

TOP TEN JRs IN SCHL HISTORY

Jack the Ripper is an alias given to an unidentified serial killer, active in the largely impoverished Whitechapel area, and adjacent districts of London, England, in the autumn of 1888. The ripping occurred in public or semi-public places, at night, or towards the early morning. The victim's throat was cut, after which the body was mutilated. Theories suggest the victims were first strangled in order to silence them, which also explained the reported lack of blood at the crime scenes. Unfortunately, the Ripper was never caught by Scotland Yard and he vanished into thin air. However, he is thought to have returned back in 1998 to the SCHL. The JR'ing was born.

The SCHL has a rich history of trades with over 450 in the past ten years. The Horses, Heartbreakers, Kilts and Jawas top the list as the teams with the most trades made. The new comers, Goldminers, are well on their way to become the number one team on that list. On the flipside, other teams have gotten it done without much trading at all. In ten years, the Gryphons have made 20 trades, which included no deals in two and half years from early 1999 to mid to late 2001.

Trading is the ultimate topic of conversation in the pool. Some teams trade for the sake of it, to rebuild, to move up the draft, and/or to make a run at the hardware. GMs putting their opinions of players to work will always cause a buzz. With a Paxman thread, there's always a guaranteed few opinions to be bandied about.

So in the past ten years, what are some of the biggest JRs? I could do a list about the top 10 fairest deals of all time, but that would be boring. And what defines a JR? To me a JR is a blatant rip at the time of the transaction. It's has to have a high level of WTF factor. It's not a deal that was once fair and looking back turned lopsided. Take the October 15, 1998, the Horses traded Martin Brodeur and Ziggy to the Kilts for Kolzig and Tkachuk. This has to be the biggest error in SCHL history, but at the time no one batted an eye. So with that, here's my definition of a JR:

"for one to trade an asset without any regard for the value of that asset, any regard of shopping that asset and utter stupidity and flushing that asset away for an inferior asset or assets."



Here are my Top 10 JRs. If you don't agree do your own list. This is my list! And remember, a JR doesn't necessarily mean it always involves major assets, it would be minor as well:

10) DATE: November 4, 2007 - VICTIM: Sampson Brahmas – THE DEAL: Brahmas send Bryan McCabe to the Kilts for Zidlicky, Fisher and Poti.



This ripping is still fresh in everyone's minds. Only the Brahmas would think moving a guy like McCabe, whose worst season as a Dman in the past three seasons prior to the deal was 53 points, for an inferior flake Euro Dman and two drops is fair. What goes through the mind of Daryl Sampson, we'll never know. McCabe is a Dman oodles of teams would have lined up to bid on. In the end, however, he was traded without a trade block post, without another offer, and over the phone to the Kilts. Surprise, surprise. If you've got a hole to fill on your roster, call up the Brahmas; they're always looking for spare parts.

9) **DATE:** July 6, 2006 - **VICTIM:** Joncas Behemoths - **THE DEAL:** Goldminers send Martin Skoula to the Moth Balls for the 28th overall choice in the 2006 draft.

Thankfully the Moth Balls were tubed and they never had to live out this ridiculous deal. After an incredibly mediocre season, where the Moths finished 17th in the WG race and still managed to make the post season, the disillusioned and neglecting Moths thought it was be a good idea to pick up a 6th defenseman with the 28th overall pick. What makes this deal incredibly bad was the fact the 2006 draft was as deep as they come and the fact the Balls could have had Skoula for a 4th rounder or a pick upgrade only weeks early prior to the expansion draft. It didn't help that the Behemoths didn't know what team in the SCHL had Malkin or bitched about the delays in the 2005 draft either. In the end, a giant Behemoth lay bleeding to death, as the Frank extracted a nugget from them after convincing them Martin Skoula was still cool, like he was when he played for the Avalanche. It's not surprising they thought protecting Alexei Morozov was a good idea. Boot.

8) **DATE:** September 30, 2006 - **VICTIM:** Tarpan Horses - **THE DEAL:** The Kilts send Jason Allison and Brian Leetch to the Horses for the 73rd and 79th overall picks in the draft.



After taking the Rowdy Kilts up on a ride to the draft, the Horses felt obligated to flush two picks on players clearly not going to play in the 2006-2007 season. The two players were Allison, the most loosely called PPG guy in SCHL history, who wasn't signed, or even close to it, and Brian Leetch, who was 38 years old. The Kilts went on to draft Vrbata and Mike Fisher...both of whom were dealt in deals to get the Kilts top notch Dmen. There's not much more to this JR than what is presented here. The Horses did not do their homework and never started either player once as both retired. To add further salt to the wound, the Horses went on to voluntarily protect Allison for the 2007-2008 season.

7) **DATE:** November 16, 2006 - **VICTIM:** Uptown Heartbreakers - **THE DEAL:** The Heartbreakers move their #1 dman for table scraps.

If there was a fault in legendary GM, Tony Roy, it's his lack of patience. After a rocky start to the 2006-2007 Heartbreakers' season, they felt the urge to move one of their only sexy assets to help with some depth issues. The Kilts moved in on their prey. In return for this 50+ dman, the Heartbreakers got Vyborny,

Vrbata and Ohlund. Boyle went on to have a career year scoring 63 points and helping the Kilts win their 4th straight WG. The Heartbreakers ended the season 16th in the WG race and DNO'd for the second straight season. Now Ohlund, Vyborny and Vrbata are nothing more than drops and the Kilts are sitting on gold. There's a lesson to be learned here, always take quality over quantity, because you can only protect 12 players per year and more often than not bums like those listed will just be filtered right back into the draft. The Kilts deserve credit; however, they pounced because Boyle wasn't lighting the world on fire (10 points in 18 games prior to the trade – but had averaged over 58 points per season over the previous three campaigns). In the Heartbreakers were left with their heart cut out, searching for another scoring Dman and out of the playoffs.

6) **DATE:** May 5, 2006 – **VICTIM:** North Shore Screamin' Jawas – **THE DEAL:** The Jawas move the 5th overall for Miroslav Satan.

In the early days of the SCHL, players such as Heatley were drafted in the 2nd and 3rd rounds and the value of a producing asset was sky high. It wasn't really till the Barbour crew left did the value of a prospect sky rocket. We had developed and adapted to what worked. And what worked was picking sexy prospects and watching them turn teams around. The year was 2006. Everyone knew what was at stake with those top picks... that's what makes this trade so odd. The Jawas on their own accord offered up the 5th overall for Miroslav Satan to the Shrubdogs. Satan was coming off two years of roughly 60 points and was not exactly a young buck at age 31. That 5th overall pick turned into Erik Johnson and taken 6th overall was Jonathon Toews. Needless to say the Jawas flushed away a killer high end prospect for a mediocre euro flake. Satan was later traded that season in early in 2007 to the Heartbreakers in a 9 player deal, which included a myriad of crap of no consequence. Imagine the Jawas team today, with Toews on it. Phew.



5) **DATE:** July 19, 2006 – **VICTIM:** Wilson Bullets – **THE DEAL:** The Bullets ship Daniel Briere, the 17th overall in 2006 and a 3rd rounder in 2007, all to the Kilts for Zherdev, 48th overall and a 1st rounder in 2007.

I originally was going to leave this deal off this the list for two reasons. 1) The deal was originally rejected by the trade board and we changed the deal to include the 1st/3rd swap in 2007. 2) Only a month earlier Savard was traded one for one for Zherdev and Savard is probably worth more than Briere now and that deal wasn't on the list. So why is this deal on the list? Well it had a high level of WTF. At the time of these two trades most GMs thought Savard's emergence was a case of him playing on Kovalchuk's line in Atlanta. So when he signed on with Boston most people thought his stock was on the verge of

plummeting, while Zherdev's stock was about to sky rocket. So put it this way, out of three players Briere had the most value, seconded by Zherdev and Savard was last.

Briere was hot shit back then. Coming off a shortened season which saw him get 58 points in 48 games on Sabres. The NHL is kind to players like Briere. So to see Briere and a slick 1st rounder in a good draft for Zherdev was shocking. This would have been kept off the list, if that 17th overall pick wasn't involved. The Bullets were unloading and gutting so fast they threw their 1st in 2006 along with a gem in Briere and felt that this deal would be rejected, but as only Lorne could justify he said *"I had soured on the trade, but since I had made the initial offer, and not taken it off the table when Tanner started shopping my pick, I felt I was handcuffed into going through with it."* Brilliant. Hand away a stud to look like a stand-up guy.

4) DATE: June 9, 2007 – VICTIM: Sampson Brahmas – THE DEAL: The Brahmas continue the handout...Miller time.



Like any good Brahma deal, it ends with GM Sampson voluntarily trading away its assets for nothing. And this time around, of course, he saw 'something' great in a Goldminer for the umpteenth time. As only the Goldminers and Kilts have players the Brahmas like. It's true!

Coming off a great half season and a playoff run, Ray Emery was someone worth trading for...no question about it...but what that price was, was another story. GM Sampson felt the urge for the 100th time not to put his young stud Miller (who was a LOT more proven than Emery) on the trade block. It didn't stop there; however, the Brahmas then moved a plum of a 1st rounder for Robbie Schremp. The writing was on the wall for Mr. Schremp...the highly touted prospect was becoming a bust and his value was next to nothing. But only 21 other GMs knew that. So in addition to sending Ryan Miller to the Goldminers for Emery, GM Sampson gave the upgrade in moving a 1st rounder for Schremp, bailing the Goldminers out on their 1st ever draft pick.

What the Brahmas saw in these two players no one will know, but they've now both been dropped and the Brahmas, with one trade, moved a top goalie and a 1st rounder for squat.

3) DATE: September 15, 2000 – VICTIM: Blake Roaddogs – THE DEAL: Paul Kariya for John LeClair.

This deal was pretty straight forward and it's of no fault of Tanner's. The Roaddogs offered up Paul Kariya for John LeClair to the Rowdy Kilts. GM Rattray later said he'da given up more, but the Roaddogs didn't even bother asking. A lot of the guys today weren't in the SCHL back then, so they might not realize what value Kariya had. He was projected to win the Art Ross in every mag for a few years. He was young hot

and shiny. I will admit, LeClair was a beast...he had 3 straight 50 goal campaigns in the mid 90s, but those days were behind him. There's no more to say. When the trade was sent in for Kariya for LeClair there was a collective groan league wide. The clueless, and computerless, Roaddogs finished off last place that next season, while the Kilts went on to use Kariya's value to propel them into four straight Wayne Gretzky Championships.

2) **DATE:** August 27, 2001 – **VICTIM:** Blake Roaddogs – **THE DEAL:** The Storm cozy up with Roaddogs and steal their lunch money.



The deal was Shane Doan, Alyn McCauley, and the Roaddogs 1st rounder in 2001 to the Storm, in exchange for Jeremy Roenick. Where to start, where to start...the Roaddogs history up to that point wasn't rosy, so tossing away their first for an aging star wasn't a good idea. But you have to remember, first rounders weren't such a big deal as they are today (even though he had come in last place the previous season). What makes this deal so bad was going down two men in a 3 for 1 trade. Odd man deals in today's SCHL aren't taboo because we protect 12 guys and get 4 draft picks. But back then we used to drop 4 players. Imagine one team with 18 players and one with 12. The guy with 18 players goes from 18 to 14 and the guy with 12, goes from 12 to 8. That's why the teams were given bonuses, to partially offset the advantage they had acquired from past trades.

Anyway, that's where this deal goes so wrong. The Roaddogs just went down 2 players for an aging star and lost their 1st rounder, which, by the way, turned out to be Martin Havlat (at 3rd overall). The Roaddogs after this trade now had 11 players on their roster. And we start 10! The Roaddogs were a disgrace up to that point and this just made them more of a joke. The crafty Storm, pulled a Kilts/Brahmas and talked Tim into throwing away the farm for Roenick. JR in a JR. To top it off, at the end of the 2002 draft, Tim asked if he could have everyone's attention and asked if he could buy some extra players for \$20 a pop. Tony quickly replied "I've got a \$100, can I buy 5 guys?" He was booted and the Regime took over their mess.

1) **DATE:** September 29, 2007 – **VICTIM:** Vancouver Millionaires – **THE DEAL:** Bullets send: Brule, Espo and a 1st rounder in 2008. Millionaires send: Iginla, 32nd overall, 73rd overall & 3rd rounder in 2008

Right off the hop, it's hard not to notice the fact the Bullets receive back that extra pick in 2008. So, what looks like a 1st rounder in 2008, is really just an upgrade over a 3rd rounder in 2008. OK, OK...perhaps Lorne hounded him in the back room of a pub, alone? Nope, it was at the draft. Where the trade block is pretty much, opening your mouth and saying 'Does anyone have interest in Iginla?' Maybe Iggy was coming off a so-so season? Nope, he was coming off 94 points in 70...that equates to 110 points over 82 games. I'm pretty sure someone sitting at that draft woulda sent the Millionaires more than two mediocre prospects and a pick upgrade for him. Brule was



pretty much losing value by the second at that point and Espo was a loser who was passed up by a shit load of teams on NHL draft day. But yet he was drafted by the Pens and his stock rose. Mind boggling to say the least. What would cause a team, 1 out of 22, to trade a 30 year old Iginla (with Allfy has his running mate) for dog meat prospects? We all know how this ended for the Bullets...he won the cup. If tanking wasn't enough for the Bullets, he lands a monster like what for squat on top of all the other goodies. The Bullets were tripping over all the goodies on that day...like a gambler winning big at a casino, scoring another jackpot on a slot machine near the exit doors...it was sickening.

What's disappointing is after years of development, years of trading, a veteran GM allows this JR to happen. The SCHL is given a permanent black eye and GM Wilson walks away with blood on his hands knowing he just committed the most gruesome JR in league history.

In closure, if I can give you any piece of advice: Don't become the latest victim of a JR. Use your trade block. Suss out the best deal and improve your team. There's no rush, don't panic and be bullied into a deal on the spot. You'll be crucified on the board, and you know we'll never let you live down any JR. If there's one constant in the SCHL, it is we love beating dead horses...just like me writing this entire piece just allows me another medium to rip into the clueless moves of some of our GMs.

For the SCHL, I'm Blake Johnston

