

Ilya Kovalchuk Traded to New Jersey Devils

Written by Matthew Coller
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The Eastern Conference leading New Jersey Devils have, weeks before the trade deadline, already become its biggest winner. [USA Today via NHL.com](#) is reporting that the Devils have won the Race for the Russian, star forward [Ilya Kovalchuk](#) of the Atlanta Thrashers. The terms of the deal have yet to be released.

Kovalchuk and defenseman Anssi Salmela were sent to New Jersey in exchange for Johnny Oduya, Niclas Bergfors, Patrice Cormier and a first-round pick. Cormier, once considered a top prospect, was suspended for the rest of the season by the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League for a viscous elbow to the head of another player. Also, the two teams swapped second-round picks in 2010.

Kovalchuk, 26, who has scored more goals than any other forward since 2001, [reportedly turned down a nine-digit offer](#) to stay with the Atlanta Thrashers, electing to be dealt. The winger had previously been involved in rumors every where from L.A. to Boston to New York, but has landed in the Garden State. This season, Kovalchuk has 31 goals and 27 assists including 19 power play points.

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