Blues GM Doug Armstrong had an easy decision to make at season's end.

The list of players becoming free-agents seems to be a mile long, but three players had to be a top-priority. Forwards Patrik Berglund and Vladimir Sobotka and defenseman Roman Polak were all key re-signings heading into the off-season. Armstrong wasted no time mulling over the three players' futures with the organization.

On Tuesday morning, Armstrong announced that he had reached a deal with center Patrik Berglund that would keep him in St. Louis for another two years. The deal, reportedly, will pay the Swede $2.25 million in each of the next two seasons.

Armstrong was not finished there. Announced Thursday morning, the Blues reached an agreement with 25-year old defenseman Roman Polak, which will pay him $2.75 million in each of the next five seasons.

In addition, reports say that the Blues have reached an agreement with Czech forward Vladimir Sobotka, which will pay him $1.30 annually over the next three seasons. Reports say that the deal has reached a verbal agreement, but Sobotka is yet to sign the contract.

All three players would have been restricted free-agents, meaning that they would have the possibility of receiving offer sheets from other teams after July 1.

Berglund is coming off a career-season, scoring a career-high in goals (22), assists (30) and points (52). Berglund was vital to the Blues' playoff run late in the season, scoring the majority of his points in the New Year (31).

Armstrong had this to say about Berglund and his importance to the organization:

“Patrik has been with our team for three years now, and we really think that he's starting to mature as a player and come into his own. His third season was obviously his best season in our opinion and we think that he's just starting to hit his stride. As our team matures, Patrik matures with it, and we think he's going to be a big piece of our team moving forward.”

Roman Polak did not have a career-season per say, but he was an important component of the Blues’ defense. Finishing the season ranked third on the team in minutes-played-per-game (excluding Erik Johnson and Eric Brewer), Polak saw time in every situation. He was on the rink for most penalty-kills, as well as late-game situations when protecting a lead. His powerful hitting and feisty play in the boards earned him this contract-extension. Polak, a native of Ostrava, Czech Republic, received a deal that he can be proud of, yet is still a steal for St. Louis. Polak has been one of the steadiest defensemen on the Blues roster for the past three years and he does not show signs of stopping his dominant play.

“We believe Roman is one of the top defensive defensemen in the league who plays against the opposing teams best players night after night,” Armstrong told the Blues website. “He’s one of our top penalty killers who is just reaching the prime of his career and we’re happy to have him in the fold for the next five years.”

While the deal is not quite finalized, Sobotka’s contract may also be considered a steal for St. Louis. In his first season as a Blue, Sobotka set career-highs in goals (7), assists (22) and points (29). Sobotka, who was acquired from Boston last summer for prospect defenseman David Warsofsky, truly exceeded expectations in 2010-11. Mainly expected to be a fourth-line grinder who could put a few pucks in the net, Sobotka saw a lot of time on the top two scoring lines due to numerous injuries to top-forwards.

Doug Armstrong is yet to comment on the Sobotka signing.

The Blues still have seven players under contract who are slated to be free-agents on July 1.

Forwards: T.J. Oshie (RFA), B.J. Crombeen (RFA), Cam Janssen (UFA), Matt D'Agostini (RFA), Dave Scatchard (UFA)

Defensemen: Tyson Strachan (RFA)

Goalies: Ty Conklin (UFA)

Berglund quotes courtesy Lou Korac of The Associated Press. His blog can be seen at lkorac10.blogspot.com
. Polak quotes courtesy
stlouisblues.com
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