


FREE SAMSUNG
Camera Phone

- 1.3 megapixel camera with video
- Bluetooth® connectivity
- Music player

Flip on over ▶

2-year agreement req. restrictions apply



2008
STANLEY CUP
CHAMPIONS

SHOR .com

OFFICIAL LOCKER ROOM HAT AND T-SHIRT

 Web
 NHL.com

[Scores](#)
[Schedule](#)
[Stats](#)
[Standings](#)
[Players](#)
[News](#)
[Multimedia](#)
[Fan Zone](#)
[Community](#)
[Rules](#)
[Fantasy](#)
[Tickets](#)
[Mobile](#)
[Auctions](#)

Shop



[Related](#)
[Features](#)

Blackhawks take psychological testing one step further

Adam Kimelman | NHL.com Staff
Writer

Jun 19, 2008, 10:00 AM
EDT



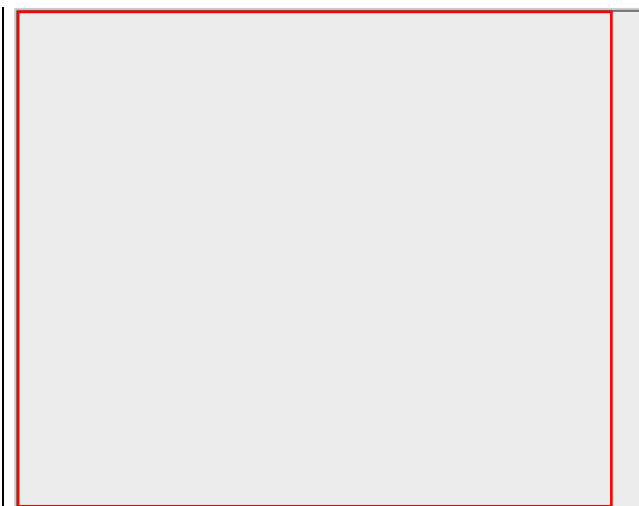
OTTAWA -- There's no exact science when it comes to drafting players, but that won't stop NHL teams from continuing to look for it.

The latest attempt to analyze players is psychological examinations. The League provided a five-minute test at the 2008 NHL Scouting Combine, coordinated by Dr. Ralph Tarter of EXACT Sports, with the results made available to all 30 teams.

But some teams like to dig a little deeper and employ their own psychological advisers. The [Chicago Blackhawks](#), for one, use a test devised by former NHL player Joe Day and his Michigan-based company, Pondera Advisors, LLC.

"What we're looking to do is ... get meaningful data into the hands of coaches and managers on their players, prospects, potential draft picks, where they can understand them better," said Day, who played 72 games with the Hartford Whalers and [New York Islanders](#) between 1991-92 and 1993-94. "All these physical skills, they're like the tip of the iceberg. But what sinks the Titanic is this massive growth underneath. That's what we're trying to figure out. This head of ours is a complex thing. There's no perfect way to measure that, but there are ways and tools out there to do that."

Day helped formulate his own tool.




Recent Editions of NHL.com - 2008 NHL Entry Draft

- [Prospects play a waiting game](#) - 06/19/2008
- [Getting inside the minds of the prospects](#) - 06/19/2008
- [Solid drafts produce on-ice success](#) - 06/19/2008
- [Del Zotto patterns game after all-time legend](#) - 06/19/2008
- [Pietrangelo thinks right, shoots right](#) - 06/19/2008
- [Move back pushed Doughty forward](#) - 06/19/2008
- [Big Bogosian well-prepared for NHL battles](#) - 06/19/2008
- [Paquette a devil and an angel](#) - 06/18/2008
- [Beefed-up McRae makes positive impression](#) - 06/18/2008
- [Boedker a Danish treat](#) - 06/18/2008

[More NHL.com feature stories](#)

Today's NHL.com Exclusives

- [Prospects play a waiting game](#)
- [Blackhawks take psychological testing one step further](#)

Chicago Blackhawks G.M. Dale Tallon became a believer in a tool called "Virtual Coach", which goes beyond the psychological examinations NHL prospects go through at the scouting combine,  **Get your 2008 Draft Center Ice Stretch Fit Hat now!**

Another one measures emotional intelligence. So while you could be dominant and aggressive in social situations, with a high level of emotional intelligence you should be able to channel those traits appropriately to the context or situation. So it's a nice blend.

"I went to a psychologist and I said, 'this is what I think is important to measure for a sports team. More specifically, here are the 28 I'd like to measure. What tests are out there that could help me with this, and I'd like you to help me map these variables.' We went to work on it, and it took a year to come up with. And it's been fabulous. These are tools that are used every day in corporate America to be able to assess high-level executives."

Day took his test, called "Virtual Coach," to Blackhawks General Manager Dale Tallon. A skeptical Tallon had 10 of his players take the test to gauge the findings.

"I was shown it, and I believed in it because of the test we did," Tallon said. "They were bang-on with what our players were about as far as their personalities were concerned. It really helped our coaches and all of our staff, and I think it's a positive tool for us."

For the 2008 NHL Entry Draft, Tallon believes "Virtual Coach" will help the Blackhawks pick not only the best player on the ice, but the best player for the locker room.

"We have to make sure we have the right balance, and that's how we use it," he said. "The kids we think about drafting, if they're a certain personality type, if we have an over-abundance of that personality type in our organization, or do we need that type in our organization. That's how we use it and I think it's really valuable."

"Maybe if you're undecided in the top pick you want to grab you might go one way or another depending on how the results are and what your needs are in your organization. It's really a valuable tool."

Day believes it's a tool all teams should use.

"Businesses do it all the time," he said. "I thought, how can we take these business tools and apply them to sports — in particular, hockey? If I can get this meaningful data, coaches and managers would know how to position kids and players for success. Some are motivated by a pat in the back, some need a kick in the butt, but we're all different, and you need to know the difference. I think if I can give people that kind of data, they can make more informed decisions. The stakes are getting higher and higher because of the dollar amounts that are there."

Contact Adam Kimelman at akimelman@nhl.com.

"What we're using are three normed and validated, and American Psychological Association-approved, psychological tests that measure normal personalities," Day said. "We're not looking at any pathology. ... It's measuring normal adult behavior. Two of the instruments we use measure traits. Are you a dominant or aggressive person? Are you highly assertive?"

Getting inside the minds of the prospects



One of the components of the draft process is examining the parts that scouts can't see – the mind of the player. One way to do that is through psychological testing. The NHL employs Dr. Ralph Tarter and EXACT Sports for just that purpose. ... [more](#)

Related Links:

- [2008 NHL Entry Draft index page](#)
- [Draft Dandies archive](#)
- [Complete Prospects archive](#)
- [More NHL.com features](#)
- [Ottawa 2008 Draft Central](#)

- [Getting inside the minds of the prospects](#)
- [Best and worst by draft position](#)
- [Solid drafts produce on-ice success](#)
- [Gillies prefers gym to golf](#)
- [Del Zotto patterns game after all-time legend](#)
- [Pietrangelo thinks right, shoots right](#)
- [Move back pushed Doughty forward](#)
- [Big Bogosian well-prepared for NHL battles](#)

SHOP NOW! BID NOW!

Search for NHL Merchandise

