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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/127/2021_2022__E7_BB_BC_E5_90_88_E8_BE_85_E5_c90_127754.htm NHLs Crosby era begins as Penguins draft phenom first OTTAWA It was Sidney Crosbys draft, and yet it was clearly the Americans day when the NHL officially relaunched competition with a scaled-down version of its annual amateur draft. The celebration of Crosby, picked first overall by the Pittsburgh Penguins, was the main storyline of a league trying to recover from a season lost to a lockout. Crosby, 17, is considered the most marketable prospect since Penguins owner/player Mario Lemieux was drafted in 1984. "This is amazing," Crosby told the AP. "Im just really relieved. Its unbelievable. Im so happy right now." Crosby, who turns 18 next week, is a 5-foot-11, 193-pound forward with surprising strength and masterful vision on the ice. A prolific scorer, Crosby won nearly every trophy the last two seasons in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League.来源：www.examda.com He had 66 goals and 102 assists in 62 games, after a rookie campaign that featured 54 goals and 81 assists in 59 games, and was the Canadian major junior player of the year both seasons. "He creates a lot of excitement," said Lemieux, Crosbys new boss and possible linemate with the Penguins. "He has all the tools to be a great player. He sees the ice well, hes a great skater. He says he needs to work on his shot, but it looks pretty good to me." Crosby will share the spotlight in Pittsburgh with Lemieux, the No. 1 pick in 1984, and will be looked upon to rescue the franchise that hasnt made the playoffs since 2001

and desperately needs a new arena in which to play. Pittsburgh's luck already seems to be changing as the Penguins won last week's draft lottery that determined the picking order of the first round. "I'm not really thinking about it right now," Crosby said of the expectations. "I want to come and play in the NHL next year. That's my goal, that's my focus right now. I'm going to put everything into that and try to move on from there." Aside from the Crosby focus, the U.S. hockey program grabbed a share of the spotlight when a record eight Americans were chosen in the first round, including two of the first three picks. After Crosby was chosen, the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim chose power forward Bobby Ryan (Camden, N.J.) and hard-hitting defenseman Jack Johnson (Indianapolis) was taken by the Carolina Hurricanes with the third pick. Johnson, who played prep-school hockey in Minnesota with Crosby, plans to enroll at the University of Michigan. Speedy Jack Skille (Madison, Wis.) went seventh to the Chicago Blackhawks and defenseman Brian Lee (Fargo, N.D.) was grabbed ninth by the Ottawa Senators. "The development program has worked very, very well and you are seeing some signs of that," said Carolina general manager Jimmy Rutherford. "And people questioned it at the time (it was introduced in 1996). But guys are going through that program and getting drafted higher and higher. Rutherford was referring to the U.S. National Development Program in Ann Arbor, Mich. In theory, the program was designed to bring the country's best teenage players to play together on the Under-17 and Under-18 National Teams. Players from around the country all live and train in Ann Arbor. Johnson and Skille both came directly

out of the Under-18 program. The Americans won the Under-18 World Championship this past winter. "This says a lot," said Johnson whose prickly playing style has drawn comparisons to Chris Chelios. "Were trying to build up with other countries, like Canada." Skille came into the U.S. National Development Program as a 185-pound player and has grown into a 205-pound, hard-driving winger. "The weightlifting program there was awesome," Skille said. The program hasnt always been an easy sell because it is expensive to operate, but USA Hockey President Ron DeGregorio says "this is an indication that USA Hockeys development programs are working." The four Americans in the first nine picks represented the best U.S. top-end showing since 1983 when high school sensation Brian Lawton was chosen first overall by the Minnesota North Stars, Pat LaFontaine went third to the New York Islanders and Tom Barrasso was chosen fifth by the Buffalo Sabres. St. Louis Blues general manager Larry Pleau was one of the few Americans in the NHL during the 1960s, and he certainly had some pride helping the Americans set a new record. With the 24th pick, Pleau chose playmaking center T.J. Oshie of Warroad (Minn.) High School. Oshie produced 99 points in 31 games this season. Some scouts say he possessed the best hockey sense in the draft. "Hes very creative and very competitive," said Pleau. The other U.S.-born first-rounders included rugged defenseman Matt Lashoff (East Greenbush, N.Y.), who went to Boston 22nd overall, Joe Finley (Edina, Minn.) who went 27th to Washington, and puck-carrying defenseman Matt Niskanen (Virginia, Minn.) who went 28th to the Dallas Stars. At 6-7, Finley is

viewed as a possible Zdeno Chara-style player while Niskanen produced 27 goals and 38 assists in 29 games for his Virginia High School team. The pro-American trend continued in the second round when 10 more Americans were chosen. Ryan Stoa (Plymouth), projected by some to be a first-rounder, went 34th to Colorado. Paul Stastny, son of Peter Stastny, was actually born in Quebec, but was raised in the U.S. and plays for Denver University. He has an American passport and was also drafted by Colorado 44th overall. Taylor Chorney, son of former Pittsburgh Penguins and Los Angeles Kings player Mark Chorney, was snatched up by Edmonton. The Americans impact helped dress up a day that lacked the major trades that usually mark draft day. The Hurricanes trade of winger Jeff O'Neill to Toronto for a draft pick was the only significant deal of the day. With a new salary cap in place, most general managers are still trying to sort out their payroll issues to concentrate on trades. The real player movement will start on Monday at noon ET when the free agent signing period begins. Per the rules of the new collective bargaining agreement, the draft was shortened to seven rounds, down from nine. Most teams won't know for sure what they have with this draft for a couple of years, but the Penguins already know what they have with Crosby, projected to be a future scoring champion. He had 168 points in 62 games playing for Rimouski in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League this past season. The Penguins season-ticket sales have spiked dramatically since it was announced that the Penguins won the lottery that assured them of Crosby. "It's booming in Pittsburgh," Lemieux said.

"Everyone is very excited not just in Pittsburgh but in the entire National Hockey League." Most first round picks don't play immediately in the NHL, and it will become even less likely now because the new CBA includes a provision that eventually will allow players with seven NHL seasons to become unrestricted free agents. In most cases, it will make more sense for a team to want to have their players tied up from the age of 20-27, instead of 18-25. But Lemieux said there is no doubt that Crosby will play in the NHL next season. "He's strong enough to play in our league right now," Lemieux said. "And I think the key for us is to surround him with some great players." There's a presumption that he might play on a line with Lemieux. He might even live with Lemieux. "We have some room," Lemieux said. Lemieux has said that he hopes to add a couple of veterans to the roster before the season begins in October. The prevailing sentiment in the hockey world is that Pittsburgh will pursue winger Alexei Kovalev who played the best hockey of his career while previously a member of the Penguins.

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