The NHL Entry Draft, which has become a de facto Christmas Day for Blue Jackets fans, is less than a month away and many of the junior team seasons are over so there's nothing left to do but watch a lot of tape, talk to coaches, and interview potential draft picks. Twenty-seven teams are in the same boat as the Blue Jackets as their seasons have ended and preparations are being made to make the next prospect's dream come true.

One of those teams, the Phoenix Coyotes, now get to focus their energies on the draft and player contracts after losing in overtime to the Los Angeles Kings on Tuesday night. The Kings are now 12-2 in the playoffs and will appear in the Stanley Cup Finals for the first time since 1993, when they lost to the Montreal Canadiens in five games. That season, the Kings went 12-7 over the first three rounds while the Canadiens went 12-3. If that's the recipe for success, the Kings are in good shape since the Rangers or Devils will have several more losses over the first three rounds, since both teams played a seven-game series in round one and are poised for a long Conference Finals series.

The Kings will now have a week's worth of rest before the Stanley Cup Finals start, since the Rangers and Devils are guaranteed to play at least two more games in this round, with Game Seven, if necessary, slated for Sunday evening. Whichever team wins that Eastern Conference Final will have home ice for the Stanley Cup Finals as the Kings were the #8 seed in the Western Conference.

What the Kings have done over the last month-plus is nothing short of remarkable. It took them until November 28, a span of 24 games, to pick up their 12th win of the regular season. Jonathan Quick has been stellar this postseason, allowing just 24 goals in 14 games. If the Kings were to win the Cup, Quick would have to play pretty poorly in the series to have the Conn Smythe Trophy for postseason MVP to be taken away from him.

In the Eastern Conference, the Rangers and Devils have renewed their rivalry by splitting the first four games of the series and added a new dimension to the series with a Game Four fracas that included Martin Brodeur being shoved by the Rangers' Mike Rupp. As the incident raged on, both Devils coach Peter DeBoer and Rangers coach John Tortorella began yelling at each other from their respective benches. Needless to say, there is a lot of bad blood between these teams which will be decided by a best-of-three series.

As I mentioned last week, I'll be spending the weeks leading up to NHL Entry Draft Week profiling one of the players expected to be taken around the Blue Jackets second overall selection. For the purposes of this exercise, I'm leaving out Nail Yakupov, the consensus number one pick. Last week , I profiled the only defenseman likely to go in the top five, Everett Silvertips defenseman Ryan Murray. This week, we'll look at talented Russian-born center Mikhail Grigorenko.

Name: Mikhail Grigorenko

Position: Center

NHL Central Scouting Bureau Rank: #3 North America, #1 North American center

Birthdate & place: May 16, 1994; Khabarovsk, Russia

Height, weight: 6’3”, 200 lbs.

Shoots: Left

Mikhail Grigorenko played for the world-renowned Russian junior team CSKA Moscow before making the jump to North America to play in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League. NHL teams are sometimes wary of drafting Russian forwards because of their propensity for getting homesick, desire to return home to play in the recently-formed Kontinental Hockey League, and the time it takes them to transition to the North American rink dimensions and style of play. None of those should be concerns with Grigorenko.

Grigorenko thrived in the high-octane QMJHL with the Quebec Remparts, leading the all rookies in scoring with 85 points, 40 goals and 45 assists, in just 59 games. He was the second overall pick in the 2011 CHL Import Draft, selected by Quebec.

Like many of the highly-touted prospects in the NHL Entry Draft, Grigorenko has had success playing for his country in international tournaments. With the Russian Under-20 team in the 2011-12 World Junior Hockey Championships, Grigorenko had five points in six games helping Russia to a silver medal. In the 2011 Under-18 World Championships, Grigorenko had a great tournament with 18 points, including 14 assists, in seven games.

What sets Grigorenko apart from many of the talented Russians is his size. At 6’3”, 200 lbs, and with a frame to grow into, he won’t be at a competitive disadvantage with the physical game. With most of his game dependent on puck possession and time to find the open guy to pass to, that’s very important for a player like Grigorenko.

Analysis: Grigorenko would be a very nice player for the Blue Jackets to pick up. The thought process in the NHL is to build from the middle out, so starting with a goaltender, then defensemen, and then a centerman. One has to wonder how Grigorenko fares defensively, but his vision and skill set are world-class. A potential stumbling block for the Blue Jackets is that they lack dynamic goal scorers, both on the team and in the prospect ranks. Grigorenko would need to be surrounded with complementary talent to utilize his great passing ability.

Just a reminder that the NHL Entry Draft's first round will take place June 22 in Pittsburgh, PA.