

## 5 NHL Offseason Winners

Written by Matthew Coller  
Monday, 28 September 2009 22:43

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Though the biggest free agent on the NHL market may be the Phoenix Coyotes, a few aged stars still remain up for grabs. The list of wily vets looking for jobs includes **Robert Lang, Miroslav Satan, Michael Peca, Mats Sundin, Darryl Sydor, Manny Legace** and **Manny Fernandez**

. No matter where these free agents land, it won't affect winners and losers of the NHL off-season. Here are the five teams who will benefit most from their free agent signings:

### **Montreal Canadiens:**

Montreal only had a plus-two goal differential, this off-season the goal to widen the gap. They signed speedsters Michael Cammalleri and Brian Gionta, who combined to score 142 points last season. The two mini-wingers (both under 5-foot-9) will make up for the loss of aging wingers Saku Koivu, Alex Tanguay and Alex Kovalev. The Habs also add a power play threat in defenseman Jaroslav Spacek, who had 18 power play assists last season.

### **New York Rangers:**

The Rangers appear to be off-season winners every year, but always fail to put the pieces together. This summer the Rangers kept their core, but added role players. Enforcer Donald Brashear, who signed a 2-year deal, will bring some much needed experience and grit. Ales Kotalik scored 43 points in 75 games last season. He's a solid second or third line winger with size (6-2, 225 lbs.) and finesse. The most important signing may be veteran Vaclav Prospal, who is projected to be the first line center. Prospal only managed 45 points last season, but

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had 80 in 05-06 when the Lightning were stuffed with stars as the Rangers are now.

The Rangers did add a star in right winger Marian Gaborik. He spent most of last season injured, but in 07-08 he had 83 points and has the potential to be a 50 goal scorer. The Rangers ranked 26<sup>th</sup> in goals for, they will need Gaborik's production to turn that around.

### **Detroit Red Wings:**

The Red Wings lost a pair of wingers to the Chicago Blackhawks, but added toughness with Jason Williams and Todd Bertuzzi. Detroit can afford to sacrifice goal scoring, they led the league in goals for, power play percentage but were 25<sup>th</sup> in penalty kill. Bertuzzi and Williams should both participate on, and improve the PK.

### **Minnesota Wild:**

The Wild were kings of the 1-0 game last season, finishing 22<sup>nd</sup> in goals for and second in goals against. This off-season they focused on the GF category signing former playoff heroes Martin Havlat and Petr Sykora. Havlat put up 77 points in 81 games and Sykora scored 13 power play goals last season with 10 game winners. The two will try to make up for the loss of Marian Gaborik.

### **Toronto Maple Leafs:**

The Leafs allowed almost 300 goals last season, this off-season they signed 6-foot-4 243 lbs. defenseman Mike Komisarek to protect the front of the net and former Ranger Colton Orr as an enforcer. The Leafs also signed center Phil Kessel to a five-year deal. Kessel scored 60 points last season with a plus-23 plus-minus ratio. The Leafs were 10<sup>th</sup> in the league in scoring last year, Kessel's presence can't hurt.

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