

**(Colo.)-Avalanche make MacKinnon first pick of NHL Draft**

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NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — The Colorado Avalanche have selected center Nathan MacKinnon with the first pick of the NHL draft.

Colorado executive vice president of hockey operations Joe Sakic made the announcement Sunday at the Prudential Center. The 17-year-old MacKinnon, a 6-foot, 182-pound center, is a solid two-way presence with strong hands and stick-handling and skating skills. He is considered a natural scorer and a very good puck distributor.

The Avalanche won the draft lottery for the first time in team history and had made it clear that MacKinnon was going to be their top pick.

The Florida Panthers made center Aleksander Barkov, the top-ranked European skater, the second overall pick.

The New Jersey Devils and the Prudential Center are hosting the draft for the first time.