

1. Montreal Canadiens

Prospect System Ranking – 1st (Last Year - 1st)

GM: Kent Hughes Hired: January 2022

COACH: Martin St. Louis Hired: February 2022

The Ivan Demidov era has officially arrived.

After scoring the most points by a rookie in the KHL, McKeen's crown jewel (ranked #1) made his NHL debut this spring and did not disappoint. With a goal and an assist, he made his mark and won over the hearts of the Bell Centre's faithful, spreading a wave of hope across the province of Quebec. Are we even surprised?

Coupled with the quick established form of Lane Hutson and several younger core pieces in Cole Caulfield, Nick Suzuki, and Juraj Slafkovský, GM Kent Hughes's rebuild is now in full force, fueled by the NHL's deepest prospect pool.

On the verge of helping out the backend is Logan Mailloux, who made good strides in his two seasons with the Laval Rocket. With 80 points in 135 games, he's providing all the necessary numbers you like to see as an offensive defender.

Unfortunately, David Reinbacher, their top-ranked prospect behind Demidov, was held to just 10 games in his first regular season in North America. However, he has shown relatively well through the postseason stretch, offering promise for the future.

Skating alongside both defenders in Laval are a few highly skilled forwards: Joshua Roy, Owen Beck, Luke Tuch, and now Oliver Kapanen, who joined the team for the playoffs.

Beck, the club's 2022 second rounder, enjoyed a very strong rookie year in Laval. With 44 points, he finished with the ninth-highest point total among all rookie skaters, finishing fourth on his team. Joshua Roy wasn't far off with 35 points in his own right. Both youngsters enjoyed NHL games with Montreal this season and could be poised for a push through within the following calendar year.

In goal, 2023 third-round pick Jacob Fowler is proving to be quite the steal. Fresh off earning the Mike Richter Award as the NCAA's best goaltender, Fowler has officially joined the Habs' organization. Now in the pro ranks, he's transitioned seamlessly with a winning record for the Laval Rocket in the playoffs. While he may not be ready to deploy out of the gate in 2025-26, it'll be a battle between him and Jakub Dobes, who broke out on his own as a surprise NHL option.

Hughes isn't done with his stockpile, though. With nine draft picks through the first four rounds in 2025, including two first-rounders who will go back-to-back midway through the opening round, more help is on the way.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
1	Ivan Demidov	Mtl	RW	19	5-11/180
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 24(5th)	Mtl	2024	5	10-Dec-05	Russia
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
SKA St. Petersburg (KHL)	65	19	30	49	22

Ivan Demidov was faced with a very difficult situation this season. Due to his intentions to leave for Montreal at the end of the year, Ivan's ice time was often limited causing an emotional firestorm on social media and a major roadblock in the way of showing his true potential. Despite adversity, Demidov took advantage of every second he was given and proved why he is arguably the best prospect outside of the NHL. He is one of the most dynamic players in the world, dominating at the KHL level as he weaves through opponents with elite handiwork and impressive speed. He showed off his smarts, reading defensive schemes and setting his teammates up with highlight reel passes in situations that look impossible for a goal to be created. Defensively, he will still need to polish some timing and positioning issues but is a hardworking, disciplined player who will be able to hold his own against the world's best. Demidov will be a gamechanger in the Canadiens's top six for years to come and has the potential to be an MVP challenger in the prime of his career. Lots to be excited about if you are a Montreal fan.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
2	David Reinbacher	Mtl	D	20	6-2/185
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(5th)	Mtl	2023	5	25-Oct-04	Austria
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Laval (AHL)	10	2	3	5	10

Some players can't seem to catch a break with injuries, and unfortunately for David Reinbacher, he falls into that category this season. Reinbacher was first sidelined after an awkward collision during an NHL preseason game against the Toronto Maple Leafs, which resulted in early-season knee surgery for the talented young defenceman. He did make a return with the AHL Laval Rocket in mid-February, but he has been in-and-out of the lineup and hasn't played a game since March 21st. While he was in the lineup, he played quite well for a defenceman that had missed most of the season, but he also had his own tough moments. The tools are obviously still there; he defends very well with his stick, he can skate with the best, and he can anticipate plays before they happen. But due to being injured for most of the season, Reinbacher hasn't appeared to have made much progress from where he was entering the season, through no fault of his own. The makings of a top four or potentially top two defenceman are still there.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
3	Jacob Fowler	Mtl	G	20	6-1/215
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(69th)	Mtl	2023	69	24-Nov-04	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Boston College (HE)	35	25	7	1.63	0.940

Fowler improved greatly upon his already phenomenal freshman season after winning the Mike Richter award as the country's top goalie in the NCAA. He's an elite positional goalie who has exceptional footwork, tracking, and play-reading and has surprisingly great quickness and athleticism. His consistency is incredible and is rarely seen from a 20-year-old goalie, only allowing more than three goals on two occasions this year in 35 games. He can get beat cleanly high showing inactive hands, but as his only real weakness, it's of little concern. He plays a very projectable game to the NHL with very few faults and a lot of elite strengths. Even though he has chosen to leave Boston College to turn pro, he still shouldn't be rushed into the NHL like fellow Mike Richter Trophy-winning goalie Deovn Levi. The jump from NCAA to the NHL is enormous, It's important to allow him to adjust to AHL hockey first and keep his confidence high before throwing him out against NHL teams.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
4	Michael Hage	Mtl	C	19	6-1/190
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 24(21st)	Mtl	2024	21	14-Apr-06	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Michigan (B1G)	33	13	21	34	23

Michael Hage has adapted greatly to the college game, showcasing high-end speed, awareness, and stickhandling that enable him to drive play through controlled zone entries. His offensive impact is evident in his ability to pursue open space and maintain offensive zone time. He actively engages in loose puck battles and stick checks, leading to extended offensive pressure and aiding in defensive zone breakouts. Hage has also displayed solid defensive coverage and positioning, demonstrating growth towards a complete 200-foot game. While his offensive instincts and play-driving abilities are clear strengths, he can further improve by more consistently supporting breakouts in the defensive zone. His deployment on the power play indicates his offensive potential, and his commitment to backchecking and staying engaged in puck play points to a well-rounded development path. As he continues refining his defensive consistency, Hage projects as a skilled forward with the potential to be a top six contributor in all situations at the NHL level.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
5	Joshua Roy	Mtl	RW	21	6-0/190
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 21(150th)	Mtl	2021	150	6-Aug-03	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Laval (AHL)	47	20	15	35	10

Joshua Roy has put forward another solid pro season, where he has split time in a number of different roles with the Laval Rocket and the Montreal Canadiens this season. As far as Roy goes as a playmaker, his AHL production is largely similar to his play from last season, but he has made strong strides in the defensive zone that make him a trustworthy option at both the AHL and NHL levels. He does still have room to build on his physicality, particularly if he hopes to remain as a consistent fourth line option at the NHL level, but learning takes time and he has played well this season in limited action, nevertheless. Look for Roy to play a prominent role with the Rocket on their playoff run, or if he remains in the NHL with the Canadiens, look for him to provide energy in a bottom-six role while also carrying the ability to provide some offence. The former is probably more likely than the latter, but Roy remains on track as a future main-stay middle-six contributor in the NHL.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
6	Logan Mailloux	Mtl	D	22	6-3/215
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 21(31st)	Mtl	2021	31	15-Apr-03	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Laval (AHL)	63	12	21	33	74

Logan Mailloux has put together two very strong pro seasons with the Laval Rocket, and he should be in the mix to make the full-time jump to the Montreal Canadiens next season. With Mailloux, there's no doubt the intelligence is there. He can run a pro power play, and he has a deceptive release from the point that can beat goalies cleanly. But there are also some qualities that are left to be desired, particularly with regard to his gap control. There are times when he gives opposing forwards too much space, which renders him less effective in the defensive zone than he could be with a person of his toolkit. With that being said, Mailloux has looked good this season with both the Rocket and the Canadiens, so it's only a matter of time before he makes the full-time jump. Look for Mailloux to develop into a second-unit power play, top-four defenceman.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
7	Oliver Kapanen	Mtl	C	21	6-0/170
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 21(64th)	Mtl	2021	64	29-Jul-03	Finland
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Timrå (SHL)	36	15	20	35	12

There are breakout seasons, and then there's whatever Oliver Kapanen just had with Timrå. Despite making the Canadiens out of camp, the 64th overall pick from 2021 elected to go to the SHL rather than be sent down to AHL Laval and went on an absolute tear, instantly becoming one of Timrå's key players down the stretch. Kapanen looked like an NHLer playing in the SHL. He was always a step ahead of the game, reading play near-perfectly and having a well-thought-out plan before touching the puck. He's hard working and tenacious in puck battles, but more floater than motor. Great at offering puck support for teammates, especially on the defensive side. Despite scoring almost a point per game in the SHL, his offensive upside probably won't be that great in the NHL. He can't drive a line, but he can work well within space and off of teammates with more dynamic playmaking qualities. As a result, Kapanen's role will probably be in the bottom six rather than the top six. Kapanen has the size, the smarts, and the work ethic to be a solid two-way center for the Canadiens for a very long time.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
8	Owen Beck	Mtl	C	21	5-11/185
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 22(33rd)	Mtl	2022	33	3-Feb-04	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Laval (AHL)	64	15	29	44	49

Owen Beck has been very good all over the ice this season, and he's done it while being asked to play in all situations for a very good Laval Rocket team. In particular, Beck uses his skating and his physicality to hound opposing players for loose pucks. He's also extremely trustworthy at both ends of the ice - when you need a goal or need to prevent a goal at the end of the game, Beck's your guy. Beck's compete and willingness to never give up on a play with both Laval and Montreal has been particularly impressive this season, and these attributes of his game are what make him a surefire NHL player. He probably won't develop into a first-line offensive forward at the NHL level, as he has good but not great offensive skill, but he should have a long career as a trustworthy, two-way middle six forward. There's a lot to like with this player, and it's just a matter of time until he regularly puts his skills on display for the rest of the NHL to see.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
9	Jakub Dobes	Mtl	G	23	6-3/200
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 20(136th)	Mtl	2020	136	27-May-01	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Montreal (NHL)	16	7	4	2.74	0.909

Jakub Dobes has made headway into the NHL, solidifying himself as a reliable backup for Montreal this season. The problem is that he's likely not too far from his ceiling. Dobes is a very strong positional goalie, often opting for the Hellebuyck style to play deeper, allowing the play to come to him in place of it dictating his movement. However, his skating isn't amazing or fluid, he often looks clunky, and while it's passable, his speed and athleticism are on the weaker side for NHL goalies. To offset this, he has to have good play-reading capabilities, which luckily he possesses. This, paired with his positioning, can hide his lack of physical talents, but it puts a cap on his ceiling. Dobes is unlikely to be the type of starting goalie that steals games consistently by making incredible high danger saves where athleticism is required. He's never really dominated outside of one season in the NCAA. This infers that he can be a solid backup in the NHL, but to end up as a legit starter isn't as likely.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
10	Adam Engstrom	Mtl	D	21	6-2/185
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 22(92nd)	Mtl	2022	92	17-Nov-03	Sweden
Laval (AHL)	66	5	22	27	40
Laval (AHL)	66	5	22	27	40

Adam Engstrom has arguably been one of the best rookies in the AHL this season. His transition from Rogle BK in the SHL to the Laval Rocket in the AHL has been almost seamless, and it won't be long before we see him as a full time NHL player with the Montreal Canadiens. What's particularly impressive about Engstrom's play this season is his hockey awareness at both ends of the ice. He is a great passer, but he's also an extremely capable defender off the rush. This allows Engstrom to quickly turn good defence into good offence, where he can break up plays in transition and turn them into quick outlet passes, and this collection of skills are why we have seen Engstrom put up over 20 assists in his first North American pro season. Engstrom has the potential of becoming a top four NHL defenceman with his combination of size, smarts, and skating ability. He will probably need another season or two in Laval with the Rocket, but Canadiens fans should be excited about his upcoming arrival. There's a real player here.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
11	Sean Farrell	Mtl	C	23	5-8/175
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 20(124th)	Mtl	2020	124	2-Nov-01	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Laval (AHL)	67	20	24	44	10

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
12	Filip Mesar	Mtl	C	21	5-9/175
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 22(26th)	Mtl	2022	26	3-Jan-04	Slovakia
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Laval (AHL)	42	4	14	18	18

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
13	Florian Xhekaj	Mtl	LW	20	6-2/175
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(101st)	Mtl	2023	101	27-Jun-04	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Laval (AHL)	69	24	11	35	175

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
14	Bogdan Konyushkov	Mtl	D	22	5-11/175
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(110th)	Mtl	2023	110	20-Dec-02	Russia
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Nizhny Novgorod (KHL)	67	3	14	17	6

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RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
15	Evgeny Volokhin	Mtl	G	20	6-3/170
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(144th)	Mtl	2023	144	6-Apr-05	Russia
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
HK Sochi (KHL)	28	4	17	3.48	0.901