

2026 27

USHL Season Preview

Cedar Rapids RoughRiders leads the updated projection at 74.8 points. This edition combines the September 15 roster reconciliation with verified departures, late trades and refreshed goalie forecasts. Three player spotlights accompany every team preview.

SEASON OPENS	SEPTEMBER 16
ROSTER FEED	556 PLAYERS
FORECAST LEADER	CEDAR RAPIDS ROUGHRIDERS

PRESEASON MAGAZINE

Prepared September 15 2026

How to read this edition

The team pages combine official roster publication with forecast evidence. A published name is stronger evidence than a protected-list entry, trade or draft right, but preseason rosters can still change before and after opening night.

Team	Conference	Rank	Projected points
Cedar Rapids RoughRiders	Eastern	1	74.8
Sioux Falls Stampede	Western	2	73.6
Madison Capitols	Eastern	3	71.5
Dubuque Fighting Saints	Eastern	4	69.1
Waterloo Black Hawks	Western	5	69.0
Youngstown Phantoms	Eastern	6	68.4
Omaha Lancers	Western	7	68.4
Muskegon Lumberjacks	Eastern	8	66.7
Sioux City Musketeers	Western	9	66.5
Green Bay Gamblers	Eastern	10	66.3
Fargo Force	Western	11	65.4
Des Moines Buccaneers	Western	12	65.3
Lincoln Stars	Western	13	63.7
USA Hockey NTDP	Eastern	14	62.9
Tri-City Storm	Western	15	62.8
Chicago Steel	Eastern	16	62.7

The updated league forecast

Cedar Rapids RoughRiders leads the updated projection at 74.8 points. Sioux Falls Stampede, Madison Capitols, Dubuque Fighting Saints follow in the next three positions. The ranges remain wide: preseason roster publication includes camp candidates and does not establish a final active roster.

Projected standings

Eastern Conference

Rank	Team	Points	Range
1	Cedar Rapids RoughRiders	74.8	65.3 to 84.3
2	Madison Capitols	71.5	62.0 to 81.0
3	Dubuque Fighting Saints	69.1	59.6 to 78.6
4	Youngstown Phantoms	68.4	58.9 to 77.9
5	Muskegon Lumberjacks	66.7	57.2 to 76.2
6	Green Bay Gamblers	66.3	56.8 to 75.8
7	USA Hockey NTDP	62.9	49.9 to 75.9
8	Chicago Steel	62.7	53.2 to 72.2

Western Conference

Rank	Team	Points	Range
1	Sioux Falls Stampede	73.6	64.1 to 83.1
2	Waterloo Black Hawks	69.0	59.5 to 78.5
3	Omaha Lancers	68.4	58.9 to 77.9
4	Sioux City Musketeers	66.5	57.0 to 76.0
5	Fargo Force	65.4	55.9 to 74.9
6	Des Moines Buccaneers	65.3	55.8 to 74.8
7	Lincoln Stars	63.7	54.2 to 73.2
8	Tri-City Storm	62.8	53.3 to 72.3

Cedar Rapids RoughRiders

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
1	1	74.8	34

Forecast

The model projects 74.8 points, with a working range of 65.3 to 84.3. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Henry Lechner and Braiden Scuderi give Cedar Rapids established scoring to build around, while tendered forward Blake Wilichoski adds a new face. With Jason Musa and Connor Davis moving on, the RoughRiders need their returning forwards to take on more of the offense.

Goaltending outlook

Joseph Skidmore brings 22 games of USHL experience to a preseason group that also includes Paul Suda and Ethan Phillips. That experience gives Cedar Rapids something to work with, but the opening games will help clarify how the workload is shared.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Blake Wilichoski F	preseason roster
Braiden Scuderi F 58 GP 35 PTS	preseason roster
Henry Lechner F 57 GP 51 PTS	preseason roster

Roster changes

No confirmed incoming agreement or trade appears in the current ledger. Departures include Jason Musa to Brantford Bulldogs; Connor Davis to North Dakota.

Availability sources: [Jason Musa](#) | [Connor Davis](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

A tendered newcomer joins two established scorers in a group that gives Cedar Rapids both experience and room to grow.

1 Blake Wilichoski

A Massachusetts prospect with an edge

Wilichoski comes to Cedar Rapids from Milton Academy and the Minuteman Flames, with coach and general manager Mark Carlson already familiar with his development. In announcing the tender, Carlson singled out his skating, competitive edge and ability to create offense through either a shot or a pass. Those are the club's expectations; the USHL will supply the test. The Danvers, Massachusetts, forward joins a group with established scorers, giving him a chance to grow into responsibility. Watch which part of his game earns early trust, and whether that becomes a regular place in the lineup.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Braiden Scuderi

The encore after an All Rookie season

Scuderi has already given Cedar Rapids more than a promising introduction. His 13 goals and 22 assists earned him All-Rookie Second Team recognition, and his 35 points ranked sixth among USHL rookies. The club counted eight multi-point games, including three in a row in early March. That run gives this season a useful question: can those bursts become a more sustained offensive presence? Still a 2009-born forward, Scuderi has time to develop. Watch his involvement between scoring streaks as much as the big nights; a steadier contribution would make him more valuable to the RoughRiders.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Henry Lechner

The playmaker already doing the work

Lechner brings a substantial scoring record to the RoughRiders' current roster: 16 goals and 35 assists in 57 games last season. His passing contribution reached the power play, where he collected 11 assists, and five of his goals were game-winners. The Bloomington, Minnesota, forward gives Cedar Rapids an experienced offensive presence alongside its younger talent. The next step is less about a sudden breakout than sustaining an already productive role. Watch who benefits from playing with him, and whether his combination of distribution and timely finishing remains effective as opponents give him more attention.

Sources: [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Sioux Falls Stampede

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
2	1	73.6	36

Forecast

The model projects 73.6 points, with a working range of 64.1 to 83.1. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Sioux Falls has scoring to replace after the departures of Thomas Zocco and Tobias Öhman. Dylan Delgado brings a productive youth-hockey background, while Pavel Martinu adds size and USHL experience. Their adjustment will help determine how quickly the Stampede can rebuild its attack.

Goaltending outlook

Ryan Cameron arrives from Cedar Rapids with 40 USHL appearances last season and an NHL draft selection by Edmonton. He gives the Stampede an experienced option alongside preseason names Ivans Kufterins and Ilja Nikitins. The opportunity is to turn that experience into more consistent results.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Dylan Delgado F	preseason roster
Pavel Martinu F 53 GP 17 PTS	preseason roster
Ryan Cameron G 40 GP	preseason roster

Roster changes

Pavel Martinu (F) from SC; Ryland Rooney (F) from CHI; Ryan Cameron (G) from CR. Departures include Thomas Zocco to London Knights; Tobias Öhman to Colgate.

Availability sources: [Thomas Zocco](#) | [Tobias Öhman](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

A highly productive newcomer, a big center and an NHL-drafted goaltender offer three different ways to follow the Stampede.

1 Dylan Delgado

A scorer takes the next step

Sioux Falls gave up its first-round Phase I pick to secure Delgado, and his Honeybaked record explains the investment. The Weston, Florida, forward produced 56 goals and 115 points in 82 AAA games in 2025-26. He became only the fourth tender signing in Stampede history, following a group that includes Jaxon Nelson. The intrigue is how quickly that youth scoring translates against older, stronger opponents. For the projected league leader, Delgado offers a young offensive option worth following beyond the first highlight. Watch whether he keeps finding scoring chances as the space around him shrinks.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Pavel Martinu

Size through the middle

Martinu gives the Stampede a very different look from their smaller forwards. Sioux Falls lists its Czech acquisition at 6-foot-5 and 220 pounds and describes a centerman with a physical, defensive game. He arrived from Sioux City in the June deal for Jake Merens and a draft pick, bringing eight goals and nine assists from 53 regular-season games. He also scored in Sioux Falls' September 4 preseason opener. His value will extend beyond the scoresheet: watch how he handles traffic, supports his defensemen and turns possession around the net into chances for linemates.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Background 2](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Ryan Cameron

An NHL pick with something to prove

Cameron's summer brought a new USHL address and an NHL selection: Edmonton took him 212th overall after Sioux Falls acquired him from Cedar Rapids. The Boston College commit won 24 games in 2025-26, but his .882 save percentage leaves a clear improvement target. There is a stronger season on his résumé, too: he posted a .948 with the NAHL's Lone Star Brahmas in 2024-25. The Stampede are betting on that development path. Watch whether he can combine his experience carrying a workload with more consistent shot stopping behind a team projected to contend.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Background 2](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Madison Capitols

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
3	2	71.5	32

Forecast

The model projects 71.5 points, with a working range of 62 to 81. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Madison has an intriguing incoming group in Bode McConnell, Quinn Kaiser and Grady Schmidt. Sam Kappell and Michael Tang have moved on, creating room for new contributors. The early question is how quickly the newcomers can turn production at their previous levels into regular USHL contributions.

Goaltending outlook

Cash Cruitt, Brady Krey and Elliot Lennon all bring some USHL experience to Madison's preseason crease. None had a full season's workload last year, so there is room for someone to establish a larger role. Watch how the starts are distributed early.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Bode McConnell F 2 GP 2 PTS	preseason roster
Quinn Kaiser F	preseason roster
Grady Schmidt D	preseason roster

Roster changes

Colin Yandle (D) agreement; Gustavs Griva (F) agreement; Bode McConnell (F) agreement; Cooper Snee (F) agreement. Departures include Sam Kappell to Minnesota State; Michael Tang to Niagara IceDogs.

Availability sources: [Sam Kappell](#) | [Michael Tang](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

Two productive young forwards and a defenseman from Minnesota high school hockey give Madison an intriguing incoming group.

1 Bode McConnell

An Edina finisher gets a longer audition

McConnell scored 36 goals and 57 points in 31 games for Edina High School before getting a brief, productive taste of Madison: a goal and an assist in two appearances. The Capitols originally found him in the fifteenth round of the 2025 Phase II Draft, then signed him for 2026-27. That makes him an appealing development story, although two USHL games are far too few to project a scoring rate. Watch the quality and frequency of his chances over a full schedule. Madison will be looking for the finishing that made him so productive in Minnesota.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Quinn Kaiser

A Wisconsin scorer stays close to home

Kaiser comes from Waterford, Wisconsin, giving Madison's tender signing a local connection. He put up 44 goals and 102 points in 54 games with Team Illinois, then added eight points in five OHL Cup games for TPH Academy. Capitols scouting director Justin Friedman praised a playmaking center who also threatens with his shot. Now comes the adjustment from youth dominance to junior hockey. Watch whether Kaiser can keep defenders guessing between shooting and distributing. His early scoring may fluctuate, but the ability to create a good option under pressure would be an encouraging sign.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Grady Schmidt

The jump from Mankato to Madison

Schmidt arrives on Madison's roster from Mankato West High School, giving the Capitols another player making the Minnesota high school transition. The left-shot defenseman was listed at 6-foot-5 and 190 pounds in Minnesota Hockey's spring program, so his reach will be immediately noticeable. What remains to be established is how that frame translates against USHL pace. Watch his footwork when attackers change direction and his decisions on retrievals. Madison does not need an instant offensive star from every newcomer; earning dependable defensive shifts would be a meaningful first step for Schmidt.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Background 2](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Dubuque Fighting Saints

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
4	3	69.1	33

Forecast

The model projects 69.1 points, with a working range of 59.6 to 78.6. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Dubuque must replace considerable offense after Michael Barron and Colin Frank left for college. Jacoby Palmer arrives through a trade, while Brandon Wright and Jack Larkin represent the Saints' younger group. Their development will be part of a broader search for new contributors.

Goaltending outlook

Tomass Rutulis's trade to Fargo changes Dubuque's competition in goal and gives Brandon Wright's progress added interest. Wright brings a strong school-hockey record from Northstar Christian Academy. His adjustment to USHL shooters is an opening-season storyline, with the starting role still unsettled.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Brandon Wright G	preseason roster
Jacoby Palmer D	preseason roster
Jack Larkin F 1 GP 0 PTS	preseason roster

Roster changes

Nikolai Zhukov agreement; Joe Wahlund agreement; Jacoby Palmer (D) from DSM; Brandon Wright (G) agreement. Departures include Michael Barron to Arizona State; Colin Frank to Connecticut.

Availability sources: [Michael Barron](#) | [Colin Frank](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

Dubuque develops from within and adds through trades. These three younger players show both routes into the Saints lineup.

1 Brandon Wright

A new crease and a strong starting point

Wright's path runs through Northstar Christian Academy, where the Hugo, Minnesota, goaltender recorded a .923 save percentage, a 1.92 goals-against average and seven shutouts in 39 appearances. Dubuque first added him as an affiliate, then signed him for 2026-27. Those youth results make him interesting, but the jump in shooters and traffic is substantial. The Saints' September trade of Tomass Rutulis to Fargo adds context to the competition for work in net. Watch how Wright responds after a difficult goal and whether he can string together reliable appearances as the schedule settles.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Jacoby Palmer

A young defenseman with room to grow

Dubuque acquired Palmer from Des Moines on draft day, adding the 2009-born defenseman and a future seventh-round pick for a 2026 third-round selection. The Holden, Massachusetts, native was listed at 6-foot-1 and 176 pounds in the announcement and initially assigned to the Saints' affiliate list. He now appears on the preseason roster. This is a development story rather than an established USHL scoring story. Watch whether he earns sustained game time, then how comfortably he makes the first outlet pass and handles pressure near his own net. Those details will reveal more than an early point total.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Jack Larkin

From Northstar scorer to full season Saint

Larkin and goaltender Brandon Wright bring a shared Northstar Christian Academy background to Dubuque. Larkin scored 25 goals and 58 points in 58 games for its 16U team, while getting a one-game USHL introduction with the Saints. Dubuque had selected the Fargo, North Dakota, forward 28th overall in the 2025 Phase I Draft before signing him for a full-time role this season. The appeal is a productive young player whose next step is already planned. Watch how he adapts when scoring opportunities are less frequent and how much offensive responsibility he earns over the first several weeks.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Waterloo Black Hawks

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
5	2	69.0	35

Forecast

The model projects 69 points, with a working range of 59.5 to 78.5. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Salvatore Viviano and Jimmy Rieber give Waterloo returning experience, and Hayden Russell has already offered an encouraging preseason glimpse. JJ Salajko’s move to Michigan State leaves a gap on defense. The Black Hawks will look for their returning group to grow into greater responsibility.

Goaltending outlook

Charles Menard arrives from Lincoln just before the Fall Classic after playing 21 USHL games last season. His addition gives Waterloo an experienced option as it sorts out the crease. Leo Gabriel and Sebastian Charvat also appear in the preseason group; the workload remains to be established.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Hayden Russell F 59 GP 34 PTS	preseason roster
Salvatore Viviano F 61 GP 40 PTS	preseason roster
Jimmy Rieber D 60 GP 11 PTS	preseason roster

Roster changes

Charles Menard (G) from LIN; Chris Baird-Gajdos (D) from MAD. Departures include JJ Salajko to Michigan State. Availability sources: [JJ Salajko](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

Waterloo's featured group includes an early preseason standout and two players who turned last year's opportunity into a roster place.

1 Hayden Russell

An early reminder of his offensive value

Russell supplied a timely preview of his potential impact with a goal and three assists in Waterloo's September 11 exhibition win over Des Moines. That performance follows a 34-point USHL season and his January move from Dubuque alongside defenseman James Russell. The Huntington Beach, California, forward also had 16 power-play points last season, giving the Hawks another established option with the extra skater. An exhibition outburst is no guarantee, but it is a good reason to pay attention. Watch whether the passing connections from that four-point night carry into games that count.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Background 2](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Salvatore Viviano

From a release to a leading returner

Viviano's path to this season began with a setback. Cedar Rapids released him during the previous preseason, but he impressed Waterloo enough to earn a place and now returns as the Hawks' top returning scorer. His 40 points in 61 games include some particularly effective work against Des Moines: seven goals and nine points in eight meetings. It is a useful reminder that an opening roster is not the end of a player's story. Watch how Viviano handles the shift from trying to win a job to being a player opponents prepare to contain.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Background 2](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Jimmy Rieber

From preseason hopeful to Ducks prospect

Rieber went from trying to make Waterloo's roster to hearing Anaheim call his name at the NHL Draft in roughly ten months. The Ducks selected him 210th overall after a season in which he appeared in 60 of the Hawks' 62 games and produced 11 points. His first USHL goal helped spark an overtime comeback win on Halloween. The next chapter is about building on that reliability with greater responsibility. Watch how he handles tougher assignments and whether his decisions remain composed as expectations rise. The résumé has changed; the daily development work continues.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Youngstown Phantoms

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
6	4	68.4	36

Forecast

The model projects 68.4 points, with a working range of 58.9 to 77.9. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Youngstown has substantial offense to replace with Cooper Simpson, Ryan Rucinski and Jack Hextall moving to college. Malachi McKinnon provides an established scoring presence, while Austin Hall and Axel Brøngel-Larsson add new possibilities. The Phantoms need that combination to develop into dependable support throughout the lineup.

Goaltending outlook

Owen Lepak brings 19 USHL appearances from last season to a preseason group that includes Nikita Oleksiienko, Cole Brindley and Bor Glavic. Lepak offers experience at this level, but the published group does not settle the starting job. Early selections will reveal how the coaches see the competition.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Axel Brøngel-Larsson D	preseason roster
Austin Hall F	preseason roster
Malachi McKinnon F 61 GP 50 PTS	preseason roster

Roster changes

Wilhelm Hasselhuhn (D) agreement; Jackson Conroy (F) agreement; Nikita Oleksiienko (G) agreement; Axel Brøngel-Larsson (D) agreement. Departures include Cooper Simpson to North Dakota; Ryan Rucinski to Ohio State.

Availability sources: [Cooper Simpson](#) | [Ryan Rucinski](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

International experience, exceptional youth production and an established USHL scorer give the Phantoms several stories to follow.

1 Axel Brøngel-Larsson

International experience on the blue line

Born in Oslo and developed in Sweden's Frölunda system, Brøngel-Larsson brings an international résumé to Youngstown. He represented Sweden on its 2025 Under-18 World Championship silver-medal team and at the 2024 Hlinka Gretzky Cup, where it won bronze. The Phantoms describe the left-shot defenseman as a blend of mobility, physical play and puck-moving ability. At roughly 6-foot-1 and 200 pounds, he adds size as well as experience. Watch how quickly he adjusts to USHL forechecking pressure and whether his first pass helps Youngstown spend less time defending and more time attacking.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Austin Hall

An extraordinary youth scoring résumé

Hall arrives with numbers that demand attention: 69 goals and 117 assists in 89 games for Honeybaked, plus OHL Cup MVP recognition. Youngstown used its first-round Phase I selection to tender the Livonia, Michigan, forward rather than wait for the draft. The 2010-born left shot now faces a different assignment, creating offense against players several years older. Those youth totals are a starting point, not a USHL forecast. Watch how he finds passing options under pressure and whether his creativity survives the faster pace. His progress could give the Phantoms an important source of new offense.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Malachi McKinnon

A balanced threat with a bigger opportunity

McKinnon's 25 goals and 25 assists made him a 50-point player over 61 games last season. That balance matters for Youngstown: defenses have to respect both the shot and the next pass. The Forest Lake, Minnesota, forward also supplied 11 power-play points, giving the Phantoms an experienced option as their personnel changes. With Jack Hextall moving to Michigan State, there is meaningful offense to replace. McKinnon is one of the current roster's most established producers. Watch whether greater responsibility brings more consistent control of shifts, rather than simply a larger share of the scoring.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Omaha Lancers

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
7	3	68.4	36

Forecast

The model projects 68.4 points, with a working range of 58.9 to 77.9. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Omaha combines returning forward Adam Israilov with tendered newcomer Matthew Lynn and defensive acquisition Nathaniel Celski. Kole Hyles has moved to New Hampshire, leaving offense to replace. The Lancers will need contributions from familiar players as well as newcomers earning their first substantial opportunities.

Goaltending outlook

Niklas Huson, Alexander Woller and Anthony Sciere are among Omaha's preseason options. The available evidence does not establish a clear starter, making the early division of starts worth watching. Settling the crease would give the rest of the lineup a more dependable foundation.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Matthew Lynn F	preseason roster
Nathaniel Celski D 27 GP 3 PTS	preseason roster
Adam Israilov F 56 GP 30 PTS	preseason roster

Roster changes

Nate Celski (D) from MKG. Departures include Kole Hyles to New Hampshire.

Availability sources: [Kole Hyles](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

A tendered forward, a defensive acquisition and a returning scorer give Omaha three distinct development stories.

1 Matthew Lynn

A timely scorer arrives from Bishop Kearney

Lynn, introduced by Omaha as Matty, comes from the Bishop Kearney Selects with a memorable late-season moment: a game-winning goal that helped his 15U team reach the national championship game. At the March tender announcement, he had 22 goals and 57 points in 56 games. The Collegeville, Pennsylvania, forward now faces a substantial jump in competition. Watch how he adjusts when the chances are harder to create and the defenders are more experienced. Omaha's investment gives him an opportunity to develop; earning useful touches and regular involvement is the next part of the story.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Nathaniel Celski

An experienced addition with size

Celski, known as Nate in Omaha's trade announcement, arrived from Muskegon for a future fourth-round pick. The 6-foot-3 defenseman played 27 regular-season games for the Lumberjacks, registering three assists, and added a playoff appearance. He previously spent two seasons at Minnesota's White Bear Lake High School. The Lancers are adding a player with some USHL experience rather than asking him to learn the league from scratch. Watch how quickly he fits with a new partner and whether he can make his reach useful around the net while keeping his exits simple and effective.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Adam Israilov

A rookie scoring base worth building on

Israilov recorded 10 goals and 20 assists in 56 games during his first USHL season. That 30-point foundation makes the left-shot forward an important player to follow on Omaha's current roster. He also contributed eight power-play points, showing that some offensive responsibility had already come his way. The next step is to make a good sequence of shifts less dependent on the man advantage. Watch whether he can generate more chances at even strength and help sustain possession with his linemates. A more complete second season would give the Lancers a meaningful source of improvement from within.

Sources: [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Muskegon Lumberjacks

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
8	5	66.7	33

Forecast

The model projects 66.7 points, with a working range of 57.2 to 76.2. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Muskegon has lost experienced forwards Melvin Novotny and Viktor Nörringer to college. Nicholas Kosiba brings junior experience, Jake Tavares gets a fresh opportunity, and Gustas Zemaitis returns with a season behind him. That mix will help shape the Lumberjacks' next group of regular contributors.

Goaltending outlook

Luke Courtney and Oscar Westman appear in Muskegon's preseason group, but their roles remain unsettled. There is little established USHL history to guide expectations for these options. The opening games should offer a better picture of who earns regular starts and how the workload develops.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Jake Tavares F 20 GP 2 PTS	preseason roster
Nicholas Kosiba F 50 GP 15 PTS	preseason roster
Gustas Zemaitis F 39 GP 5 PTS	preseason roster

Roster changes

Trey Wilson (F) from FGO; Nicholas Kosiba (F) from FGO; Jake Tavares (F) from SC; Anthony Spadaro (D) from CR. Departures include Melvin Novotny to Massachusetts; Viktor Nörringer to Boston University.

Availability sources: [Melvin Novotny](#) | [Viktor Nörringer](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

Two arrivals and a returning forward enter the season with different résumés and the same opportunity to earn a larger role.

1 Jake Tavares

A fresh start with a familiar league

Tavares changes clubs with a modest statistical record and an opportunity to write a different second chapter. The Belmont, Massachusetts, forward had two goals in 20 games with Sioux City before Muskegon acquired him in July. That limited sample offers little basis for a scoring prediction, but it does give him experience of the league's speed and physical demands. The question is where he can establish a regular role with the Lumberjacks. Watch how often he reaches shooting positions and whether productive shifts earn him more ice time. Progress here may show up in usage before it reaches the scoresheet.

Sources: [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Nicholas Kosiba

Playoff experience comes to West Michigan

Kosiba has already seen a fair amount of meaningful spring hockey. He helped Waterloo reach the 2025 Clark Cup Final, then played for Fargo during its run to the 2026 Western Conference Final. Muskegon acquired the New Boston, Michigan, forward in the Max Cullen deal, bringing him closer to home. The Western Michigan commit had 25 points in 92 career USHL games at the time of the trade. He offers more experience than his 15-point last season alone suggests. Watch whether a new lineup allows him to contribute more offense while drawing on those two playoff runs.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Gustas Zemaitis

Turning familiarity into a larger role

Zemaitis returns to the Lumberjacks' preseason roster after a 39-game season that produced two goals and three assists. The Barrington, Illinois, forward therefore starts with a clear, modest baseline rather than a breakout reputation. His advantage is familiarity: he has already worked through a USHL season with this organization. The next question is whether that experience turns into more involvement. Watch his ability to extend offensive possessions and become available for a pass around the scoring areas. More frequent chances would be a useful sign of progress before anyone asks him to deliver a dramatic jump in points.

Sources: [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Sioux City Musketeers

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
9	4	66.5	38

Forecast

The model projects 66.5 points, with a working range of 57 to 76. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Sioux City adds young forward Dominik Bednar and brings in Jake Merens and Zach Spagnuolo from other USHL clubs. William Tomko and Ashton Schultz have left for college. The challenge is to replace their offense while giving the incoming group time to find its place.

Goaltending outlook

Hugo Severgardh and Andrew McLouth are among Sioux City's preseason choices in goal. The available roster information leaves the starting role open, so early performances will carry particular interest. Watch who receives consecutive starts as the Musketeers establish their regular rotation.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Dominik Bednar F	preseason roster
Jake Merens F 6 GP 2 PTS	preseason roster
Zach Spagnuolo D 31 GP 3 PTS	preseason roster

Roster changes

Nathaniel Poole (D) from LIN; Zach Spagnuolo (D) from CHI; Will Keane (G) from MKG; Danny Browning (D) from WAT. Departures include William Tomko to Ohio State; Ashton Schultz to North Dakota.

Availability sources: [William Tomko](#) | [Ashton Schultz](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

Sioux City adds a young scorer and two players changing clubs. Their progress will help reveal the shape of the new lineup.

1 Dominik Bednar

A young scorer facing a tougher test

Bednar left Slovakia to develop at Seacoast Performance Academy in New Hampshire, then earned a Sioux City tender. In its January announcement, the club reported 61 goals and 100 points in 35 games at the 15U level, alongside a separate 24-point record over 32 games at 16U. Those figures explain the interest without predicting what comes next. The USHL will challenge the 2010-born winger with older defenders and less room to finish. Watch how he creates separation around the net and whether he can contribute when a game offers only a handful of clean chances.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Jake Merens

A change of scenery and an open question

Merens moved from Sioux Falls in the Pavel Martinu trade, bringing the Musketeers a right-shot forward from Highland Park, Illinois. His 2025-26 USHL record was brief: six games and two assists. That makes him an opportunity story rather than a statistical certainty. Sioux City will learn more from his day-to-day contribution than from projecting that small sample over a full season. Watch whether he establishes a regular lineup place, then how much offensive responsibility follows. A productive start would give the Musketeers another option as they reshape their forward group.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Zach Spagnuolo

A new setting for a developing defenseman

Spagnuolo joins Sioux City from Chicago after a 31-game season with one goal and two assists. The Allen, Texas, native is a left-shot defenseman listed at just over 6-foot-1 on the current roster. His appeal is not an established record of blue-line scoring; this is a chance to grow into a larger, more reliable role. Watch his positioning when play changes direction and the quality of his first pass out of pressure. If those areas hold up over regular shifts, the Musketeers can gain useful defensive minutes without needing an immediate offensive breakout.

Sources: [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Green Bay Gamblers

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
10	6	66.3	38

Forecast

The model projects 66.3 points, with a working range of 56.8 to 75.8. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Green Bay replaces major contributors Zach Wooten and Gavin Katz while adding experience through Ritter Coombs, Joseph Sinclair and Kevin Perreault. Those arrivals give the Gamblers several ways to reshape the lineup. The task is to turn their different backgrounds into a productive group.

Goaltending outlook

Jan Vaculik and Adam Novotny are among the names in Green Bay’s preseason crease. Their listings leave the pecking order unresolved, and there is little prior USHL evidence to separate these options. The first run of games will be more revealing than the preseason roster alone.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Ritter Coombs F	preseason roster
Joseph Sinclair RW	preseason roster
Kevin Perreault D 18 GP 0 PTS	preseason roster

Roster changes

Ritter Coombs (F) agreement; Kevin Perreault (D) from FGO; Joseph Sinclair (F) agreement; Mack Diggins (F) agreement. Departures include Zach Wooten to Wisconsin; Gavin Katz to Penticton Vees.

Availability sources: [Zach Wooten](#) | [Gavin Katz](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

A return from the OHL, a scorer from the BCHL and a late defensive acquisition give Green Bay a distinctly experienced group of additions.

1 Ritter Coombs

An experienced winger brings an edge

Coombs returns to the USHL after a season with the OHL's Erie Otters, where he recorded six goals, 10 points and 84 penalty minutes in 51 games. Green Bay's September 14 signing announcement emphasized the energy and toughness the 6-foot-2 winger brings. He previously split a 23-point USHL season between Dubuque and Sioux Falls, and his Providence commitment is for 2027-28. That leaves a clear junior-hockey chapter ahead. Watch whether he turns his physical involvement into useful possession and offense while staying available to his team. Experience is valuable; disciplined experience is more valuable still.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Joseph Sinclair

A proven junior scorer changes leagues

Sinclair gives Green Bay an intriguing addition from the BCHL: 24 goals and 60 points in 54 games for Sherwood Park last season. The Brantford, Ontario, forward joined as a free agent and signed his player agreement in September. Coach Patrick McCadden highlighted his speed, vision and ability to play at pace. Those are attractive ingredients for a right wing who can also play center. Watch how his scoring translates to USHL competition and which combinations make use of his passing. He has produced against junior opposition already, giving the Gamblers more than youth-hockey potential to work with.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Kevin Perreault

A bigger presence on the back end

Green Bay acquired Perreault from Fargo on September 11 for a future fifth-round pick. The Chicago native brings a 6-foot-3 frame, a right-handed shot and experience in both the USHL and BCHL. He played 18 USHL games last season and added four goals and 10 points in 20 games with Chilliwack. The Dartmouth commit therefore offers a broader résumé than his USHL point total reveals. Watch how he uses his reach without losing position and whether he can make clean exits under pressure. For Green Bay, the immediate opportunity is a steadier, more experienced defense.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Fargo Force

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
11	5	65.4	43

Forecast

The model projects 65.4 points, with a working range of 55.9 to 74.9. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Fargo welcomes Max Cullen and retains Bryce Mattern, while Kolin Sisson and Graham Jones have moved on. Cullen brings a brief introduction to the USHL and a productive high-school record; Mattern offers a full season of experience. Both have room to become more important contributors.

Goaltending outlook

September arrival Tomass Rutulis adds another contender to the crease after his trade from Dubuque. His role remains unsettled, making the opening games an early look at how Fargo intends to divide the workload. Izaak Kalis also appears among the Force’s preseason options.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Tomass Rutulis G	preseason roster
Max Cullen F 8 GP 0 PTS	preseason roster
Bryce Mattern F 51 GP 16 PTS	preseason roster

Roster changes

Tomass Rutulis (G) from DBQ; Max Cullen (F) from MKG. Departures include Kolin Sisson to UMass Lowell; Graham Jones to Penticton Vees.

Availability sources: [Kolin Sisson](#) | [Graham Jones](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

A late goalie trade, a familiar regional name and a hometown returner give Force supporters plenty to follow in the opening weeks.

1 Tomass Rutulis

A late arrival in the goalie competition

Rutulis joined Fargo on September 10, with Dubuque receiving a conditional 2028 Phase II fourth-round pick. The 2008-born goaltender appears on the Force's preseason roster, putting a late transaction directly into the opening-week story. There is no prior-season USHL statistical sample for him in this edition, so a confident performance forecast would be premature. The useful questions are practical: how soon does he get a start, how does he handle traffic, and how quickly does he settle with a new defense? His opportunity will become clearer through the coaching staff's distribution of work.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Max Cullen

A champion comes home to the Fargo area

Cullen helped Moorhead win consecutive Minnesota state championships, then joined Muskegon for a run to the Clark Cup Final. Fargo acquired him in August after a 63-point high school season that included 27 goals in 29 games. His USHL résumé is still young: eight regular-season appearances followed by three points in 15 playoff games. The move puts a familiar regional name in front of Force supporters. Watch whether a full training camp and a settled role help him turn that successful high school background into regular junior offense, rather than judging him on his brief spring introduction.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Background 2](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Bryce Mattern

The local returner building momentum

Mattern is a Fargo native playing for the Force, and his first full USHL season gave local supporters a useful starting point: eight goals and eight assists in 51 games. He also scored against Sioux Falls in the September 4 preseason opener. The next step is to turn occasional contributions into a more regular offensive role. He does not need to repeat a spectacular youth scoring line; he needs to build on work already done at this level. Watch his shot opportunities and whether he becomes a more frequent option when Fargo needs a goal.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Des Moines Buccaneers

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
12	6	65.3	32

Forecast

The model projects 65.3 points, with a working range of 55.8 to 74.8. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Des Moines loses Blake Zielinski and Owen Tylec to college but has experience in Mason Jenson and Riley Zupfer. Christopher Pinko adds a younger attacking option. The Buccaneers will look for the experienced forwards to help carry the offense while newcomers adjust to the league.

Goaltending outlook

Evan Hazelberg and Jon Kavcic appear among Des Moines’ preseason options in goal. Their roles are not yet established, leaving the crease as an important opening-season question. The early schedule should show whether the Buccaneers lean toward one goalie or spread the opportunities.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Christopher Pinko F	preseason roster
Mason Jenson F 58 GP 30 PTS	preseason roster
Riley Zupfer F 58 GP 41 PTS	preseason roster

Roster changes

Nick Koering (D) from TC; Mason Jenson (F) from TC. Departures include Blake Zielinski to Providence; Owen Tylec to St Lawrence.

Availability sources: [Blake Zielinski](#) | [Owen Tylec](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

The Buccaneers combine a creative newcomer with two forwards who have already produced through a full USHL schedule.

1 Christopher Pinko

Brooklyn creativity meets the USHL

Pinko arrives from the North Jersey Avalanche with an interesting blend of scoring and distribution. When Des Moines announced his March tender, he had 45 points in 18 AYHL games and another 18 in 12 T1EHL games; those are separate competition totals, not a combined season line. Coach Derek Damon praised the Brooklyn native's hockey sense and skating. The Buccaneers committed a first-round Phase I pick to bring him in. Watch how quickly he makes decisions against older opponents and whether his passing creates chances even on nights when his own scoring is quiet.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Mason Jenson

An experienced addition with more to give

Jenson comes from Tri-City with 58 games and 30 points from his first full USHL season. Des Moines acquired the Rogers, Minnesota, forward in June, adding an Ohio State commit whose 12 goals and 18 assists offer a solid base. He has already made the transition from affiliate appearances to regular junior hockey; now he must make the transition to a new club. Watch where the Buccaneers use him and whether chemistry with new linemates lifts his offensive involvement. He is a useful candidate to help connect the team's established players with its younger arrivals.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Riley Zupfer

A returning threat on the power play

Zupfer's 41 points in 58 games give Des Moines a current-roster scorer with a substantial first-year résumé. Eight of his 16 goals came on the power play, and he supplied another eight assists with the extra man. Five game-winning goals add another reason to follow the Woodbury, Minnesota, forward. The opportunity this season is to build on that special-teams value while becoming more influential at even strength. Watch whether he can keep finding dangerous space when the opponent has all five skaters available. That would make his scoring less dependent on the penalty count.

Sources: [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Lincoln Stars

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
13	7	63.7	36

Forecast

The model projects 63.7 points, with a working range of 54.2 to 73.2. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Lincoln adds Henry Steele's NAHL experience and late acquisition Max Aronson to a group that includes returning forward Jackson Rudh. Nikolas Young and Nate Pederson have moved on. The Stars need new combinations to develop as those arrivals compete for opportunities in the lineup.

Goaltending outlook

William Prowse gives Lincoln a familiar option after 42 appearances and 19 wins last season. Charles Menard's trade to Waterloo changes the competition, while Lukas Stuhrmann appears in the preseason group. Prowse's experience is a useful starting point as the Stars settle their plans in goal.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Henry Steele D	preseason roster
Jackson Rudh F 58 GP 20 PTS	preseason roster
William Prowse G 42 GP	preseason roster

Roster changes

Max Aronson (F) from WAT; Henry Steele (D) from CR. Departures include Nikolas Young to Clarkson; Nate Pederson to Penticton Vees.

Availability sources: [Nikolas Young](#) | [Nate Pederson](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

A newcomer with NAHL experience joins a returning forward and an established goaltender in Lincoln's group to watch.

1 Henry Steele

Junior experience before his Stars debut

Steele comes to Lincoln with more junior experience than a blank USHL stat line suggests. The Hudson, Wisconsin, defenseman played 52 regular-season games for the NAHL's Wisconsin Windigo, recording 17 points, then added 10 playoff appearances. Lincoln acquired his rights from Cedar Rapids in June for a future Phase I fourth-round pick. The 2009-born newcomer has already faced a long junior schedule; the next step is its faster Tier I version. Watch how he handles forechecking pressure and whether the passing that produced 16 assists in Wisconsin carries into his first season with the Stars.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Jackson Rudh

Timely offense from a returning forward

Rudh's 20 points in 58 games do not immediately leap off a league scoring list, but the details give Lincoln reasons to value him. Four of his eight goals were game-winners, and he added nine power-play points and three shootout goals. The Cottage Grove, Minnesota, forward has already contributed in situations where a single finish matters. The next question is whether he can create more offense across ordinary shifts. Watch his involvement away from special teams. A broader contribution would help the Stars get more from a player who has already delivered some timely moments.

Sources: [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

3 William Prowse

The workload is already on his résumé

Prowse gives Lincoln a goaltender with an established USHL body of work: 42 appearances, 19 wins and three shutouts in 2025-26. His .902 save percentage and 2.90 goals-against average provide a clearer starting point than the projections available for many newcomers. The Vail, Colorado, native has already experienced the demands of repeated starts through a long season. Watch whether he can sustain that level as Lincoln's lineup changes around him. For a team looking to outperform a cautious preseason forecast, reliable goaltending can keep games close enough for a developing offense to make the difference.

Sources: [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

USA Hockey NTDP

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
14	7	62.9	23

Forecast

The model projects 62.9 points, with a working range of 49.9 to 75.9. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.58. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

The NTDP combines a fresh U17 group with players taking the next step in the program. Andrew Krochalk joins the younger defense, while Nash Roed and Jake Prunty bring USHL experience to the U18 group. Carter Meyer and Jamie Glance have moved to the QMJHL.

Goaltending outlook

Eli Winters and Nate Chizik give the published U18 group returning USHL experience. Both faced league opponents last season, providing a foundation for their next step. Their progress will be judged by how they handle repeated opportunities as the program’s schedule unfolds.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Andrew Krochalk D	U17 roster
Nash Roed F 11 GP 4 PTS	preseason roster
Jake Prunty D 44 GP 37 PTS	preseason roster

Roster changes

No confirmed incoming agreement or trade appears in the current ledger. Departures include Carter Meyer to Quebec Remparts; Jamie Glance to Saint John Sea Dogs.

Availability sources: [Carter Meyer](#) | [Jamie Glance](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

The program combines fresh U17 talent with players who already have USHL experience. Follow the adjustment as well as the production.

1 Andrew Krochalk

A new defenseman enters the U17 program

Krochalk joins the U17 group from Fox Motors, bringing a Michigan development background to the National Team Development Program. The 2010-born defenseman begins a different stage of hockey, with a demanding schedule and a new group of teammates learning together. There is no prior-season USHL scoring record to lean on, so his early progress is best judged in smaller details. Watch the speed of his decisions on retrievals, his positioning against older forwards and how comfortably he moves the puck to a teammate. Those habits will matter well before a meaningful statistical sample develops.

Sources: [Roster](#)

2 Nash Roed

A White Bear Lake scorer changes programs

Roed joins the NTDP U18s after leading White Bear Lake High School with 20 goals and 42 points as a sophomore. He also got an 11-game USHL introduction with Waterloo, recording a goal and three assists. His first league goal came against the very NTDP U18 team he now joins. Waterloo's announcement described a plan for him to return to the Black Hawks in 2027. For now, watch how he adapts to the program's varied schedule and new linemates. He brings both high school scoring responsibility and a small but useful taste of junior competition.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Jake Prunty

A puck mover with a proven USHL season

Prunty appears on the NTDP preseason roster after an All-Rookie First Team season with Sioux Falls. He recorded four goals and 33 assists in 44 games; the assists led all USHL rookies, and his 0.84 points per game led rookie defensemen. That is a substantial offensive foundation for a blue liner joining a new environment. His previous season included 22 power-play points, making special-teams usage an obvious storyline. Watch whether he can carry that distribution into new combinations while managing the defensive demands that come with greater attention from opponents.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Tri-City Storm

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
15	8	62.8	41

Forecast

The model projects 62.8 points, with a working range of 53.3 to 72.3. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Tri-City has departures to absorb in Carson Pilgrim and Bode Laylin. Cooper Ernewein and Luka Rohloff offer returning experience, while Dominik Domonkos brings a productive youth-hockey background. The Storm will need the returners to grow as younger arrivals adjust to a more demanding level.

Goaltending outlook

Quinn Beumer has a brief USHL introduction behind him, while Nicko Zakk Havel and Ryan Denes also appear in Tri-City's preseason group. That leaves plenty to learn about the eventual rotation. Beumer's next step will be turning limited experience into a more substantial role.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Dominik Domonkos F	preseason roster
Cooper Ernewein F 51 GP 14 PTS	preseason roster
Luka Rohloff D 44 GP 9 PTS	preseason roster

Roster changes

No confirmed incoming agreement or trade appears in the current ledger. Departures include Carson Pilgrim to St Cloud State; Bode Laylin to Everett Silvertips.

Availability sources: [Carson Pilgrim](#) | [Bode Laylin](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

A Slovak scoring prospect and two returning players offer different measures of progress for Tri-City this season.

1 Dominik Domonkos

A Slovak scorer follows the Storm pathway

Domonkos developed with HC Košice before moving to the Windy City Storm, then signed a Tri-City tender. The club's November announcement recorded 40 goals and 63 points in his first 25 games with Windy City's 15U team; those were in-season figures, not a final total. He had also scored 54 goals in 46 games for Košice's U18 team in 2024-25. The scoring background is substantial, but the 2010-born forward now faces USHL defenders. Watch how he gets into finishing positions and how effectively he adjusts when his first shooting option disappears.

Sources: [Background](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Cooper Ernewein

A second season to build on

Ernewein returns on Tri-City's preseason roster after six goals and 14 points in 51 games as a USHL rookie. The Saskatoon forward is now beyond the first adjustment to travel, pace and older opponents, which makes his next season worth following. His previous production supplies a realistic baseline rather than a promise of a major jump. Watch whether he gets more involved in creating chances and earns work in situations that were less available to him last year. For the Storm, useful improvement from returning players can matter as much as the arrival of a highly rated newcomer.

Sources: [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Luka Rohloff

A Minnesota path through Kearney

Rohloff's development connects Grand Rapids High School, Tri-City and a commitment to Bemidji State. He accumulated 69 points in 85 high school games before finishing his first Storm season with three goals and nine points in 44 appearances. That background suggests there is more offensive experience than his USHL totals alone convey. The question is how it fits into a dependable junior defensive role. Watch his decisions about when to join the attack and when to hold his position. Tri-City benefits if he can make that choice more consistently while handling a larger share of the work.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

Chicago Steel

LEAGUE RANK	CONF RANK	POINTS	ROSTER
16	8	62.7	30

Forecast

The model projects 62.7 points, with a working range of 53.2 to 72.2. The model uses a roster evidence factor of 0.72. Preseason forecast using published rosters and verified departures.

How the team is taking shape

Chicago has experienced forwards in Dallas Vieau and Patrick Tolan, with Trevor Shorter returning on defense. Jackson Crowder and Timothy Kazda have moved on. The Steel will look to that returning group for stability while finding new combinations and replacing the departed offense.

Goaltending outlook

Alex Wang has a brief taste of USHL action, and Stepan Houdek and Oliver Kanat also appear in Chicago's preseason group. The starting role remains unsettled. An early priority is finding dependable goaltending as the Steel establishes its new lineup.

Players to know

Player	Evidence
Dallas Vieau F 61 GP 42 PTS	preseason roster
Patrick Tolan F 58 GP 26 PTS	preseason roster
Trevor Shorter D 34 GP 7 PTS	preseason roster

Roster changes

No confirmed incoming agreement or trade appears in the current ledger. Departures include Jackson Crowder to Ohio State; Timothy Kazda to Guelph Storm.

Availability sources: [Jackson Crowder](#) | [Timothy Kazda](#)

Roster note Treat central roster publication as current preseason evidence. Final active-roster status remains subject to cuts, additions and assignments.

Three players to watch

Chicago needs new combinations to emerge. Two experienced forwards and a towering young defenseman provide useful starting points.

1 Dallas Vieau

A returning scorer takes center stage

Vieau brings 20 goals and 42 points from 61 games to Chicago's current preseason roster. The Duluth, Minnesota, forward also contributed 12 power-play points, giving the Steel an experienced offensive option as prominent teammates move on. His role is worth following because Chicago needs production from the players who remain, not just memories of last season's strongest combinations. Watch whether he can maintain his finishing while helping new linemates settle. His 83 penalty minutes also leave a practical target: keeping an established scorer on the ice more often would help the Steel make the most of him.

Sources: [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

2 Patrick Tolan

A fuller chapter after a midseason move

Tolan came to Chicago from Fargo in the January trade that sent Kolin Sisson the other way. The Anchorage, Alaska, forward finished the season with 10 goals and 26 points across 58 USHL games. A full preseason with the Steel gives him a different starting point from arriving during the schedule. Watch whether that extra familiarity translates into a more settled offensive role and stronger combinations with the returning forwards. His previous season offers a useful base, but Chicago will be looking for growth as it builds new scoring partnerships.

Sources: [Background](#) | [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

3 Trevor Shorter

A blue line presence you cannot miss

At a listed 6-foot-7, Shorter will be easy to pick out even before checking the sweater number. The Elmhurst, Illinois, defenseman recorded five goals and seven points in 34 games during his rookie USHL season. That is an intriguing first contribution from a player still learning how to use his frame at this level. Watch the details beneath the size: his gap when attackers gather speed, his balance through turns and his decisions with the puck. Chicago gains more if his reach supports dependable defending than if it merely makes him the tallest player in the picture.

Sources: [USHL stats](#) | [Roster](#)

Profiles checked September 15 2026. Preseason listings remain subject to roster changes.

What the numbers mean

The standings projection blends prior team results, age-eligible returning production, goalie regression, draft and tender evidence, official player agreements, trades and current roster publication. It is a preseason forecast, not a claim that each listed candidate will make the opening roster.

Evidence order

Evidence	Use in this edition
Central roster feed	Current published preseason roster evidence
Club roster page	Additional official roster evidence where the page is populated
Player agreement	Confirmed contractual commitment subject to normal transactions
Trade acquisition	Confirmed club-control movement
Protected list	Club rights evidence rather than final roster membership
Draft and returner model	Candidate evidence used when stronger confirmation is unavailable

Reading the forecast

- Projected points describe a preseason estimate, not a guaranteed finish.
- The working ranges show model uncertainty; they are not statistical confidence intervals.
- Confirmed college and CHL departures are excluded from the candidate pool.
- Unconfirmed absences remain provisional; a missing name alone is not treated as a departure.

Roster and news sources checked September 15 2026. The central feed contains 556 preseason entries across 16 teams, including camp candidates. The model excludes 107 verified external departures and follows single-club preseason reassignments. Protected-list evidence remains the August 12 cached snapshot because the portal blocked retrieval.

Player profiles use a separate check of current preseason and U17 roster listings. The standings remain the September 15 availability-adjusted model. Published preseason rosters can still include camp players.

Season opens September 16 at the USHL Fall Classic in Chicago.