

Opinion:

Penguins Preview: Big trades in the off season

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It is that time of year again when a hockey team's General Manager's job comes into play. Ray Shero, General Manager for the Pittsburgh Penguins, has spent his summer making deals and trades to keep the Pittsburgh Penguins one of the top ranked teams in the NHL.

Ray Shero's first decision was concerning veteran defenseman, Sergei Gonchar. On July 1 the decision of whether or not Gonchar would stay in Pittsburgh was made. Shore and Gonchar could not reach an agreement and therefore Gonchar signed a three-year contract with the Ottawa Senators. It was a sad day in Penguins History when it was announced that Stanley Cup Champion Sergei Gonchar would not be returning after five years of playing for the Penguins.

The next deal concerned defenseman Mark Eaton. After four years with the Penguins, Mark Eaton signed a two-year contract with the New York Islanders, feeling this is the best move for his career.

Alexie Ponikarovsky was the next deal Penguin fans were waiting to hear about. After two months with the Penguins, unrestricted free agent Ponikarovsky decided to accept a one-year contract with the Los Angeles Kings.

The last two teammates to leave the Penguins line-up were Bill Guerin and Ruslan Fedotenko. Bill Guerin is still unsigned but it has been confirmed that he will not be returning as a Penguin. Ruslan Fedotenko's career with the Penguins is still undecided.

Through all the deals and trades, the Penguins get some good players in return. The Penguins have acquired forwards Aaron Asham from the Philadelphia Flyers, Mike Comrie from the Edmonton Oilers, and Ryan Craig

from the Tampa Bay Lightning. And defensemen Paul Martin from the New Jersey Devils, Zbynek Michalek from the Phoenix Coyotes, and Corey Potter from the New York Rangers.

The loss of Guerin seems to be the main concern of many Penguin fans. With out picking up an equal trade some worry that his loss will be the biggest in the team's roster. The team has high hopes, after a playoff run the previous season, especially with such strong players as Mlakin and Crosby. These young stars are the backbone of the team.

As hockey season nears, Pittsburgh Penguin fans hope Ray Shore has made these decisions correctly and that these players will only improve Pittsburgh's great reputation.



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Mark Eaton signed a contract extension, giving him two more years with the Pens.

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