

Mismash, I was takin' a bath...

When you look at the forward-heavy crop of talent available for the 2017 NHL Entry Draft, U.S. National Team Development Program left wing Grant Mismash is in the mix for first-round consideration.

The Edina, Minn., product is coming off of a successful first year with the Under-17 team after joining the program last fall. The skilled, energetic forward has made his early bones as a scorer coming up through the ranks with Shattuck-St. Mary's, but he has clear objectives in mind to improve his performance by rounding out his overall game.

"You could look at the numbers and think I might be more of a goal scorer or a playmaker but I want to be known as a

player because of how competitive we were growing up."

Mismash brought an offensive element with him to Plymouth last season, but credits the NTDP coaching staff and his U-17 teammates for bringing the best out of him and sparking a realisation that he needs to improve his three-zone play going forward.

"I want to improve my back-checking and d-zone play," said Mismash. "I want to earn more time killing penalties and playing in a lot of different situations because I'm able to prove that I'm not just out to score goals. I just want to be more reliable on defence and be a more reliable, all-around player."

His first year at the NTDP served him

Grant Mismash File

- ◆ **Ht/Wt:** 6-0/182
- ◆ **Position:** Left Wing
- ◆ **Shoots:** Left
- ◆ **Birthdate:** February 19, 1999
- ◆ **Team:** U.S. NTDP U-18
- ◆ **Scouting Report:** Smooth skating winger is a natural sniper with a terrific shot. Has a knack for finding open ice in scoring territory, and then buries his chances with a clean release - gets great wrist snap. Competitive kid who plays with some fire and doesn't mind mixing it up in corners or going to the dirty areas to get chances. Underrated playmaker who sees the ice well. Needs to work on his play away from the puck, in particular picking up his defensive zone assignments.

complete player," Mismash said recently from his Twin Cities home. "Being a competitive player, a team player and a guy who plays with a lot of passion, that leaves everything on the ice and is someone that can play in a lot of different situations is what I try to do."

Mismash's dad and older brother played hockey, while his mother is a former figure skater. He credits his family for giving him the inspiration and some critical components he has as a pro hockey prospect.

"My parents were really supportive of me," he said. "My dad loves hockey and was a big influence, but he wasn't this 'crazy dad' who pushed me too hard. My mom was always there for me and is pretty laid-back; she would tell me I played well after every game and stuff like that.

"My brother made me tougher...there are three years between us, so everything we did was competitive, whether it was hockey or Xbox or what have you. He was real tough on me and being younger, it was hard for me sometimes, but I think I gained an appreciation for being a physical, competitive

well, introducing him to the kinds of on- and off-ice lessons that he might not have gotten had he stayed in prep hockey at Shattuck.

"It's very, very competitive," he said of the environment and schedule. "The top 22 kids your age in the whole country are there and everyone is used to being a star player, so the practices can get very heated. Everyone pushes each other to a whole new level and it's not just what you learn in the games and on-ice work, but what you get in the weight room as well. The off-ice workouts were all new to me, but I learned real quick that they train you to be a pro. What they instilled in us was about eating right, training right, having a pro mindset and the willingness to not only push yourself to be the best but to bring out the best in the other guys around you."

Mismash verbally committed to the University of North Dakota in the spring of 2015, and he's excited about getting some NCAA games under his belt this season while skating with the U.S. U-18 squad.

"You look at the NTDP and guys go off to [NCAA Division I schools] as true

Mismash Report Card

Size/Strength	B
Skating	A-
Shot/Scoring ability	A
Puckhandling	A-
Hockey Sense	B+
Competitiveness	A-
Physical play	C+
Composure/Poise	A-
Defence	C

freshmen at age 18," he said. "They're physically developed and are mentally prepared for the speed and physicality of play at that level, which I think is why you saw someone like Jack Eichel go to school and make a huge impact as a freshman. Now, he's in the NHL, so I think that the two years we get is really important in preparing us for what comes next."

Although he's a Land of 10,000 Lakes product, Mismash's childhood NHL rooting interest led him further East to a team that he was able to identify with more than the Minnesota Wild. "My favourite team is the Philadelphia Flyers," he said. "It's a weird story, but when my dad was playing junior hockey, his roommate was a huge Flyers fan. The North Stars had already left and he didn't have a Minnesota team to cheer for, so he adopted the Flyers. Both me and my brother picked that up from him."

Despite his allegiance to the black and orange, Mismash said that Alexander Ovechkin was his favourite player when he was younger and has gravitated more towards Patrick Kane in recent years. He tries to pattern his own style of play after Corey Perry, Jamie Benn and Ryan Kesler the most, as he describes his approach to hockey as an "in-your-face, physical" brand of play that takes him into the high danger areas in front of the net.

He described the opportunity to represent his country while making a case to be drafted into the NHL next June as a dream come true, but like the rest of his U-18 mates, has the month of April circled on his calendar as a chance for redemption at the World U-18 tournament after the Americans came away with bronze in Grand Forks last spring.

"The Under 18 World Championship is the big thing," he said. "There's a ton of work to do and some exciting games to play between now and April, but that's the big one. I'm excited about trying to win a gold medal."