**[Mike Hoffman: Ottawa Senators Prospect/Scouting Report](http://highlightofthenight.blogspot.com/2010/04/mike-hoffman-ottawa-senators.html)**

I had the chance to check out Saint John Sea Dogs star forward and Ottawa Senators prospect, Mike Hoffman at the Rob Guertin Arena in Gatineau tonight. Hoffman did not disappoint.



Mike Hoffman is a 20-year old native of Kitchener, Ontario. He was drafted 130th overall by the Ottawa Senators in 2009. Considering his late round status, I really didn't go into the game expecting much.

Boy was I wrong. Mike Hoffman was all over the ice tonight. He was playing the point on the power play, taking faceoffs and even playing along the wing. Hoffman's skating and hard shot are two things that stood out the most.

Everything about Hoffman's skating impressed me. Not only was he fast, but he had very quick feet. His mobility was phenomenal - his footwork, his pivots, and over all his agility were all signs that complement the argument that his skating is already at the NHL standards.

Hoffman also showcased his shot. He had a great slapshot and an even better wrist shot. Not only was the shot quick and hard, but it was, for the most part, very accurate. He is was a great addition on the point for the Sea Dog's powerplay.

I wouldn't consider Hoffman a gritty player, but he sure doesn't shy away from physical play. If he could add a few more pounds and a few more muscles during the off season, I feel this could elevate his game to a whole new level.

Another positive was Hoffman's great vision and his hockey IQ. Hoffman was very aware of where his teammates were and tried to put himself in positions to open lanes and create more open ice.

**MIKE HOFFMAN**
Team: Saint John Sea Dogs
League: QMJHL
Position: RW / C
Born: November 24, 1989
Hometown: Kitchener, ON
Height: 6.00
Weight: 175

**Report Card (Excellent, Good, Average, Below Average, Poor)**

**Size/Strength** Average
**Skating** Excellent
**Shot/Scoring** Excellent
**Puckhandling** Good
**Physical Play** Average
**Offensive Play** Excellent
**Defensive Play** Average
**Hockey Sense** Excellent
**Competitiveness** Good

**Strengths**
1. Skating
2. Hard, quick shot
3. Hockey sense

**Area’s For Improvement**
1. Size/Strenght
2. Defensive game

**Skill:**
Intelligent offensive sniper with quick feet and a great shot.

**Scouting Report:** (via @[B\_Hurdis](http://twitter.com/B_Hurdis))

1. He's intelligent. He doesn't trend towards bad decisions with the puck. His movement away from the puck suggests that he understands where the dead space in a team's defence is going to occur before the lane actually opens up. He also plays well within the team system and doesn't appear as an individual on the ice. Moving with purpose and anticipation within a team concept is a clear sign that he has the intelligence to adapt to the much more structured game that the NHL presents.

2. He skates very well. He doesn't have a noticeably powerful stride, but it is quick, and it allows him to hit top speed quickly. Unlike so many prospects emerging from the junior game, his skating in the pro game will not be an issue. You could even make the argument that he has the potential to be a world class skater when he has the opportunity to go through a couple off seasons of training under the watchful eye of the Senators staff.

3. He's versatile. He's trusted to play multiple positions by the St. John coaching staff, and he does it well. He plays the point on the power play, and has a very good understanding of the rotations necessary to open shooting lanes for himself, and passing lanes to the down low forwards.

4. He can shoot. If given the opportunity, he can absolutely wire the puck. He did seem to have some minor issues with accuracy on his one-timer, but that is something that will improve with strength and experience.

5. His skating lines are phenomenal. Watching Hoffman skate with the puck reminds me a lot of a young Mike Modano. He's fast and agile, and he forces lanes to open. He also uses this shiftiness with his speed in order to back off opposing defencemen and obliterate their gap control. There was a tangible fear among the Olympiques' defenders when he got the puck in stride. This did cause one minor issue for him. Because defenders lose their gap control, he sometimes has an issue with identifying where his decision point on the rush actually is. This is a problem that even Jason Spezza has at times, so while it is noticeable, it's actually not necessarily a bad problem to have.

6. Even though he's not a big player, he's not afraid to make his way to the dirty spots on the ice. He doesn't crash his way to the front of the net, but he will use his intelligence and quickness to sneak in to the right spots when it matters.

His one obvious downside: he's still a bit on the small side. He could stand to put on about 15 pounds, and he needs to work on strength in is lower body in particular. Adding 15 pounds would put him at around 195 - 200 pounds. Given the type of game he plays, anything more than that could be detrimental.

**NHL Potential:** 1st or 2nd line forward

After seeing his play to day it is no surprise why Hoffman was named most valuable player and most sportsmanlike player of the year in this year's QMJHL Annual Golden Puck Awards. During the 2009-10 season, Hoffman had 46 goals and 39 assists in 46 games with only 38 penalty minutes. He also helped the Sea Dogs to first place overall in the QMJHL this season with a 53-12-3 record and a league-high 309 goals scored.

Here are some videos kindly provided by @[B\_Hurdis](http://twitter.com/B_Hurdis).

This was recorded as soon as Hoffman jumped off the bench. You can judge his quick speed and wicked slapshot. Considering he's an a bit of an awkward angle, his accuracy is pretty impressive.

A much longer video showcasing more of his skills. At 0:06, you can observe his hockey sense where he skates from the left side to right side attempting to open up a shooting lane. Also showing that he can shoot from both sides of the ice and be accurate 95% of the time.

At the end of the night, the Saint John Sea Dogs won 4-2 eliminating the Gatineau Olympiques in 4 games. Hoffman finished of the night with one point (1 assist), a +1, 7 shots and 50% faceoffs won.