

Peter Holland comes home ? Maple Leafs have big hopes for the 22 year-old centre

By Brian Lockhart

In what could be the career move of a lifetime, and the dream of many hockey players in Canada, Caledon native Peter Holland has been traded to the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Holland played his first game with Toronto Saturday night against the Buffalo Sabres, stepping into the top line between Phil Kessel and James Van Riemsdyk.

He was acquired from the Anaheim Ducks and wasted no time getting on an airplane after the deal was signed.

Holland played four seasons with the Guelph Storm of the OHL, ending the 2010-11 campaign with 88 points (37 goals and 51 assists) after 67 games.

Holland made his name known as the first-round draft pick (15th overall) for the Ducks in 2009 while still with the Storm. He made his pro debut with the Syracuse Crunch of the American Hockey League, playing three games at the tail end of the season in 2011 and was called up for the Ducks' NHL playoff run, though he did not appear in any games.

In 2011, he made his National Hockey League debut, playing in four games with Anaheim before moving back to Syracuse for a productive season, in which he scored 23 goals with 37 assists in 71 games.

Back to the Ducks for 2012-13, Holland appeared in 21 games and also played 45 games with the Anaheim affiliate Norfolk Admirals of the AHL.

The trade comes at a time when the Leafs are hurting when it comes to players in the centre position. Holland has been slotted in to replace the injured Dave Bolland in the line-up.

At six feet two inches, Holland is known as a big guy, but with his current weight listed as 194 pounds, he's not a bulked up player for his height.

The plan, for now, is to keep Holland on the ice in the top line-up, Leafs coach Randy Carlyle said in an interview with the Globe and Mail.

'He's going to get a chance (to play in the top six),' Carlyle said. 'That's why he's here. Obviously, the centre ice position for us has been decimated with injuries, and he's a big, young, skilled centre ice man.'

Whether Holland will be sent down or relegated to another line when the regular line-up gets healthy remains to be seen, but in the meantime he's got the opportunity to step it up and earn his place on the Leafs bench

