

## **9. Washington Capitals**

**Prospect System Ranking – 14th (Last Year - 9th)**

**GM: Chris Patrick Hired: July 2024 (Also Senior Vice President)**

**COACH: Spencer Carbery Hired: May 2023**

The Washington Capitals pulled off a remarkable retool in 2024-25, blending youth with an aging core to finish second in the NHL's Eastern Conference. Though their playoff run ended in the second round, the season showcased a bright future under GM Chris Patrick. Steady at ninth, the prospect pool fuels this optimism with high-end talent and depth.

Ryan Leonard, McKeen's second-ranked prospect, headlines the system, joining the Capitals late after a dazzling two-year stint at Boston University with 61 goals, 109 points in 78 games. The NCAA standout, filled to the brim with accolades, is poised for a full-time NHL role in 2025-26.

Meanwhile, the Capitals' junior ranks erupted, with three prospects eclipsing the century mark. Andrew Cristall capped his WHL career with a monstrous 132 points, completing an astounding tenure of 412 points in 248 games.

Ilya Protas, brother of NHLer Alexei, took the OHL by storm as a rookie skater, ranking second league-wide with 124 points. Patrick Thomas, a 2023 fourth rounder, soared to 104 points, nearly doubling his previous best. On defense, 2024 second-rounder Cole Hutson tied for the NCAA's top-scoring defenseman with 48 points, matching Zeev Buium.

Next year, youngsters such as Ivan Miroshnichenko, defenseman Ryan Chesley, and Vincent Iorio should be seen pushing to make their presence felt.

Under coach Spencer Carbery, the Capitals are seamlessly integrating youth, complementing their already established veterans. It's not often a team can continue to stay relevant while bringing up its players of the future. Sporting the game's most prolific goal scorer, Alex Ovechkin, the Stanley Cup push is always the goal.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
1	Ryan Leonard	Wsh	RW	20	5-11/190
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(8th)	Wsh	2023	8	21-Jan-05	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Boston College (HE)	37	30	19	49	46

Ryan Leonard is by far the most exciting prospect that the Washington Capitals have had in over a decade - probably since Filip Forsberg. Leonard has been a star for years with the USNTDP and Boston College Eagles and wrapped up his NCAA career with an impressive 61 goals and 109 points in 78 career games. He has dominated the past two World Junior tournaments, including a tournament MVP nod as he captained USA to their second straight gold medal this year. The Capitals' 2023 8th overall pick is a highly competitive power forward with excellent scoring touch. Think of upside somewhere in between a Brad Marchand and a Matthew Tkachuk, and you can see why Washington is so enamored with their top prospect. After leading the NCAA in scoring this year, he signed with Washington and was immediately inserted into their lineup and has been playing meaningful minutes in the Capitals' middle six.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
2	Cole Hutson	Wsh	D	18	5-10/165
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 24(43rd)	Wsh	2024	43	28-Jun-06	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Boston University (HE)	39	14	34	48	64

Cole Hutson was a second-round pick by the Washington Capitals in 2024, and that's already looking like a steal. Hutson is the all-time points leader among blueliners in the US National Team Development Program, and he didn't miss a beat stepping into the NCAA this season, where he finished as the third-highest scoring defender. Not only did he fill the scoresheet in collegiate play, but he also made history by becoming the first defenseman ever to lead an entire World Junior Championship outright in scoring. With the puck on his stick, there's no doubt Hutson can completely dominate: his creativity, agility, and confidence shine every night. Without the puck, he's still a work in progress defensively, largely due to his size and tendency to take risks, but his hockey sense and compete level keep him from being a liability. He projects as an offensive top four defenseman that should be a fixture on the powerplay.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
3	Ivan Miroshnichenko	Wsh	LW	21	6-1/185
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 22(20th)	Wsh	2022	20	4-Feb-04	Russia
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Hershey (AHL)	53	23	19	42	28

Even if his play in the NHL remains a work in progress, Miroshnichenko's second pro season in North America has to be considered a success. He established himself as an excellent goal scorer at the AHL level with Hershey and he's learning how to best utilize his shot and strength on North American ice. It's easy to forget that he's only 21, the age that most CHL players begin their pro journey; Miroshnichenko played in the AHL as an "underager" last year. With some big contracts coming off the books this offseason, one has to wonder if Miroshnichenko will be given every opportunity to earn a top nine role with the Capitals next season. His combination of skating ability, strength on the puck, and scoring instincts makes him the ideal complementary winger for a creative playmaking pivot. He could easily develop into a perennial 25 goal scorer for Washington in the near future and someone who can help ease the eventual transition post Alex Ovechkin.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
4	Andrew Cristall	Wsh	LW	20	5-9/165
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(40th)	Wsh	2023	40	4-Feb-05	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Kel-Spo (WHL)	57	48	84	132	34

A lot of WHL defensemen must be thrilled that this is Cristall's final year in the league, because it means that his offensive reign of terror is coming to an end. To give you an idea of just how unstoppable he was, earlier this season he became just the first WHLer in the 21st century to amass 400 regular season points. A mid-season trade to Spokane only made him more dangerous, clicking immediately with fellow dynamo Berkly Catton. He's creative, his offensive vision is razor-sharp, and he's a wizard with the puck on his stick. So then why did he slide to the second round in the 2023 draft and get snubbed by Hockey Canada for the World Juniors? Simply put, he's a poor skater for a guy his size and plays at a low pace, which can sometimes make him a 200-foot liability. Cristall will need to be developed and deployed appropriately and carefully in order to translate his current success to the NHL.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
5	Ilya Protas	Wsh	LW	18	6-3/185
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 24(75th)	Wsh	2024	75	18-Jul-06	Belarus
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Windsor (OHL)	61	50	74	124	34

What a season it was for Ilya Protas, as he made the jump to the OHL with the Windsor Spitfires. He and the Spitfires took the league by storm, jumping to the top of the standings, and a lot of that can be attributed to the remarkable performance of Protas. The big winger is such a well-rounded and intelligent offensive player. He's highly skilled. He has great vision with the puck and demonstrates the poise of a player who you'd assume already has pro experience. He's a committed two-way player who was utilized by Windsor in all situations. Like his brother Aliaksei, who just enjoyed a breakout year for the Washington Capitals, the only thing missing from his game is dynamic skating ability. Improving his quickness and agility will be paramount to his NHL success. The question is, where does Protas play next year? He could return to Windsor for another year, or he could turn pro and play in the AHL as a 19/20-year-old. Either choice would have potential drawbacks and benefits.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
6	Vincent Iorio	Wsh	D	22	6-2/190
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 21(55th)	Wsh	2021	55	14-Nov-02	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Hershey (AHL)	67	5	15	20	27

Iorio has essentially hit a crossroads in his development. The big right shot defender has the tools to be a quality bottom pairing defender in the NHL. He is mobile. He makes a great first pass. He competes physically and takes away space. Offensively, he's not a standout; he's not a skilled puckhandler or someone confident in jumping up in the play. He's content with being that stable, stay at home defender. The issue is that the Capitals just don't have room for him right now. That becomes an even larger issue next year when he is no longer exempt from waivers. If he performs well in camp, does Washington move out someone like Trevor Van Riemsdyk? Does he beat out someone like Alexander Alexeyev to earn the seventh defender spot? Either way, Iorio's future with the Capitals may just be decided soon.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
7	Ryan Chesley	Wsh	D	21	6-0/200
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 22(37th)	Wsh	2022	37	27-Feb-04	USA
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Minnesota (B1G)	40	8	12	20	48

In his third season at the University of Minnesota, Ryan Chesley was named captain of the Golden Gophers. The 6-foot-0, 200-pound blueliner logged heavy minutes for a second straight year, continuing to anchor Minnesota's top matchups with his reliable defensive play. While offense isn't the hallmark of his game, Chesley did take a step forward in that area, jumping to 20 points after totaling just 18 over his first two seasons combined. He managed that while sharing power-play time with Sam Rinzel, a first-round pick of the Chicago Blackhawks. Chesley shines as a defender, where his footwork and physicality play a huge part in shutting down rushes. The reliable USNTDP alum is particularly good on retrievals, and his breakout passing and transition game are stronger than his offensive numbers would suggest. There's a bottom pair defender here, maybe with the upside of a second pair role at some point.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
8	Terik Parascak	Wsh	RW	18	6-0/180
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 24(17th)	Wsh	2024	17	28-May-06	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Prince George (WHL)	59	28	54	82	47

There was an expectation coming in this season that Parascak's point totals might come back down to earth a little, especially now that he's no longer the unknown and unexpected scoring phenom that he was at the beginning of last year. That has indeed happened, but he has also proven that his breakout campaign wasn't just some kind of fluke. This is one driven, highly intelligent young player who just keeps erasing doubts about his underwhelming strength and skating ability. Few can match his instincts and anticipation in the offensive zone, which causes pucks to gravitate to his stick right before he strikes quickly with them. And despite lacking size he's not afraid to go into the dirty areas and absorb some punishment to help create scoring chances. There's still a lot of work to be done, and the Capitals will need to be patient, but Parascak has the potential to become a useful complementary piece in an NHL roster puzzle.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
9	Leon Muggli	Wsh	D	18	6-1/175
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 24(52nd)	Wsh	2024	52	9-Jul-06	Switzerland
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Zug (Sui-NL)	40	5	6	11	43

The 24-25 season has been exceptional for the Washington Capitals organization, but 2024 second round draft pick Leon Muggli has experienced a winter best described as "meh". Playing for a disappointing EV Zug, Muggli's season was ended by Davos in a four-game first round playoff sweep that nonetheless saw him average approximately 18 minutes of ice time and 'only' go -1 along the way. This came after concluding the season having racked up 27 and then 24 minutes of TOI. Overall, Muggli continued to rely on his trademark physicality and high compete level throughout the season, but this time to blander results. His numbers dropped slightly in comparison to his draft year, putting up one less point and dropping by 9 in his plus/minus rating. He wore an "A" for Switzerland at the WJC (3 assists and -4 in 5 games) and his NL statline was akin to that of former first round draft pick and teammate Gabriel Carlsson, even if it paled in comparison to former Capitals sixth round teammate (and seven-year older) Tobias Geissner. Having already signed his ELC in July of 2024, all signs are that the 18-year-old (July birthday) will be joining the Hershey Bears for the 25-26 season.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
10	Eriks Mateiko	Wsh	LW	19	6-5/215
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 24(90th)	Wsh	2024	90	18-Nov-05	Latvia
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
SNB-Rim (QMJHL)	47	26	15	41	20

After an impressive World Junior Championship with Latvia, where Mateiko stood out as the best player on his team, he was quickly traded in the QMJHL to the Memorial Cup Host, the Rimouski Océanic. It was his chance to play on a stacked team and elevate his game. From the very beginning, Mateiko was doing what he does best: supporting the play with smart passes, playing a responsible game in both zones and using his size to create a threatening pressure on the forecheck. But now that he was playing with better teammates, he was more confident in driving plays by himself, using his playmaking ability to create plenty of scoring opportunities. He even added some physicality to his game, using more of his body in battles to win the puck. Although the skating and the intensity are still an issue in his game, he has found a way to make it work with his smartness and skills. He could project as a fourth line powerforward in the NHL that will kill some minutes on the penalty kill.

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
11	Cam Allen	Wsh	D	20	6-0/195
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(136th)	Wsh	2023	136	7-Jan-05	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Gue-Ldn (OHL)	49	11	34	45	68

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
12	Petr Sikora	Wsh	C	19	5-11/170
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 24(178th)	Wsh	2024	178	2-Jan-06	Czech
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
HC Ocelari Trinec (Czechia)	34	7	8	15	61

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
13	Patrick Thomas	Wsh	C	20	5-11/160
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 23(104th)	Wsh	2023	104	21-Aug-04	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Brantford (OHL)	66	27	77	104	10

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
14	David Gucciardi	Wsh	D	22	6-1/185
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 22(213th)	Wsh	2022	213	9-Oct-02	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Michigan State (B1G)	37	6	10	16	42

RNK	PLAYER	NHL	POS	AGE	HT/WT
15	Joaquim Lemay	Wsh	D	22	6-1/180
ACQUIRED	DFT TM	DFT YR	DFT SELECTED	BIRTHDATE	NATIONALITY
` 21(119th)	Wsh	2021	119	28-Jul-02	Canada
TM	GP	G(W)	A(L)	PTS(GAA)	PIM(SPCT)
Northeastern (HE)	30	3	9	12	29