

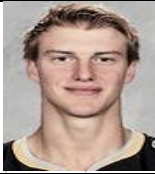
2011-12 Silk City SabreCats Preview

The 2010-11 Silk City SabreCats were a pleasant surprise in the HBHA's inaugural season. Picked to finish near the bottom of the standings, the Cats managed to garner a playoff spot. That initial success was the result of the team's management strategy of doing whatever they could to make the playoffs in Year One, even if it meant giving copious ice time to again veterans without much of a future. So in Year Two, the Cats have decided to take back and try to re-build the team with younger players. Some important players from last season are gone (either through retirement or being dispatched to other HBHA outposts) and replaced by young players. The success of the 2011-12 Silk City SabreCats' strategy will probably not be known for some years; as the young players will need some time to develop.


Key additions: C Sam Gagner, D Mark Fayne, RW Mats Zuccarello, RW Linus Omark, RW BJ Crombeen, D Sami Lepisto

Key departures: D Dion Phaneuf, RW Mark Recchi, RW Bill Guerin


You don't have to turn on the red light. The 2011-12 Silk City SabreCats will be built around defense, led by the first player ever signed by the franchise and newly-appointed captain, Tyler Myers. The big fella will need to eat up huge amounts of ice time on the blueline and help to break in this year's new defense model, Mark Fayne.

Tyler Myers		#57					
2010-11	Silk City	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
		80	21	26	47	1	34


The Cats will try to pair the high draft choices together to create a signature pair to face other teams' top forward lines. They will need a lot of support from veterans Fedor Tyutin, Mattias Ohlund, Scott Hannan and John Erskine. That back line will need to form the brick wall in front of goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury.

Marc-Andre Fleury		#29					
2010-11	Silk City	GP	W	L	OTL	SV%	GAA
		40	27	9	1	.925	1.90


Punch the clock and come to work. In addition to building around defense, the SabreCats will need to bring their lunch pails every night and try to out-work other teams with gritty play. New addition BJ Crombeen will bring his reputation as an enforcer, but also contribute as a winger alongside John Madden on the checking line.

BJ Crombeen		#26					
2010-11	Antioch	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
		77	9	6	15	-14	175

Sean Bergenheim did not dress often in 2010-11, but will be counted on this season to be a strong two-way player that will move between all four lines as needed along with Dainius Zubrus.


Sean Bergenheim		#10					
		GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
2010-11	<i>Springfield (AHL)</i>	58	20	18	38	5	90
2010-11	Silk City	18	4	1	5	0	10


Brandon Dubinsky will probably be the team's top goal-scorer for the season, alternating between playing on the wing and in the middle and also bringing two-way and forechecking presence.

Brandon Dubinsky		#17					
2010-11	Silk City	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
		69	19	14	33	7	32

Youth will be served, but not necessarily right-away. As mentioned previously, the SabreCats will need time to determine if this year's strategy works. One of the reasons that Crombeen was brought in was because of the Smurfs that are coming into Silk City. Mats Zuccarello and Linus Omark will split time between the big club and our minor-league affiliate in Springfield MA, but will get a lot of ice-time when they are in the lineup. Former WCHA player of the year Matt Frattin will spend his year in the minors,

but will be counted on to show development towards joining the big club in 2012. Fayne will step right into the opening night lineup and be expected to help out right away.

Mark Fayne		#34					
2010-11	<i>Springfield (AHL)</i>	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
		19	1	3	4	4	6

Mats Zuccarello		#36					
2009-10	<i>Modo (SWE)</i>	GP	G	A	PTS	+/-	PIM
		55	23	41	64		62

Things go right if.... Fleury wins a lot of 2-1 games on his way to winning the Tretiak Trophy.

Things go wrong if... Dubinsky leads the team in scoring, but doesn't crack the 40 point barrier.

Season prediction... Silk City is a playoff pretender but is eliminated from the playoff race in the last two weeks of the season.