The Blues will be making a lot of business for U-Haul in the coming days.

Blues General Manager Doug Armstrong has been very busy the past 36 hours, sending Captain Eric Brewer, defenseman Erik Johnson and center Jay McClement packing. But the Blues get a pretty impressive return for all three players.

The Blues moved Brewer to Tampa Bay Friday afternoon, acquiring the rights to unsigned-prospect Brock Beukeboom and a third-round draft pick in the 2011 draft.

“I was quite honest with Eric, where we are in the standings. It's an uphill battle," Armstrong said to members of the media Friday. "It gives Eric a chance to go to a Stanley Cup-contending team that has a chance to play into June.

"It allows him to show his worth and it allows us to get some things for the future."

Brewer waived his no-trade clause to join the Lightning. He was happy to move on.

"I think in the end, you just want to make a good decision for everyone and put yourself in a really good spot to play hockey for a long time," Brewer said after hearing the trade went through. "Playing in Tampa will certainly change that this year."

The big news came late Friday night, after a 3-0 blanking of the Sabres. Fan-favorite Erik Johnson and top penalty-killer Jay McClement were traded to the Colorado Avalanche along with a conditional 2011 or 2012 first-round pick for rookie defenseman Kevin Shattenkirk and power-forward Chris Stewart.

The Blues traded their first overall pick from 2006. Needless to say, eyebrows were immediately raised all throughout St. Louis media, but this is not Doug Armstrong’s first rodeo;

these moves were made for a reason.

"We're very excited to acquire a young emerging power forward in Chris Stewart and a top young NHL defenceman in Kevin Shattenkirk," Armstrong said. "These are two solid young players who will help us now as we continue to grow and improve our team."

Does this mean it's a Blues fire-sale and we now enter another rebuild?

Not at all. The Blues moved Eric Brewer because his contract is up at the end of the season. The Eastern Conference playoff-contending teams are always looking for defensive help around the trade deadline (Derek Morris in 2009, Joe Corvo and Milan Jurcina in 2010, Tomas Kaberle and Brewer in 2011). They always bring back a decent return and the Blues saw this as an opportunity to get back some young-guns for the aging Brewer.

Brock Beukeboom is not just a CHL wash either. The name gives it all away; he is the son of former Ranger-tough guy Jeff Beukeboom. He is not as aggressive as his father, but he does possess a mean-streak that comes out when it needs to. He is more of a two-way player than his dad was; he can rocket shots from the blue-line with the best of them. The 18-year old still has some development to go through before being considered an NHL-ready defenseman. He could be someone fun to watch in the future.

The Johnson-McClement trade was not done to start a rebuild process either. After all, why would you trade a first-round pick if you were going to rebuild the team?

The return in the deal was as good as it can get. Shattenkirk, 22, is a rookie this season and has been quite the gem for the Avalanche. He was Colorado's first choice in the 2007 NHL Entry Draft, going 14th overall. He has racked up seven goals and 19 assists for 26 points, which ranks him second among rookie defensemen in the points category. He is smaller than Johnson at 5'11", but he does play sound defense and can really move the puck out of his own end. And let's face it; with Nikita Nikitin, Beukeboom and Shattenkirk as three defensemen for the future, the Blues have the potential to have the best-named defense in the league.

The Blues must have adopted the Yankees philosophy when they signed Johnny Damon; if you can't beat him, have him join your team. That is what they have done with Chris Stewart. Posting eight goals (two game-winners), seven assists and 15 points in just nine games in his career against the Blues, it's obvious to see why Armstrong was licking his chops at acquiring the 23-year old.

Stewart could be the cornerstone of this trade in the future. He possesses a lot of offensive talent in front of the net as well as up the wing. Playing a very Backes-esque game, Stewart scored 28 goals in his second season in the NHL. This season, Stewart has just 13 goals and 17 assists, but the Avalanche are loaded with offensive talent, meaning Stewart may just be getting overshadowed. In St. Louis, Stewart has the potential to be a top-three forward, meaning he will see time with T.J. Oshie and David Perron in the future. His feisty nature in front of the opposing team's net could result in a lot of St. Louis goals.

It has been a long time coming, but the Blues may have finally done the roster-shakeup that they have so desperately needed the past couple of months. With Brewer and Johnson on the outs, that will open up playing time for Shattenkirk, Nikitin and, probably in the coming weeks, Ian Cole. With Pietrangelo already playing like an NHL-veteran, this defense looks very promising for the future.

The removal of McClement from the forward lines allows Stewart to step right in, but it may also mean that youngster Phil McRae may get a chance to step in and show off his checking abilities on the third or fourth line.

Maybe now the Blues can get on the right track. Doug Armstrong has made it clear that no one has job security. Another call to U-Haul may be in the near future if this team doesn't respond.

Discuss the Eric Brewer Trade!

Discuss the Erik Johnson - Jay McClement Trade!