It had been rumored for weeks and the rumors have finally come to fruition. After acquiring the rights to goaltender Ilya Bryzgalov, the Philadelphia Flyers were in desperate need of freeing up cap space. Trading Jeff Carter became their solution and the Columbus Blue Jackets became the focus of their plans. After meeting with Flyers GM Paul Holmgren to discuss the eighth pick and Steve Mason, GM Scott Howson pulled the trigger on a deal that gives Rick Nash the dynamite offensive player he has always been looking for.

Just one day before the 2011 NHL Entry Draft, the Columbus Blue Jackets traded the eighth pick, a third round pick, and right wing Jake Voracek to the Flyers for Jeff Carter. Carter is a tremendously talented center/wing hybrid with the potential to score 35-40 goals and add 30-35 assists. Carter has a long-term worth just over five million dollars on the salary cap. He signed an 11-year, 58 million dollar deal in November. The deal includes a full no-trade clause from 2012-2015 and a limited no-trade clause after that.

Carter answers a lot of needs for Columbus. He gives them a competent talent to play alongside Rick Nash. He also gives them a heavy right handed shot who has good enough vision to quarterback the powerplay if they cannot find a free agent to do that. Carter also can fill a bit of a leadership role and is familiar with RJ Umberger because the two grew up together in the Flyers organization. The Blue Jackets will probably rely on Carter to play center to start off his Jackets tenure and may eventually move him to wing if Ryan Johansen, the team's first round pick in 2010, is able to develop in to the big bodied centerman that they hope.

Unfortunate in this is losing Jake Voracek. He has shown flashes of brilliance, but lacks consistency and the ability to play well in the defensive zone. They are not in a position to wait on high upside guys like Voracek anymore. Philly can take their time and develop him, but the Jackets need to begin producing results. It is the type of high impact move that Jackets fans have craved and waited for basically since the team traded up to draft Rick Nash.

With the draft now down to a second round pick and a bunch of crapshoots, it is clear that the Jackets will look to free agency to help bolster the roster. It remains to be seen what will be available, but the team still has significant cap space even after this Jeff Carter deal and ample roster space for improvement. The team will also likely buy out Mike Commodore's contract and free up a little more cap space that way.

Overall, the Blue Jackets are a much better team today than they were yesterday. They kept prospects like Ryan Johansen and John Moore. While they gave up the shot at drafting in the top ten of Friday night's NHL Entry Draft, they acquired a bona fide first line player with a great track record and a friendly salary. Even with the NHL salary cap continuing to escalate, the Jackets will have about $13M tied up in Nash and Carter, which accounts for about 20% of the projected salary cap of $64M for the upcoming season.

Scott Howson has finally made the big splash, but it cannot stop here. The team has huge needs in terms of depth at forward and impact on defense. One piece is in place, but it's time now for the others to fall in to place as well.