



COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS

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## NINE MEMBERS OF THE COLUMBUS BLUE JACKETS ORGANIZATION SET TO COMPETE AT 2024 IIHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN CZECHIA

*Blue Jackets to represent three countries in tournament held from May 10-26*

**COLUMBUS, OHIO** – The 2024 IIHF World Championships get underway in Prague and Ostrava, Czechia on Friday, May 10 with nine members of the Columbus Blue Jackets organization set to participate in the tournament. Director of Player Development **Rick Nash** along with D **Damon Severson** will represent Canada at the event, while G **Elvis Merzlikins** will represent Latvia. RW **Gavin Brindley**, LW **Johnny Gaudreau** and D **Zach Werenski** along with Head Athletic Trainer **Mike Vogt**, Equipment Manager **Jamie Healy** and Assistant Equipment Manager **Dustin Halstead** will participate for the United States at the tournament.

**Nash** is serving as Hockey Canada's general manager at the 2024 edition of the IIHF World Championships after helping the country earn a silver medal as the assistant general manager at the 2022 tournament. The Brampton, Ontario native also appeared in numerous events for the country as a player. He skated in three Olympic Games (2006, 2010-gold, 2014-gold), four IIHF World Championships (2005-silver, 2007-gold, 2008-silver, 2011) and the 2002 IIHF World Junior Championships for Canada.

**Severson**, 29, is skating for Canada in his third IIHF World Championships after earning silver medals at the 2019 and 2022 tournaments. The 6-2, 202-pound blueliner, who was acquired by Columbus in a trade from the New Jersey Devils on June 9, 2023, posted 9-19-28 and 51 penalty minutes, while averaging 21:09 TOI/GP in 67 contests this past season to rank third on the club in TOI and second among team blueliners in goals. Originally drafted by the Devils in the second round, 60<sup>th</sup> overall, at the 2012 NHL Draft, the Melville, Saskatchewan native has posted 67-224-291 and 439 penalty minutes in 714 career NHL games with Columbus and New Jersey since making his NHL debut in 2014-15.

**Merzlikins**, 30, has represented Latvia at numerous international tournaments, including five IIHF World Championships from 2016-2019 and 2022. The Riga, Latvia native, who was Columbus' third round pick, 76<sup>th</sup> overall, at the 2014 NHL Draft, has posted a 68-79-30 record with a 3.20 goals-against average, .904 save percentage and 10 shutouts in 191 career games. The 6-3, 184-pound netminder finished with a 13-18-8 record, 3.45 GAA, .897 SV% and one shutout in 41 contests.

**Brindley**, 19, is making his United States men's debut after skating at the 2023 and 2024 IIHF World Junior Championships and 2022 IIHF U18 World Championships. He helped Team USA capture a gold medal at the 2024 World Juniors after posting 6-4-10 in seven outings. He made his NHL debut in the club's 2023-24 regular season finale on April 16 vs. Carolina. The Estero, Florida native registered 37-54-91, 50 penalty minutes and a cumulative +38 plus/minus rating in 81 career games over two seasons at the University of Michigan from 2022-24. He racked up 25-28-53 with 28 PIM in 40 appearances with the Wolverines this season and was named a NCAA First Team All-American, Big Ten First All-Star Team and the league's Player of the Year after finishing among NCAA leaders in goals (sixth-T), points (eighth) and points-per-game (1.33, 11th). The 5-9, 175-pound was selected by the Blue Jackets in the second round, 34<sup>th</sup> overall, at the 2023 NHL Draft.

**Gaudreau**, 30, has skated for Team USA at various international tournaments, including the 2014, 2017, 2018 (bronze) and 2019 IIHF World Championships. He led the Blue Jackets in assists, points, multi-assist and multi-point efforts with 12-48-60, 13 multi-assist and 15 multi-point contests in 81 outings in 2023-24. The 5-9, 163-pound native of Salem,

New Jersey has registered 33-101-134 in 161 games with the Blue Jackets since signing as a free agent on July 13, 2022. He was originally drafted by the Calgary Flames in the fourth round, 104<sup>th</sup> overall, at the 2011 NHL Draft and has racked up 243-500-743 in 763 career games with Columbus and Calgary since making his NHL debut in 2014-15.

**Werenski**, 26, played for Team USA at the 2019 IIHF World Championships as well as the 2015 and 2016 (bronze) IIHF World Junior Championships. The Grosse Pointe, Michigan native set single-season franchise records for assists (James Wisniewski, 44 in 2013-14) and points by a defenseman (tied with Seth Jones, 57 in 2017-18) with 11-46-57 in 70 games in 2023-24. Selected by the Blue Jackets in the first round, eighth overall, at the 2015 NHL Draft, the 6-2, 219-pound defenseman has registered 90-212-302 in 486 career NHL games since making his debut in 2016-17. He is the franchise's all-time leader among blueliners in goals, assists and points and ranks second overall in all-time assists.

**Vogt**, who has served as the Blue Jackets' head athletic trainer since 2008, previously performed as an athletic trainer for Team USA that earned a bronze medal at the 2015 IIHF World Championships in Prague, Czechia. **Healy** has been with the Blue Jackets since prior to the inaugural 2000-01 season, first as an assistant equipment manager and then the equipment manager since September 2022. He has served as an equipment manager for Team USA at three previous IIHF World Championships (2015, 2021, 2023), earning bronze medals at the 2015 and 2021 tournaments.

**Halstead**, who joined the club as an assistant equipment manager in September 2022 after spending 11 years as the head equipment manager for the American Hockey League's Cleveland Monsters, will work his first IIHF World Championships for Team USA.

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