



It was likely that the Blue Jackets were going to make a splash one way or another during the first trade deadline for President of Hockey Operations John Davidson and new General Manager Jarmo Kekäläinen. They did exactly that on Wednesday. The Blue Jackets acquired Marian Gaborik and two prospect from the New York Rangers and traded Steve Mason to the Philadelphia Flyers. For Gaborik, the Jackets gave up Derick Brassard, Derek Dorsett, John Moore, and a sixth round pick. For Mason, the Jackets acquired goaltender Michael Leighton, who will serve as the backup goaltender, and a third round pick.

Gaborik seems to have fallen out of favor in New York City. He has just 19 points in 35 games and just six goals in his last 33 games. The Blue Jackets are a team in desperate need of talent and Gaborik gives them some. Over 757 career games, Gaborik has 333 goals and 333 assists. He had a no-trade clause, which he waived to allow the deal to happen. Perhaps the best part of the deal is that the Blue Jackets kept all three of their first round draft picks.

Gaborik is signed through next season for \$7.5 million.

Derick Brassard never blossomed into the player that the Blue Jackets thought he would when they took him in the first round of the 2006 draft. Derek Dorsett will be a great energy guy for the Rangers, who are in need of players like that who can give a big effort on a nightly basis, but the Jackets have plenty of players in that role. Also, Dorsett is out until the playoffs with a broken collarbone. John Moore could be a loss for the Jackets, but they have very good depth in terms of young defensemen, so he became expendable.

Brassard was signed through next season for \$3.2 million and is due to be a restricted free agent. Dorsett is signed for two more years at \$1.63 million. Moore is on the second year of his three-year entry level contract with a cap hit of \$965,000 and will be a restricted free agent after the 2013-14 season.

Steve Mason, the much-maligned backup goaltender of the Columbus Blue Jackets, has been traded to the Philadelphia Flyers in exchange for a . The NHL's condensed season is in its final month and the league's trade deadline has not seen a whole lot of activity. But, Mason is one of the more interesting names to be moved on Wednesday. Mason, who was the league's Calder Trophy winner for rookie of the year in 2009 after directing the Blue Jackets to their first postseason appearance. Mason was 33-20-7 that season with a 2.29 goals against average, a .916 save percentage, and 10 shutouts. Since then, Mason has posted four consecutive seasons with a goals against average of 2.95 or higher and a record of 63-79-20 and just eight shutouts.

According to Columbus Dispatch Blue Jackets beat writer Aaron Portzline, Mason had been discussed during the Jeff Carter negotiations from two offseasons ago. The Blue Jackets are hanging around in the Western Conference standings, one point out of the final playoff spot. The trade of Mason would be inconsequential to that playoff run, as he has started just 11 of the team's 36 games. Sergei Bobrovsky has taken over the job completely and has been one of the best goaltenders in the league.

The Blue Jackets have also acquired role player Blake Comeau from the Calgary Flames for a fifth round pick. Comeau has four goals and three assists in 33 games this season.

Overall, the Gaborik deal has sent waves through the hockey world. It was thought that the Blue Jackets would look to be buyers, with a shot at the playoffs within their grasp, but not of this magnitude. Gaborik gives the worst offensive team in the Western Conference a big shot in the arm. The Jackets have struggled with shootouts as well and a skilled player like Gaborik should help in that regard. The loss of Brassard, Dorsett, and Moore really isn't a lot for the organization to withstand. To get a star player like Gaborik for next season as well, with the possibility to trade him at next year's deadline for future assets is something that Davidson and Kekäläinen had to do.

Frankly, the best part about all of this is that the Blue Jackets are buyers at the trade deadline. With one playoff appearance in franchise history, the Jackets saw a soft market and exploited it.

More importantly, they kept their draft picks and unloaded guys who weren't needed on the roster. To get better at the deadline without doing it at the expense of the future is every GM's chief goal at the deadline and that's exactly what Kekäläinen did.

To top it off, the Jackets turned Mason into a third round pick, which is good currency during the NHL Draft. Mason was not likely to be retained, even though the Blue Jackets had exclusive negotiating rights, so this is a nice haul for Mason.

If nothing else, this trade deadline signifies a lot to the fans in Columbus. Davidson and Kekäläinen are intent on building a winner in Columbus. They're willing to buy when they can and are willing to take risks, so long as they don't send the train off the tracks. There's a change in the culture in Columbus and today's activity is an example of what good things will hopefully be coming to Jackets' fans.