

Ilya Kovalchuk Trade Suitors A Plenty

Written by Matthew Coller
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All this talk must be making him Ilya. One thing is clear about Atlanta Thrashers winger **Ilya Kovalchuk**

: he'll be next on the list of famous departures from Atlanta sports teams. The list includes names such as Dominique Wilkins (Hawks), Deion Sanders (Falcons) and more recently Dany Heatley and Marian Hossa of the Thrashers.

Kovalchuk (who will be an unrestricted free agent after this season) and the Thrashers are reportedly unlikely to agree to a long-term extension, which leaves Atlanta with the option to trade Kovalchuk or let him go and get nothing in return. Rumors are aplenty. Monday, Jan. 11, [Yahoo! Sports Mark J. Miller](#)

wrote that the Los Angeles Kings were a front runner. The King's general manager Dean Lombardi took a personal trip to the ATL to see Kovalchuk play.

Other rumors include the Boston Bruins, Chicago Blackhawks, Detroit Red Wings and Vancouver Canucks. Then there were seven. By Friday, Jan. 15, another contender for the league's leading scorer since 2002: the New York Islanders. The [New York Post](#) reported that GM Garth Snow did not rule out the possibility of jumping into the mix.

Whoever elects to pick up the monster goal scorer will need to have an agreement already in place to sign him long-term. With so many teams in the race, we may not know until the final hour. The trade deadline this season is March 3. Take a look at how things turned out in the past two seasons for some notable upcoming unrestricted free agents who were traded at the deadline:

Trade Deadline '09:

Steve Montador: The defenseman was dealt from the Anaheim Ducks to the Boston Bruins at the '08-'09 deadline for Petteri Nokelaine. The Buffalo Sabres signed Montador in the off-season to a 2-year, \$3.1 million deal.

Ales Kotalik: Traded by Buffalo to Edmonton at last season's deadline, Kotalik eventually signed in the off-season with the New York Rangers to a 3-year, \$9 million contract.

Nik Anthropov: Rangers traded for Anthropov from the Toronto Maple Leafs for an '09 draft pick. Anthropov was eventually signed by the Atlanta Thrashers to a 4-year, \$16.25 million contract.

Dominic Moore: Traded from the Leafs to the Sabres at the deadline for a second-round pick. Moore signed before the '09-'10 season with the Florida Panthers to a 1-year, \$1.1 million deal.

Trade Deadline '08:

Brian Campbell: Sabres traded defenseman Brian Campbell to the San Jose Sharks for a first-round draft pick and winger Steve Bernier. Campbell later signed an 8-year contract with the Chicago Blackhawks for around \$7 million per season.

Cristobal Huet: Huet was dealt to the Capitals for a second-round pick. Once he hit free agency, Huet signed a 4-year, \$22.4 million agreement with the Chicago Blackhawks.

Brad Stuart: After being traded from the Kings to the Detroit Red Wings at the deadline, Stuart decided to stick with the Wings at the price of \$15 million over four years.

If you are noticing a trend, it's that most of the players don't resign with the team that trades for them. So, if Ilya gets traded, his suitor could possibly be a quick-fix team.

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