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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/127/2021_2022__E5_95_86_E4_B8_9A_E6_89_98_E7_c90_127821.htm nhl's 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. 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. pittsburghs luck already seems to be changing as the penguins won last weeks draft lottery that determined the picking order of the first round. "im not really thinking about it right now," crosby said of the expectations. "i want to come and play in the nhl next year. thats my goal, thats my focus right now. im 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 countrys 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."

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