shots he faced against top quality shooters. May have had a case of the jitters in his first real showcase outing on the big stage. Has really fine size and physical tools, and covers a lot of net - though he does play too deep and doesn't look confident on his angles. Vaguely reminiscent of a young Hasek with no style or reason to his play, but he manages to stop the puck.

TEAM CHERRY:

Mitch Marner — London. Such a smart, instinctive player. Gives the puck up and instantly gets to open ice for return feeds. Terrific skater with great lateral agility and moves - elusive and tough to hit. The only thing faster than his feet is his mind - thinks the game and makes decisions at a higher tempo than everyone else. Offensive dynamo set up Strome at least three different times that should have been sure goals.

Jake DeBrusk — Swift Current. Really liked his game riding herd for Marner and Strome. Really hard on his stick and the puck. Powerful stride and strong balance - tough to move off the puck. Played a bang-and-crash style and got to the net regularly. Already a pro style winger with size, toughness, and a little puck skill.

Evgeny Svechnikov — Cape Breton. Didn't show up on the scoreboard, but he was highly involved all night and always in the middle of the action for Team Cherry. He both gave and took several big hits, and was working well along the walls and in traffic. Left himself exposed too often - needs to feel the pressure coming better. Strong skater with a great stride who heads directly to the net. Got off one very heavy wrist that handcuffed goalie.

Dylan Strome — Erie. Was a bit snakebit the whole game. Pucks slid off his blade, bounced and hopped over his stick, and generally would not lay flat for him to show his offensive skill on a few glorious chances in tight. But he was always in the right spot and positions himself beautifully to receive passes so he can get a shot off

while keeping defenders on his hip. Big, smart and creative with soft hands. One thing he lacks is a top-end gear.

Anthony Beauvillier — Shawinigan. Was his usual self: high energy every shift and really good leadership skills with a take-charge attitude on the ice. Got in quickly on the forecheck and caused some problems, but overall wasn't able to establish chemistry with his linemates or create sustained offensive pressure. Still love his game and high character.

Dennis Yan — Shawinigan. Highly disappointing effort. Don't know what the hell he was thinking, but repeatedly dribbled himself off into the corner on his rushes without ever looking to make a play to a linemate - it's like he was wearing blinders. Looked very one-dimensional and easy for top defencemen to angle out wide and neutralise.

Graham Knott — Niagara. Foolishly cut into the middle coming over the blue line on a first period rush and took a huge hit, turning the puck over for a goal the other way. Had one impressive solo rush where he dashed down the wing and swung around behind the net for a dangerous wrap-around attempt, showcasing his long stride and puck control at speed. Other than that, not an impressive outing.

Vincent Dunn — Niagara. The most impressive d-man on Team Cherry for us on the night. Has very good offensive skills and instincts. Made one very dangerous solo rush, carrying in deep behind the net and nearly scoring on a wrap-around. Accelerated and just blew past the opposing defenceman with a wide burst. Also sent in Stephens on a clear breakaway with a perfect stretch pass rocketed through the neutral zone. Also unleashed several bombs from the blue line - has a hard, low shot. Not big and can be overpowered defensively, but has good feet and is intelligent with his positioning.

Matthew Spencer — Peterborough. Had a couple of big hits early and played a strong all-around game with good physicality and puck movement. Got caught on the wrong side of the puck defensively on occasion and was a little unsure in his positioning. But competed hard down low and won most of the board battles. Showed surprisingly nimble feet for a big kid and was able to stick with smaller, quicker forwards in coverage.

Rasmus Andersson — Barrie. Still doesn't pivot and get back to dump-ins quickly enough. Has problems with his defensive footwork in general - not agile laterally and gets caught standing/ watching as his check chases and retrieves loose pucks. Turned the puck over under pressure on Team Orr's third goal and did not react quick enough to correct his mistake. He does have a fine offensive skill level. Moves the puck well and carries it out of trouble at times. Didn't get to showcase perhaps his strongest asset — power play quarterbacking — in this contest.

Brendan Guhle — Prince Albert. Played an early 1-on-1 situation versus McDavid very well, stealing the puck and starting play the other way in transition nicely. However on a couple of later rushes, he got mesmerized by the puck and failed to move his feet, getting beaten easily to the outside.

Samuel Montembeault — Blainville. The first goal of the game was a real softy: a mediocre shot to the short side from a defenceman who had been pushed to the outside on a solo rush. After that, he settled down nicely and showed very good athleticism and flexibility. Plays a bit too deep, but gets good push off either blade going side-to-side quickly. Keeps shoulders up when down in the butterfly to cover top corners. Gets re-set for second shots quickly. Good concentration with traffic around his crease.