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Sometimes, the best addition for an AHL club is placed directly in its lap.

Top prospect Jaden Schwartz decided to go pro after his sophomore season at Colorado College abruptly ended after a playoff series sweep at the hands of the Michigan Tech Huskies. He jumped right into NHL action, signing an entry-level deal with the Blues two days after his team lost. He joined the team for his first NHL practice the next day and then played in his first NHL game four days later. On his first shot, Schwartz scored his first NHL goal to help the Blues beat the Tampa Bay Lightning, 3-1, on March 17, 2012.

Schwartz went on to play in seven games in 2011-12, scoring two goals and one assist for three points.

The 20 year old center will have his shot to make the Blues' roster once training camp opens, but will face a steady line of competition. The Blues have only seen forwards Chris Porter and Jason Arnott depart from their 2011-12 roster but have also added the likes of right-winger Vladimir Tarasenko. Many tout this Russian forward as the most NHL ready forward of all the rookies looking to break into the NHL in 2012-13.

Currently, the Blues' depth at center includes David Backes, Patrik Berglund, Vladimir Sobotka and Scott Nichol; this goes without mentioning that wingers Andy McDonald and T.J. Oshie are fully capable of switching to center ice as well. Schwartz is a very gifted forward but may have to settle with some time to develop in the AHL.

In other words, the Blues may be handing a great gift to the Peoria Rivermen organization.

A team that finished five points out of the playoffs with a 39-33-2-2 record last season, the Rivermen could benefit from a skilled center. AHL veteran center T.J. Hensick was the club's leading scorer last season (21-49—70) but was accompanied by former NHL 50-goal scorer

Jonathan Cheechoo, who has since been left unsigned (Cheechoo ranked 2nd on the team with 56 points scored). Phil McRae, 22, is a fine second line center, but he will likely be given the chance to battle for a checking line role with the Blues. If McRae is out of the mix, Adam Cracknell is a capable option up the middle but is better served on the wing.

Schwartz would fit very well in the Rivermen lineup. He is known for possessing pinpoint accuracy on every pass; something that cannot hurt a team that finished 11th in the league last season in goals-scored. If Schwartz is paired up with Derrick Nesbitt (22-33—55 in 2011-12) or Cracknell (23-26—49 in 2011-12), he could easily become one of the most dangerous centers in all of the AHL.

Taking Schwartz's desire to play in the NHL so soon after a heartbreaking loss with his NCAA team into consideration, it is easy to see that the young man is motivated to get his game to the highest level. If Schwartz can keep moving in the right direction, Peoria will be a short stop on his way to a long career in the world's top hockey league.

What a sweet stop it would be for the Rivermen franchise, though.

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