

3. Prospect System Ranking – 3rd (Last Year - 3rd)

GM: Steve Yzerman Hired: April 2019

COACH: Todd McLellan Hired: December 2024

The Detroit Red Wings' rebuild, the Yzerplan, fell short again in 2024-25, missing a Wild Card spot by five points.

But glass half full, GM Steve Yzerman continues to stockpile draft picks, with 21 first- and second-round picks since 2019 and two more slated for 2025, fueling a prospect pool that holds firm at third on our rankings board.

Then there's the glass half empty crowd, and eventually, those draft picks must show results. Anchored by Dylan Larkin, Alex DeBrincat, Lucas Raymond, Moritz Seider, and now recent graduates Marco Kasper and Simon Edvinsson, things are beginning to take shape. But now it's time for the next wave of prospects to elevate Detroit from hopeful to contender.

Axel Sandin Pellikka, just 20 years old, arrived from Sweden after a stellar SHL season with Skellefteå (12 goals, 29 points in 46 games). His elite skating and offensive instincts make him a power-play catalyst and a significant asset to the team's future. Though he'll likely need to start with his AHL training wheels, he could be on the verge of making his NHL debut.

Sitting on the cusp are Nate Danielson and Michael Brandsegg-Nygard, who are now stewing in the American League. Danielson enjoyed a relatively successful rookie season with the Grand Rapids Griffins, scoring 12 goals and 39 points in 71 games. While Brandsegg-Nygård, a 2024 first rounder, joined late after a one-stop season in the Swedish Hockey League. Like Sandin-Pellikka, both could see stints in Detroit at varying times through 2025-26.

Arguably, the Wings' goaltending situation shines the brightest in the system. Sebastian Cossa, the 6-foot-6 netminder, enjoyed a strong AHL sophomore season and should be eyeing Detroit's backup job in 2025-26. Meanwhile, Trey Augustine continues to dominate as one of the Nation's top NCAA netminders, winning back-to-back Big Ten titles and World Junior Gold Medals with Team USA. With a crowded crease, he's committed to his Junior year, but he could be the real deal of the future.

While success has yet to hit the Wings during their rebuild, a ton of substance shows promise for the future. It may not be long before Detroit makes a serious push for postseason contention, bringing their rebuild to fruition.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
1	Axel Sandin-Pellikka	Det	D	20	5-11/180
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
`23(17th)	Det	2023	17	11-Mar-05	Sweden
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Skelleftea AIK (SHL)	46	12	17	29	22

If ASP didn't have "star" written all over him already, he certainly does now. The dynamic offensive blueliner had a scorching hot first half of the season, tallying 22 of his 29 SHL points and winning Best Defenceman honours at the WJC during that span. Despite a quiet two-month stretch, ASP has been playing excellent hockey. He's been Skellefteå AIK's most used defenceman this season. He moves the puck from DZ to OZ like a dream and is a constant threat to score with the puck on his stick once he gets there. The defensive side of the puck is still a bit of a weakness. He can defer a bit too much on retrievals, and he'll never be a physical force on the ice. That said, his overall defensive game has gotten to about league average, which is probably as good as it's going to get for a stud offensive defenceman. Other than that, there isn't really anything left to learn in Sweden for Sandin Pellikka. The next step for him should be AHL Grand Rapids, knowing Detroit's careful approach when it comes to developing young blueliners. He'll get more time to play in his presumed future NHL role in the mid-pair there, as well as power play QB duties.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
2	Sebastian Cossa	Det	G	22	6-6/229
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
`21(15th)	Det	2021	15	21-Nov-02	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Grand Rapids (AHL)	41	21	15	2.45	0.911

Sebastian Cossa has had a perfect development path ever since being drafted. From moving to the top CHL goalie, into the ECHL at 20, and now his second AHL season, Cossa has dominated every level and been an elite goalie. Cossa's consistency is excellent; he hasn't allowed more than four goals this season and really has only had two to four bad performances. He stands at a mammoth 6-foot-6 but moves like a highly mobile 6-foot-1 goalie, a combination that isn't seen frequently. He's very athletic, as he's able to stretch out after very explosive pushes to make incredible saves. He's also fantastic when it comes to anticipating play, positioning himself, and making smart save selections. Cossa is the type of goalie to show very few weaknesses, if any, at least for the level that he's currently at. The only thing that may be notable is potentially slower hands, but it doesn't seem to be that much of a problem in any case. Cossa's potential to be a franchise goalie is evident and is practically a shoo-in to be elite at the NHL level.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
3	Nate Danielson	Det	C	20	6-2/185
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(9th)	Det	2023	9	27-Sep-04	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Grand Rapids (AHL)	71	12	27	39	33

Nate Danielson has always had questions following him about the translatability of his creative but inconsistent playmaking game that brought him great success in the WHL. Nate possesses a great shot with a snappy release, along with fluidity and pace on his feet that allow him to weave through the offensive zone. He broke into the AHL in style hovering around 0.5 points per game, which is nothing to sneeze at, especially given the concerns about how he'd handle a faster-paced game. Danielson's game goes far beyond what he can do with the puck. He makes a positive impact in all areas of the ice with persistent forechecking and a sharp defensive mind to shut down lanes and pick off pucks. Danielson very well could be a second-line center for the Red Wings a few years down the road as he continues to refine his passing game and develop more translatable habits with the puck.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
4	Trey Augustine	Det	G	20	6-1/185
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(41st)	Det	2023	41	23-Feb-05	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Michigan State (B1G)	30	19	7	2.08	0.924

Trey Augustine is a premier goalie prospect, possessing exceptional speed, footwork, tracking, positioning, and great athleticism. He's a very smart and calm goalie who anticipates play at a high level, which gives him a huge advantage when traveling laterally on cross-ice passes. He took another step this season, improving upon his freshman season at Michigan State, with his biggest improvement coming in the consistency department. Augustine has been prone to occasional bad games that were seen in his first NCAA season and also were seen against Germany at the World Juniors this year. Cracking down on consistency has been massive for his improvement, and continuing in that direction will propel him to the NHL even quicker. The only flaws in Augustine's games are minor ones: he has some poor habits that would be best left at Michigan State, where he plays in a high stance too frequently, has a tendency to slide laterally when he could get there on his feet, or plays an overly aggressive overlap. These things can be worked out and shouldn't hold him back from reaching his elite potential.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
5	Dmitri Buchelnikov	Det	LW	21	5-10/165
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 22(52nd)	Det	2022	52	6-Sep-03	Russia
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Vityaz Moscow Region (KHL)	65	15	39	54	12

After being traded to one of the KHL's worst teams, expectations were unclear for Dmitri Buchelnikov's second full pro season, but he responded by nearly doubling his point total. His shot remains his biggest weapon, with heavy wrists and one-timers from all over the ice. He's also improved his decision-making under pressure and looks sharp as a power play distributor. Though his physicality and compete level have taken a step forward, his offensive-heavy style, lack of size, and limited explosiveness could pose problems on North American ice. With one year left on his KHL deal, he has time to work on his defensive game. Buchelnikov currently projects as a third line, offensively focused winger and a one-time threat on a second power play unit. The big question is whether he can improve enough in the gritty areas to earn a consistent NHL role. Right now, his offensive upside alone isn't enough to crack Detroit's roster as a meaningful contributor.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
6	Michael Brandsegg-Nygard	Det	RW	19	6-1/205
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 24(15th)	Det	2024	15	5-Oct-05	Norway
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Skelleftea AIK (SHL)	42	5	6	11	51

Despite the step up from the HockeyAllsvenskan to the SHL, Brandsegg Nygård still looks as projectable to the NHL as the day he was drafted. His stellar work ethic, strong skating and heavy playstyle has helped him fit right in on the wing of Skellefteå's third line. He's seeing powerplay time as well, primarily used as a shooter along the half wall. He's great at using his frame to his advantage in a plethora of different situations. He can wall off the puck from defenders with his body, set picks for teammates away from the puck, and, of course, use his body as a wrecking ball along the boards to win puck battles. His physical skills are so advanced that he could probably make the jump to the NHL right away. However, he wouldn't be much of a factor, offensively speaking. Detroit will be hoping he can take more steps to become that middle six power winger he was drafted to be. To do that, he'll have to work on his explosiveness and his puck-handling ability. Another year in the SHL with a bigger role on the team could be beneficial, or perhaps a year or two in the AHL.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
7	Carter Mazur	Det	LW	23	6-0/170
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 21(70th)	Det	2021	70	28-Mar-02	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Grand Rapids (AHL)	20	8	7	15	8

Mazur has had some rotten injury luck in his second full AHL season. The former University of Denver forward suffered a concussion that kept him out until late January, followed by a dislocated elbow that sidelined him again in early March. In the 20 games he did play in Grand Rapids, Mazur picked up 15 points and showed flashes of physical defense. He often draws defenders toward him before firing a pass in another direction, buying space and time for his teammates. His defense is solid, but Mazur shines most when he's in physical contact with the puck carrier. He refuses to give up the inside lane, gluing himself to his opponent's hip and sticking with them. His mix of creative playmaking and strong puck retrievals might be exactly what earns him a role in the Red Wings' bottom-six next year as they push for a wildcard spot.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
8	William Wallinder	Det	D	22	6-4/190
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 20(32nd)	Det	2020	32	28-Jul-02	Sweden
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Grand Rapids (AHL)	62	2	17	19	10

The big Swede William Wallinder built on his first AHL season, slightly increasing his point rates and showing off more of his prowess in transition with his quick hands and speed. In the offensive zone, Wallinder likes to activate from the point with a quick deke and slip past his opponents. His confidence in his offensive game is obvious, and the production will come as he continues to play the same style that made him so valuable in the SHL. On defense, Wallinder is smart with how he uses his reach and body against the rush. He leans on attackers to push them to the outside and uses his stick to disrupt plays. He breaks the puck out well using a mix of mobility and passing to keep forecheckers guessing. As far as an NHL timeline goes, Wallinder likely spends a good portion of next year in the AHL and should get a real look when Chiarot's contract expires.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
9	Jesse Kiiskinen	Det	RW	19	5-11/180
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
T(Nsh-6/24)	Nsh	2023	68	23-Aug-05	Finland
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
HPK (Fin-Liiga)	46	14	30	44	30

Jesse Kiiskinen, a 2023 third-round pick originally selected by the Nashville Predators and later traded to the Detroit Red Wings, took a major leap forward in his development during the 2024-2025 season. After a blazing start in 2023-2024 with 21 points in just eight U20 SM-sarja games, he transitioned to the Liiga, finishing with 10 points in 28 games. The following year, after joining HPK, Kiiskinen broke out offensively with 44 points in 46 Liiga games and emerged as a key contributor for Finland at the World Juniors, scoring six goals in seven games. Known as a shoot-first winger with relentless pace and energy, Kiiskinen thrives on the rush and consistently finds soft ice to generate scoring chances. While his tunnel vision on shooting can lead to missed passing opportunities, his improved ability to create offense and his work ethic make him an intriguing prospect for Detroit's future.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
10	Elmer Soderblom	Det	RW	23	6-8/245
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 19(159th)	Det	2019	159	5-Jul-01	Sweden
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Grand Rapids (AHL)	38	5	12	17	29

Elmer Soderblom has now split two of his first three seasons in North America between Grand Rapids and Detroit, nearing fifty NHL games played. The enormous 6-foot-8 winger often shows off his slick hands when breaking into the zone or working the cycle. It helps that his massive frame lets him shield the puck from defenders, forcing them to attempt to push through all 247 pounds of his mass. Soderblom's call-up to the big leagues down the stretch gave Red Wings fans a look at what he can offer in a depth role, holding his own on the team's fourth line. He moves surprisingly well for his size, using his feet in combination with toe drag moves to slip down the boards and drive into the middle of the ice for high-danger chances. At this point, it's looking more and more likely that he's made the full-time jump to the NHL and will be a regular fixture in Detroit's bottom six.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
11	Amadeus Lombardi	Det	C	21	5-10/165
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 22(113th)	Det	2022	113	5-Jun-03	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Grand Rapids (AHL)	44	19	21	40	10

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
12	Shai Buium	Det	D	22	6-3/210
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 21(36th)	Det	2021	36	26-Mar-03	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Grand Rapids (AHL)	67	2	23	25	22

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
13	Max Plante	Det	LW	19	5-11/175
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 24(47th)	Det	2024	47	20-Feb-06	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Minnesota Duluth (NCHC)	23	9	19	28	16

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
14	Emmitt Finnie	Det	C	19	6-0/170
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(201st)	Det	2023	201	27-Jun-05	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Kamloops (WHL)	55	37	47	84	26

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RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
15	Antti Tuomisto	Det	D	24	6-4/190
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 19(35th)	Det	2019	35	20-Jan-01	Finland
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Grand Rapids (AHL)	67	3	24	27	54