Applicability scouting of ice-hockey players

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Abstract

Date of presentation

Degree programme

Author or authors	Group or year of entry
Kärki Sampo	2009

Title of thesis	Number of pages and appendices
Applicability scouting of ice-hockey players	40 + 3

Supervisor or supervisors	
Markus Arvaja	

This thesis studies the amount and share of the applicability scouting in whole scouting process and searches its most usually used elements. It also looks for which issues of the applicability are most valued by the SM-league teams. Most used supportive issues and outside help are also looked into.

Objective of this thesis is to find out how much and in what way Finnish Ice-Hockey SM-League teams scout applicability issues of the player and how much value they actually put in other issues than technical, tactical or physical skills, when considering and scouting a new player.

Work started on 14th of June with the conversation between author and supervisor and first questionnaire was sent 31st of July 2011. 5th of September all the questionnaire answers were received back and interviews were done by 20th of September. Text editing and result handling were roughly done 10th of october 2011.

This thesis is research based and style is survey. Questionnaire with combination of alternative answering, scale numbering and free space writing possibilities was sent to all Finnish ice-hockey SM-league teams. For comparing opinion three scouts or ex scouts were interviewed.

Results shows that SM-league teams see applicability scouting as approximatly 50% of total scouting process. From SM-League teams 2/3 sees that applicability scouting is successful most of the times and 1/3 sees that their applicability scouting succeeds half the times. Teams value most player´s working habits when scouting their applicability to the team and relevant issues while scouting are player´s character, acceptance/suitability to their own role and mental issues. Relevant issues when scouting applicability on the other hand varied a lot between the teams.

Of all participated teams 1/3 had no scouting or orientation process and they did not use outside help while scouting applicability of a player. Those 2/3 who used outside help, usually asked from ex coach or ex teammate about the player. Some also had or used the help of professional scout.

Keywords
Ice-Hockey, Scouting, Applicability, Team culture,

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1   Introduction

Why does an ice-hockey player, with high technical and tactical skills, fail when he moves to another team? Why can´t he get more out of himself even though in his earlier teams his performance was good or even excellent. Has his performance something to do with new environment, new team culture or things he could not bring along with him like old team mates and friends.

I have been following ice-hockey nearly 40 years. I have seen many excellent professionals coming from abroad but also many of those who have been very successful earlier and failed in SM-league Finland. Unfortunately there have been, on my opinion, more those who haven´t been able to deliver their best into the ice or have been wrong type of players to their teams in the beginning with.

1.1   Thesis objectives

Objective of this thesis is to find out how much and in what way Finnish SM-League Ice-Hockey teams scout applicability issues and how much value they actually put in other issues, other than technical, tactical or physical professional skills, when considering and scouting a new player. Also objective is to find out how many players are considered in a season per team. Concretely target is to find out what are those issues or elements about applicability of a player teams are interested in if they are. This thesis also studies if teams have a manual of the process in scouting and are these applicability issues included into their manual and are teams using outside help for such a scouting.

There are less and less resources to spend for mistakes in this complex world and that includes sport and sport industry. Many times mistakes are everyday type of mistakes that could be avoided by pure visualization. Success can be controlled theoretically but by visualization of the project and by naming one designated project manager, big achievements can be reached. (Forsberg K., Mooz H., Cotterman H. 2000, 7-8.)
If it turns out that there are significant nominators related to applicability scouting in SM-League teams, and they have a certain value, I would like to produce a formula or sheet which could be a suggestion of an risk management formula in applicability

scouting project. In project world there is often used a matrix sheet to calculate the risks and possible success of the project and I believe such a matrix could be used in Ice-Hockey scouting world as well. The suitability of such a risk management matrix in sport scouting is probably unknown in ice-hockey but I was able to find one something close to similar in the world of baseball. They call it a character scouting and the scouting director of the Dodgers (U.S) team has created a "matrix" consisting of a 50 separate markers, which they believe relates to the success (Reiter 2010, 64). I believe that in time risk management matrix would be usefull tool, if it was filled properly and used for a long period of time. By continuous usage it would be more and more accurate by the time.

1.2   Thesis topic and scope

I have chosen this topic of applicability scouting due to my own personal interest and doubts. My hypothesis is that quite a lot of attension is payed for players technical skills, game sense and his earlier scoring points and not enough for the applicability issues that shows if the player actually is suitable for the new environment or not.

This thesis is a research study with expectation of such a results that would make it possible to create an applicability risk scouting formula. I have been working in personnel recruitment business over 10 year and would like to be able to see if such practises, processes could be used also in sport, Ice-Hockey, industry. This thesis scope is limited to scouting of applicability issues. Scouting of technical and tactical skills or physical abilities of the players are not studied in this thesis.

The type of reasearch is survey. Questionnaire is sent to the SM-league teams. Professional scouts are interviewed to get perspective and to have added value for the subject.

2 Supportive theoretical backround

Applicability scouting in this thesis is defined to mean scouting of personal issues (other than technical, tactical or physical hockey skills) which shows if the players are suitable to play and work in some particular country, in particular culture, particular league, in some particular club and group and their culture and working (rehearsing and training) habits. In scout´s scouting scorecard there should be a topics of prospect having (or not having) a strong work ethic and is the prospect willing to be coached (Malloy 2011, 172).

2.1 Scouting

Scouting of ice-hockey players can be roughly divided into two groups: amateur scouting and professional scouting. Amateur scouting means scouting of non professional junior or college players at age of 16 to 20. Professional scouting means roughly players over 20 years of age and who are already professional players in some professional or semiprofessional league. In terms of applicability scouting it usually means professional players who are scouted for they possible ability to adapt into a team´s playing system and culture. Amateur players are more scouted for their technical abilities and potential and they are also expected to be easier adapted into team´s style and system throughout their development years. Amateur players are also more scouted for their long term future. (Malloy 2011, 14-21) In this thesis Scouting is mainly related to professional scouting since topics handles more those who are already professionals and moving from one professional team to another.

2.2 Applicability

When considering applicability of a player who moves from another country to play in foreign country, I believe there are similarities with any other professional working abroad. Particularly studies or theories about Ice-Hockey players working abroad where not found. However if we can believe, that issues are basicly same with any people in expatriation, there are issues that can be stated. Most of the people going to work abroad are worried about following issues: Adaptation and managing of the family in a new country, leaving the social network behind, lack of support network,

slowing carrieer development, security, social security, health care, living conditions/accommodation, adaptation into a new organization, school of children, day to day issues, language barrier, returning home, is there a working place still at home waiting. Employers are worried about: Getting the newcomer fast into a work, not leaving the newcomer isolated, aborting the contract, adaptation of the worker and the family. (Sinkkonen 2008, 115-117.) In study of NHL players attempting to adjust their lives as a professionals, one of the biggest adaptation challenge was relocation (Battochio, Shinke & Eyes 2009, 269).

When considering the applicability related to effectiveness of the player in foreign country I also believe that it might be quite similar with any worker. Very common is that companies, employers, are only looking for the professional skills and not considering so much two other things that are as much important. Those other issues are cultural interaction and personal issues. Therefore the success and effectiveness is combination of the following: 1. Cultural interaction, such as local language, conversation with locals, openness, information about the local issues and tolerance. 2. Professional activity in local environment, such as professional skills, transfering the ability, applying the procedures. 3. Personal issues, such as environmental satisfaction, meaningful activities, aproving the conditions and adaptation of the whole family. (Sinkkonen 2008, 20.)

2.3   Environment and Team culture

Each nation, country or even city has a culture of its own and knowing the culture helps us to define psychological situations and create meaningful clusters of behavior according to particular logics. Individual differences are important because individuals vary in the extent to which they endorse or reject a culture's ideals. Further, because different cultures are organized by different logics, individual differences mean something different in each. (Leung & Cohen 2011, 507.)
Team culture can be defined as the extent of values shared by team members (Kao & Ceng 2005, 22). It means that in a team which has a good team culture; team members, including management and coaches, have a common goal. The sport team culture with which all members voluntarily comply is the total of common faith, valuation view,

morality, spirit pillar, ceremony, intelligence factor, and entertainment life. The function of the sport team culture is as follows: instructing people, construction of team standard, recovery, spiritual adjustment, meeting psychological and social demand. (Liu & Wang 2001, 28-33.)

According to a lesson material of Anthony de Carvalho, Teacher of Discpline of Coaching in Haaga-Helia Vierumäki (2011), athletes may find it difficult to adjust to a new environment and they might continue their earlier habits from old surroundings. Also he underlines that it is coaches responsibility not to put a player into too different atmosphere. If coaches only expect players to leave their earlier environmental style of behavior behind and expect them to adjust into new system it might lead into a difficult problems of adaptation and inability for coaches to utilize players´ talents. Authors own assumption, like mentioned earlier, is that scouts put most, if not all, of their effort in scouting of players´ skills and technical issues such as skating, shooting, game sense, positioning etc. and not really consider applicability issues. However, this seems to be at least somewhat true since applicability is not directly emphasized for example in the book, Art of Scouting, at all. Only in a section of the amateur scouting there is mentioned that step from junior league to professional is big, even too big sometimes. That is somewhat different thing and more like, I believe, normal developmental issue. (Carvalho 2011, 4; Malloy 2011, 15.)

Ice-hockey is a game of winning and losing. Every game counts. SM-league is so tight league and differences between the teams are so small that every single point counts, when trying to get into the play offs. Highly experienced coach Alpo Suhonen has listed several issues which matter when winning or losing in a game takes place. In his list, among other important things, are also mentioned:1. <u>Team</u>, its culture, traditions, history and expectations, 2. <u>Club</u>, its culture and tradition, history and expectations and 3. <u>Country Finland</u>, its culture, traditions etc. (Suhonen 2002, 57.) Therefore I also believe that cultural issues are highly significant when considering player´s applicability into a new team.

2.4 Recruitment and Assessment

Every recruitment is a project and I assume it is no different when talking about hiring a player. It has at least planning phase, performing phase, decion making phase and follow up. It is important that already in a planning phase it is agreed who is doing what, how it is to be done, how much it can cost, what is the time table for the project and what possible outside help or material is utilized. Inside the project there are processes that may be quite basic but alltogether it is a project that also has documented activity plan, and persons related to plan are constantly informed. Also there is allways possibility that things and situation may change and there is a need for recheck or replan. Important is that there is one person, project manager, who is responsible and leads the project. Well done recruitment or hiring a player forms a safety network for a organization and that will occur in the long run but never right at the moment of decion making. Hiring a player is always a matter of choise. Person who makes a descision, Manager, makes multiple choises before the decision. Among many other choises he chooses from the list of players, the candidates, who would be the most suitable for the position. So does the hired person, player, when choosing a team. He chooses if he wants to serve this team and is he willing to make a commitment. (Markkanen 2002, 6,9.)

Applicability assessment means looking into candidates adaptability to the position, abilities, working habits and expectations for the position (Honkaniemi 2007, 79) . Interview is one of the main methods in the applicability assessment and for that the manager should properly prepare in advance and be prepared for (Vaahtio 2007, 77). Therefore team management should have a process for the interview and in advance prepared structured model of questions to be asked conserning applicability. There should be a plan who are interviewing and when. Do the coaches participate always and how? Are they only listening or actually asking for those core issues they are interested in?.

2.5   Commitment, motivation and willingness to learn

Since studies about committed Ice-Hockey players or purely motivation about the players were not found I looked into general statements about committed employees and motivation with willingness to learn overall. I assume basics are similar regardless the nature of the work or subject to study.

Committed employee is usually described as one who stays in the organization, attends work regularly, puts all in a full day, protects company assets and ,most important of all, shares company goals (Meyer & Allen 1997, 3). I believe such elements can be highly valued in an ice-hockey player as well. From the organization perscpective committed person would clearly appear to be an advantage. Also from the point of view of a player it should be beneficial or why else there are also highly committed players and workers. Of course some could enjoy the financial benefits but beyond that other things organization can provide are essential. Opportunity to do challenging work, to meet and interact with interesting people and to learn new skills and develop as a player or as a person will lead to the development of commitment. (Meyer 1997, 3) In attitudinal commitment organizations values and goals are similar with employees own (Meyer 1997, 9). In affective commitment person is emotionally attached to the organization and several studies suggest that employees with strong affective commitment work harder and perform better, than those with weak affective commitment (Meyer 1997, 11, 28). I believe that players with such a commitment could be highly beneficial to any team, also to an ice-hockey team.

The core of a motivation process are intention to do something and goal setting. Those with high intention to act are more likely to perform the task well. Also those with intensive thinking and high intrest of problem solving usually solve the problem. Commitment to the goal is based on how big a value person put to goal. Motivation for learning is highest when the task given is just enough challenging to a person. Not too hard and not too easy.(Ruohotie 1998, 55-56.) An ice-hockey player, I think, is also motivated and willing to learn when the task fits him the best and goal is valuable enough for him. This is, on my opinion, important issue when considering a player to join the team.

Cycle of learning is based on three things. Commitment to an activity, control and self reflection. Commitment to an activity creates opportunities for learning. Defining factors are goal definition, strategic planning and impression of oneself as a learner. Control steers the learning process and regulates the perceptivity and learning activity. Self reflection means studying the learning experience and giving sense to things in learing experience. Those in good with learning are good in self regulation. (Ruohotie 1998, 77-78.) I strongly believe that those players who study their learning experience and try to make meaning what they have learned are more likely to learn team´s tactical issues, style and culture.

2.6   Working under Pressure and Stress

Pressure and stress are related but not exactly same thing. We all need certain amount of pressure to get up and go into our everyday actions but when the amount of pressure, the load, gets too big it may cause unhealthy stress which will lead us to stress zone. Certain amount of everyday pressure will give us strenght, energy and power. Stress on the otherhand causes us strain, anxiety, nervous tension and constant worry. (Clark 2002, 7.) Two major causes of extra pressure and possibly stress in work life are self-imposed expectations and type of job. Our own expectation that we should be the best and our high standards of performing or otherwise feeling of total failure causes stress and usually these expectations are far more bigger than those expected by our family members, friends or colleagues. (Clark 2002, 23.) I believe many Ice-Hockey players set themselves high goals and huge expectations. One of the most stressfull job if not the most is the job where one is acting or performing in public. Also multicultutal society may cause some extra stress. (Clark 2002, 60,64.) Also I consider that Ice-Hockey players are acting and performing in public and they also many times work in multicultural society. When NHL players were interviewed, most challenging issues in NHL lifestyle were mentioned to be earning trust, meeting the team´s expectations, crosscultural encounters and meeting scouting and media demands (Randy 2009, 281). One major element which may cause a lot of pressure and later on stress or not is the load of demanding placed on individuals by the organization and the culture of supportiveness (Clark 2002, 74). This is a thing to consider, on my opinion, when considering a player to the team. If a player cannot handle the pressure

(and is not properly supported) and it goes into a stress zone it may cause multiple behavioral problems such as aggression, difficulties in sleeping and disorderly eating and drinking (Clark 2002, 45).

2.7 Work ethics

In identifying task requirements essential for the successful professional ice-hockey player there were several technical elements mentioned but also one that is close to work ethics. That was "desire/attitude" (Renger 1994. 180). Professional ethics or working ethics is combination of desire and belief. Desire is always behind the goal to achieve and value. Belief is the steering element which directs action to the right direction. That direction is based on value, professional value. (Räikkä 1995, 45-47.) I believe such a professional ice-hockey players who value the goals of the whole team are hard working and they believe such a direction is the right one.

2.8 Player´s personality

Ice-hockey as a game demands mental toughness. Psychological power and success is derived from that. Arto Pesola (2009, 34) defines certain traits that are demanded and typically high for successful ice-hockey player; 1. Need of achviement, which means strong willingness to succeed and willingness for long lasting work to it, 2. Positive aggressiveness meaning showing energetic acting and toughness in performance, 3. Self-confidence, ability to trust yourself, 4. Ability to stand pressure, ability to perform well even in tough situations. 5. Dominance, ruling the game and its situations and therefore acting as a good example for the rest of the team and 6. Emotionally mature gains trust and produces team spirit. Such a player also looks for interaction with team mates. (Pesola 2009, 34.) Such a personality traits are surely crucial to an ice-hockey player. When lookin for a sport personality type there was one study found. When studying overall sports, team sport athletes were observed to be more anxious, dependent, extraverted and alert-objective. On the other hand they were observed to be less sensitive-imaginative than individual sport athletes (Gadsdon 2001, 5). Also I would like to add one. On my opinion such a personality who copes well with majority of situations, even unfair situations, is likely to be successful in ice-hockey.

3   Methods

In this thesis the target group of getting information are Finnish professional ice-hockey teams playing in SM-league. More accurately target group is those representatives of the teams who are involved with scouting of the players which are considered to join their team. Usually such a repersentatives are player coordinator, sport manager, CEO or coaches or combination pair or group of any of the mentioned.

3.1   Survey

The survey method is qualitative research since the sample will be relatively small. There are only 14 teams in Finnish Men´s ice-hockey SM-league and therefore that 14 is the highest amount of answers as well. However the amount of people involved might be a little bigger because more than one person maybe together giving answers. Assumably about max 25 persons are likely to be involved if all teams will give their answer.

If there will not be enough answers, at least 10, some other teams or ex-sport managers or such maybe asked also to answer the same questions.

3.2   Questionnaire

Questionnaire is made to follow the topics at the theory backround presented in this report and to inquire those topics and elements from the team representatives, the respondents. Questionnaire sheet consists of introduction, short definition of the subject and 12 questions of which includes open questions, alternative choosing questions and scale 1-5 evaluating questions.

Questionnaire material was shown to and evaluated by the supervisor Markus Arvaja. Before sending to all representatives of the target group the question sheet was tested by professional of the subject. It was sent one Sport Manager and asked for feedback about its contents, length and for how long it takes to answer.

After confirmed the quality and length of the question sheet it was sent to all SM-League teams by email and asked for return also by email. Many of the teams needed to be called first to find out who in the team are taking care of the scouting and player coordination.

Questionnaire is made in finnish language since all the respondents are native finnish speakers and less missunderstandings were this way expected to happen.

3.3   Interview

I´m going to interview at least one professional scout and get his/their opinion about applicability scouting. That will be mainly structured or theme interview including same, similar or comparative questions about the subject as were in the questionaire sent to the SM-League teams. Interviews are made to get deeper or comparative data or opinions but not to make the scope of the thesis any wider. Comparative questions are made to see if there are differences between finnish SM-League and other leagues, NHL or North America in general.

4 Results

These results are from the questionnaire and interviews and shown "as is" in tables and texts. Supportive text is added to help to read and explain the tables and results but actual interpretations of the results are stated later.

4.1 Process of getting the information

Questionnaire, question sheets (See attachement 1), were sent by email to all ice-hockey SM-League teams in finland in the beginning of August 2011. Only one replied directly to the email. All the rest were phoned after at least once but many of them several times. One respondent wanted me to write/mark down the answers in a telephone interview. Many of them mentioned to be very busy at the moment, August 2011, but after I assured the importance of the questionnaire to me and to my thesis material, they answered. I sort of had to sell the idea since many of them hadn´t even read the email. 12 out of 14 SM-league teams responded finally within 5 weeks after I sent the first one. Most of them answered solely but some of them mentioned that whole coaching team had participated. So alltogether I would assume approximately 20-25 persons were involved with answering the questionnaire.

4.2 Scouting and signing of players

Teams were asked (questions 1 and 2, see attachement 1) how many players they scout and sign overall during the season. If respondent answered number between something for example 100-200, the average (150) was calculated and added into the total average. Mode was also calculated as an average of those figures (100 to 200 scouted) that occurred mostly. On a part of the results of signing of the new players average was also calculated from average if between two figures were answered. Mode was noticed from the number (10) that occurred mostly.

Table 1. Amount of scouted players

How many players scouted during the season?

	Least	Most	Average	Mode
■ Series1	5	1500	303	150
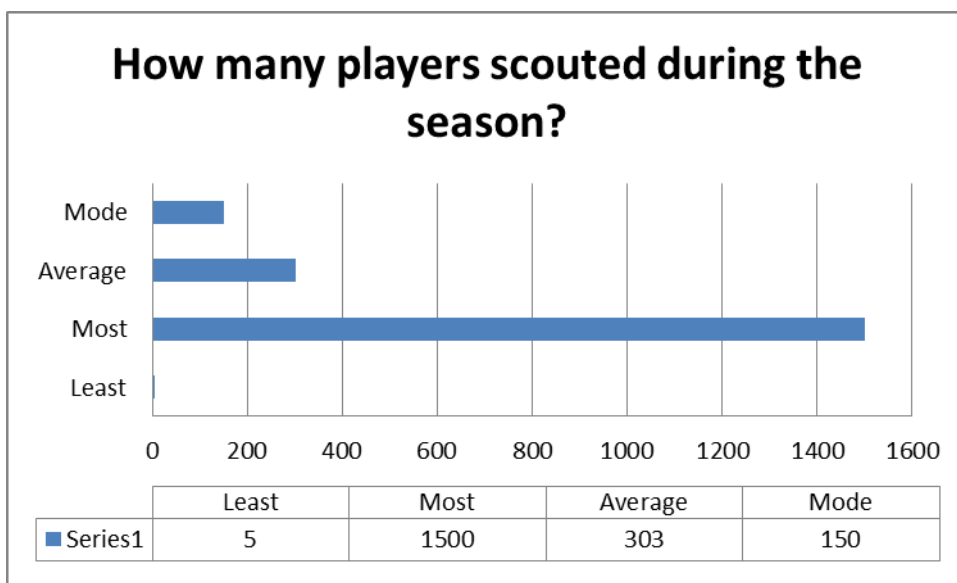
As can be seen from the Table 1 variety of the scouting amount is huge. Teams responded they scout between 5 and 1500 per season. Numerically largest answers; over 1000 and 1000 to 2000 made average quite high and therefore the mode gives better, more truthfull figure to tell how many players usually teams scout. So usually SM-league ice-hockey teams scout between 100 to 200 players per season.

Table 2. Amount of signed players

How many players signed during the season?

	Least	Most	Average	Mode
■ Series1	2	20	8	10
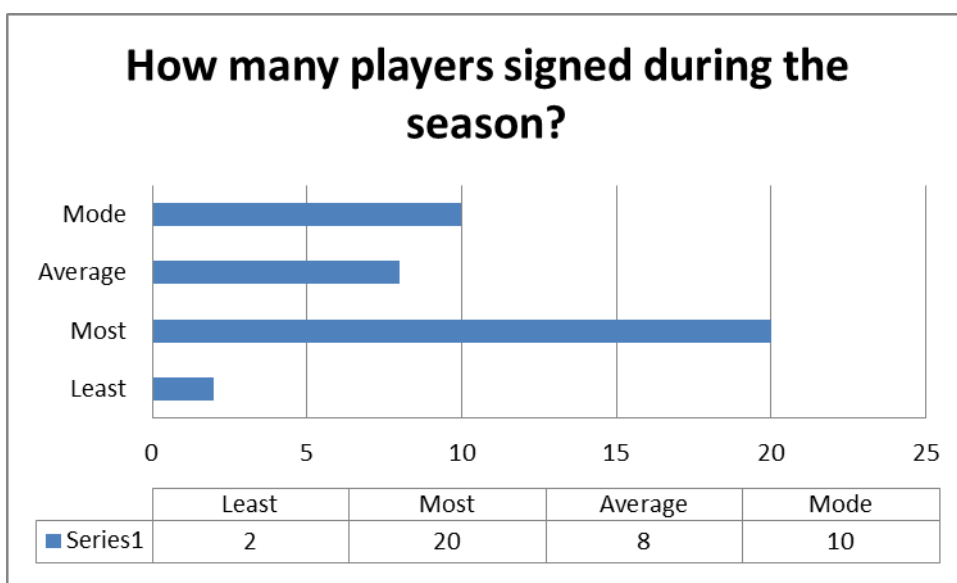
As we can see in Table 2 the variety of new signed players is between 2 to 20 between the teams during the season. Average and median values are close so it can be stated that usually teams recruit 8 to 10 players during one season.

4.3 Importance of applicability and the main issues when considering a players applicability.

In questions 3 and 4 of the questionnaire teams were asked about the importance of applicability and the most relevant issues when considering a player´s applicability. Importance was devided into four category; 1. very/most important, 2. important, 3. quite important, and 4. not important. Majority, seven, of the respondents mentioed applic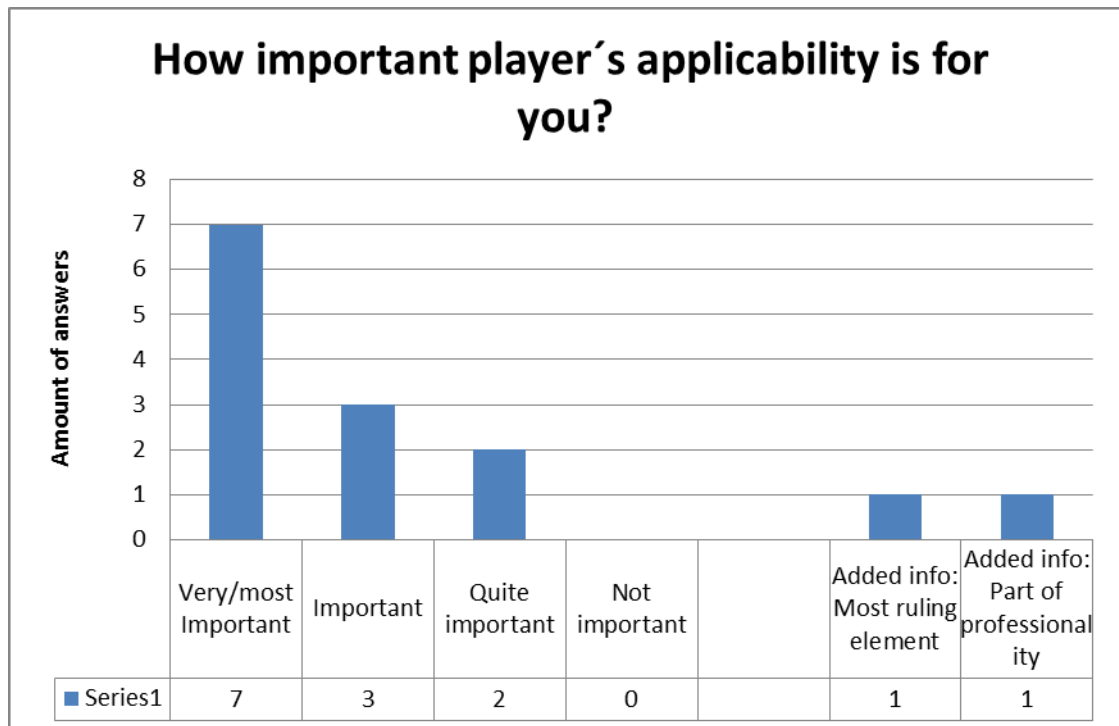ability to be" very or the most important" element when scouting a player (see Table 3). None of the respondents answered it to be " not important". Some added valuable info was received. Applicability was mentioned to be the most ruling element and part of professionality.

Table 3. Importance of applicability

How important player´s applicability is for you?

	Very/most Important	Important	Quite important	Not important		Added info: Most ruling element	Added info: Part of professionality
■ Series1	7	3	2	0		1	1

For the question 4 respondents answered (see Table 4) several issues to be relevant when considering a player´s applicability. Number behind the named issue shows the times occurred in answers:

Table 4. Relevant applicability issues named by the teams

Character	4
Mental issues	3
Attitude	2
Determination	2
Commitment	2
Suitability to certain role	2
Being Finnish	1
Willingness to develop	1
Desire	1
Accepting own role	1
Personal Balance	1
Athletics	1
Body language	1
Applicability to team	1
Way of acting	1
Competitive spirit	1
Co-operation ability	1
Work ethics	1
Goal-oriented	1

Results in Table 4 shows that character, mental issues and suitability or acceptance of/to own role are the overall most important. Determination, commitment and attitude are next most mentioned. Still variety is large and no issue is highly above all.

4.4 Applicability share in scouting process and success frequency in applicability scouting.

In questionnaire teams were asked about the share of the applicability scouting in total scouting process. Teams were guided to answer with percentage figure. One respondent did not show any percentage figure but mentioned the sport type issues to come first. If answer was between two figures such as 40-50% the average 45% was noticed to the total average. Median was noticed from the figure which occurred mostly (50%). In success of scouting teams were asked how often scouting is successful on a part of applicability scouting and five alternatives were given: 1. never, 2. sometimes. 3. half of the times, 4. most of the times and 5. always. Respondents named the number or wrote the word. Some of them grounded their answer more and most of them only answered by choosing an alternative.

Table 5. Applicability share of total scouting process

How big a share % applicability is in total scouting process?

	Least	Most	Average	Mode
■ Series1	25 %	70 %	45 %	50 %
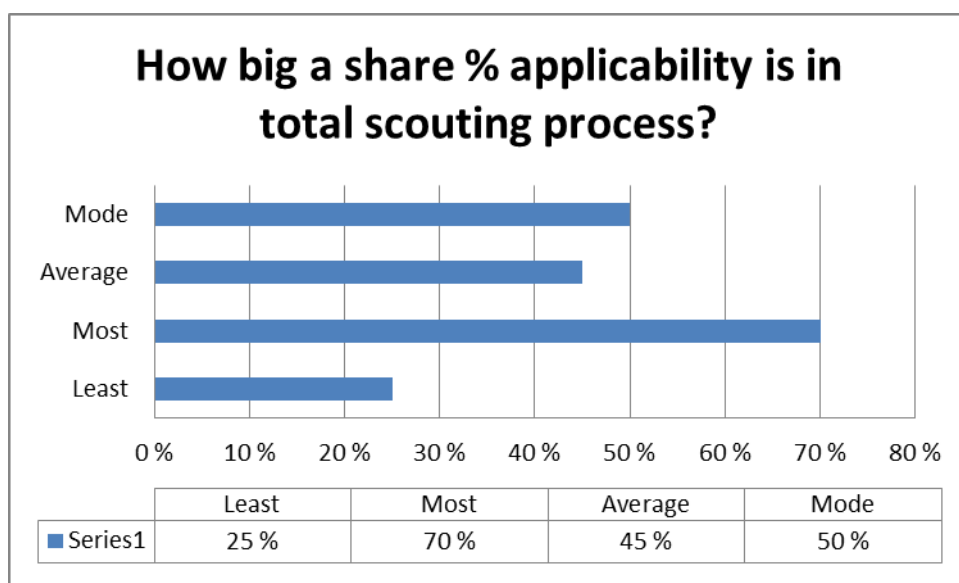
Biggest share of total scouting process applicability was mentioned to be 70% (see Table 5) and least share was 25%. Average was 45% and usually teams named applicability to be 50% of their total scouting. One respondent did not mention any figure.

Table 6. Successfulness of applicability scouting

How often scouting is successful on a part of player´s applicability

	never	sometimes	half the times	most of the times	always
■ Series1	0	0	4	8	0
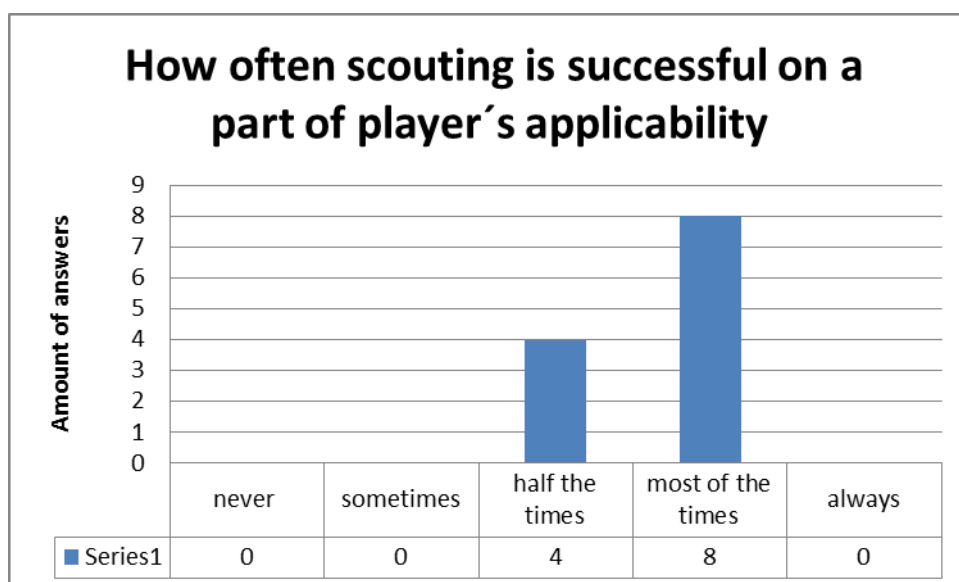
Four out of 12 respondents (Table 6) mentioned scouting to be "half the times" successful on a part of applicability scouting. Eight out of 12 mentioned applicability scouting to be "most of the times" successful.

4.5 Key issues when applicability scouting succeeds and does not succeed.

Teams were asked about the key issues when scouting succeeds on a part of applicability and also when scouting on a part of applicability does not succeed. Respondents had open space to write down freely their answers in both questions. Number after each issue shows how many times the issue has occurred in answers.

Table 7. Issues to make applicability scouting successful

Opinions of earlier coaches and team mates	5
Personal meetings/interviews	5
Appropriate and up-to-date info	4
Background work	3
Need of the team	2
Knowing the player	2
Earlier experience scouting	1
Ability to interpret information	1
Find out player´s day to day behavior	1
Carefulness in scouting	1
Character	1
Preparations	1
Co-operation inside the team	1
Good contact network in ice-hockey	1

Many teams mentioned the opinions of ex coaches and team mates (5) and personal meetings/interviews to be the key issues of success (see Table 7). Also appropriate and up-to-date info (4) with good background work (3) were mentioned several times. Other issues mentioned varied quite a lot between respondents.

In Table 8 are listed such issues teams mentioned when scouting failes on a part of applicability. Respondents had a chance to write down freely as many issues as they wanted.

Table 8. Issues to make applicability scouting fail

False info	2
Player´s motivation	2
Not knowing well enough player´s earlier coach or team mates	1
Wrong interpretation of info	1
Too small sample of questions asked about the player	1
Essential issues not noticed	1
Nationality	1
Not suitable into environment	1
Not suitable for team playing	1
Hidden injuries	1
Not enough knowledge of player`s bad traits	1
Trust too much for agents´ selling arguments	1
Self-confidence may increase or decrease	1
Close to transfer time limits pressure to get good player and not too many options or not enough money	1

Answers varied quite a lot (Table 8). Only "false info" and "player´s motivation" were mentioned two times by the respondents to be the issue when scouting on behalf of applicability failes. All the rest were mentioned solely.
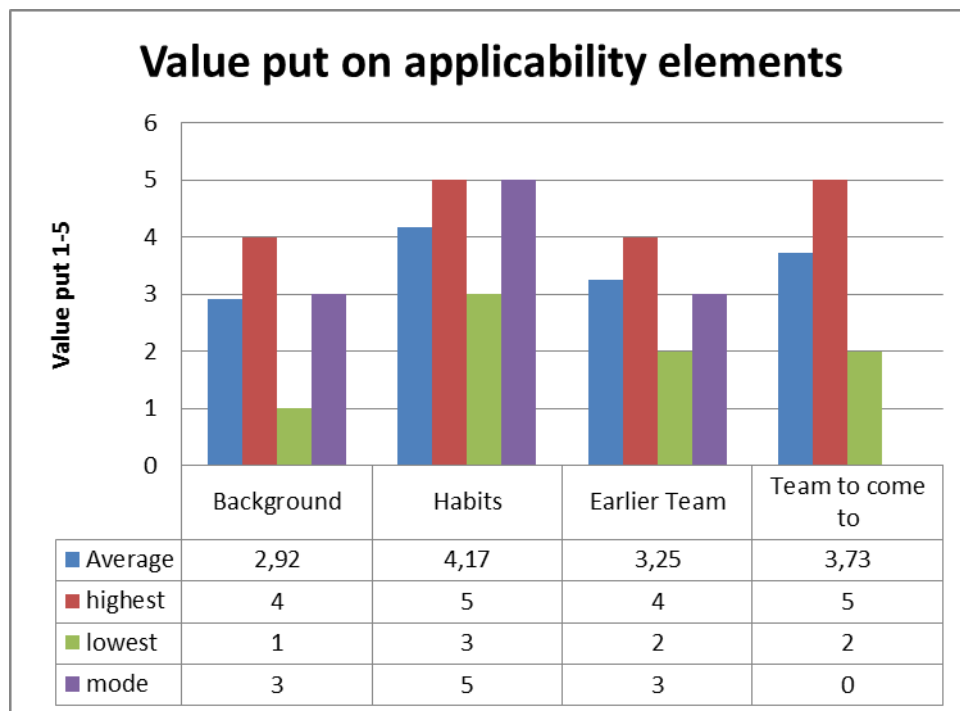

4.6 Value of certain backround elements and player´s personal traits in applicability scouting

SM-League teams were asked how much value (on a scale 1-5) they put in four following applicability elements; 1. Background: home, country, city, culture, environment, 2. Habits: cultural habits, training habits, eating/drinking habits, 3. Team: earlier team culture, organization (big, small, higher level, lower level) 4. Club type to come to: family type of club, working place, legion. (See attachement 1, questions 9,10)

Teams were also asked how much value (on a scale 1-5) they put on a following player´s personal traits; 1. Personality: self-sufficient, help needing, friend needing 2. Attitude: on ice, off ice, happenings, meetings, other participation 3. Commitment: to team, to the team culture, to the club culture 4. Arousal level: being as "present" in all events and occasions 5. Work ethic: every day work spirit high or low? 6. Willingness to learn: Does the player things agreed by the team or does he play his own game 7. Working with the high pressure: Scouted and imported players are always expected a lot, usually more than from domestic players. Issues and lines after each seven element
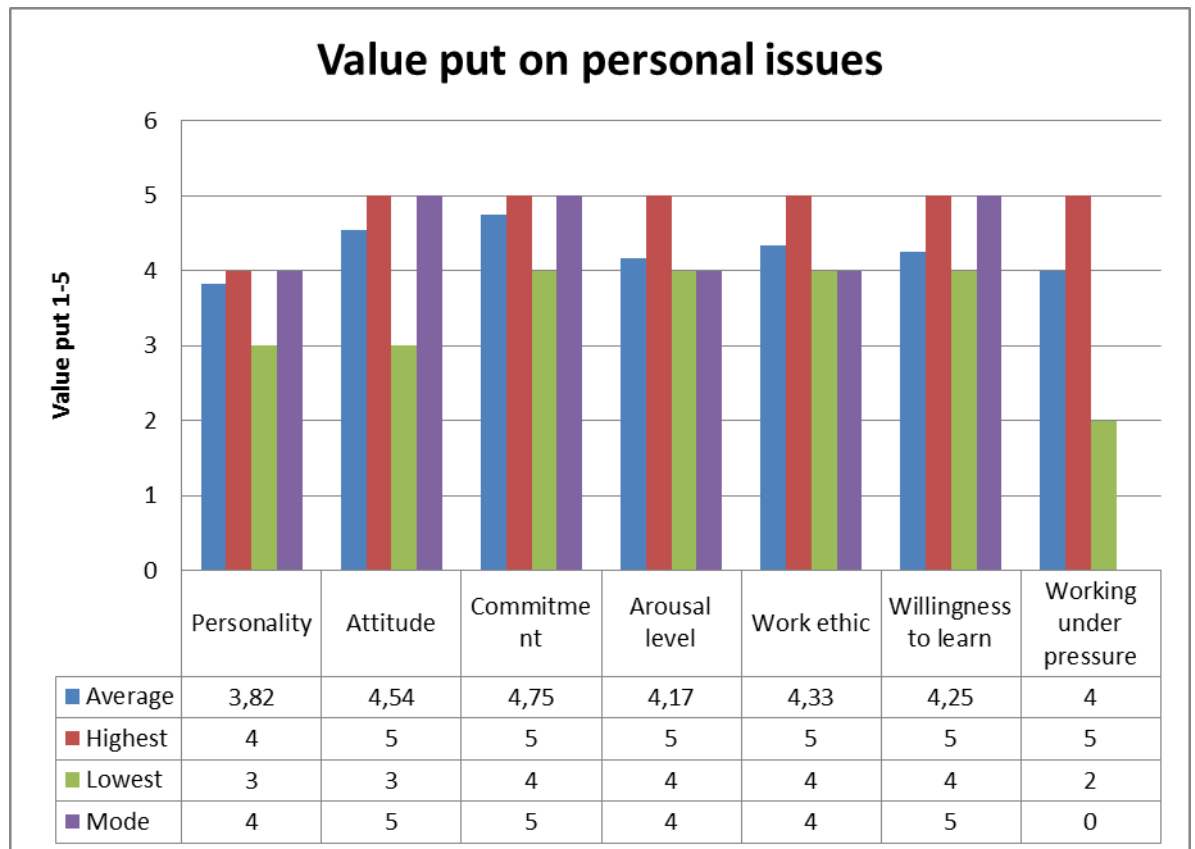
mentioned, were given to clarify the trait, and ease answering the question. Scale 1-5 is: most important 5, important 4, somewhat important 3, not so important 2, and not at all important 1.

Table 9. Elements teams value in applicability scoutning

Value put on applicability elements

	Background	Habits	Earlier Team	Team to come to
Average	2,92	4,17	3,25	3,73
highest	4	5	4	5
lowest	1	3	2	2
mode	3	5	3	0

Players´ "habits" seem to have (Table 9) most value (4,17) and "background" seems to have least value (2,92) on average when scouting applicability elements mentioned." One respondent also wrote freely that it is all the same where the player comes from. Team to come to" (3,73) seems to have on average more value than "earlier team" (3,25) when scouting applicability. Mode (value occurred most) on element "team to come to" (0) was contradictory since both 3 and 5 occurred equal amount of times in answers and therefore in a table it shows the value 0. One respondent did not put any value on "team to come to" and mentioned not to understand the question. There were few low values put and seen in lowest value row in Table 9. Some respondents did not value "Background" (1), "Earlier team" (2) or "Team to come to" (2) very highly. One respondent did not put numerical value on "Team to come to" and there-fore that answer was not counted for the results.

Table 10. Amount of value teams put on personal issues of the players

Value put on personal issues

	Personality	Attitude	Commitment	Arousal level	Work ethic	Willingness to learn	Working under pressure
■ Average	3,82	4,54	4,75	4,17	4,33	4,25	4
■ Highest	4	5	5	5	5	5	5
■ Lowest	3	3	4	4	4	4	2
■ Mode	4	5	5	4	4	5	0

"Commitment" has the biggest value (Table 10) on average (4,75) and "Attitude" (4,54) with "willingness to learn"(4,25) follow quite near with their average value when teams consider personal issues. Player´s "personality" itself has the lowest value on average (3,82) but still relatively high." Working under pressure" (4,00), "Arousal level" (4,17) and "work ethic" (4,33) have values close to each other and no big variation can be noticed. In lowest values few relatively low values were put for "Personality" (3), "Attitude" (3) and "Working under pressure" (2). Mode for all the issues was from 4 to 5. On an issue "working under pressure" there was equal amount of answers 4 and 5 and therefore the in a table it shows "0". For "Personality", "Attitude" and "Working under pressure" issues there were all of them one respondent who did not put a numerical value and therefore not counted for the results.

4.7 Documented processes, ouside help and other issues or elements teams value and check when considering a player´s applicability in scouting.

Teams were asked to name other possible issues, other than already mentioned earlier, what they value and what they may check when considering player´s applicability while

scouting. Teams were also asked if they have a documented scouting and orientation process and if they utilize outside help in scouting.

Table 11. Utilization of documented scouting process and outside help

Documented scouting process and outside help

	Documented scouting process	Outside help used
no	4	3
yes	8	9
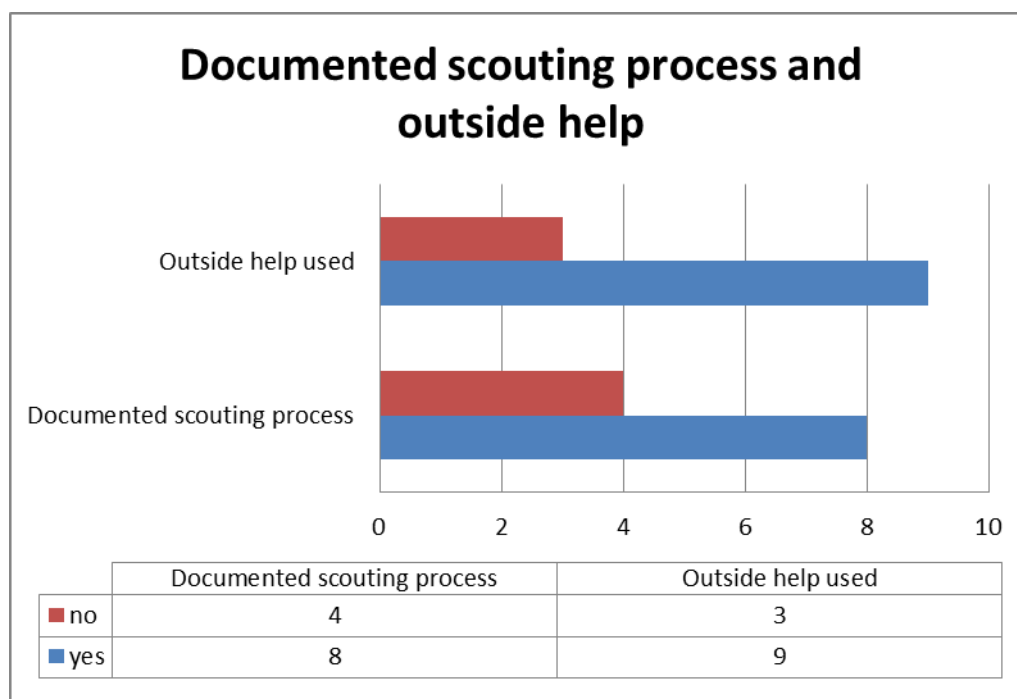
According to results 8 teams have "documented scouting and/or orientation process" and 4 have not (Table 11). Outside help is utilized in 9 teams and in 3 not. The type, model or deepness/details of the processes were not asked. Few mentioned a little more. For example one respondent commented that process is especially for young players and other respondent commented that process starts with sport type technical demands. Other possible issues and elements teams check or value varied a lot. In a Table 12 such issues are listed.

Table 12. Issues or elements teams check in applicability scouting process

Health issues	Statements of players by professionals
Persistence	Personality fits the coach
Age	TotalScouting scoutting program
Passion to learn and develop	Contacts in Europe and USA
Language skills	Player´s personal interviewing sheet
Work history, earlier way of action	Psychology
Character	Earlier coaches, team managers and players

Teams had free space to write down such issues and elements (See attachment 1, questions 11 and 12) they check or value or is not earlier mentioned in the questionnaire. Underlined are answers for question 12 in which other elements were asked. Some of the issues like "health issues" and "character" were already seen in the answers, but for example "age" and "language skills" did not came up until here. One respondent described the answer "persistence" more and stated it as the ability to cope with and go on after disappointments. Personality value has been asked earlier but here one respondent mentioned it accurately as "Personality fits the coach". Nature or source of the outside help did not come up from many respondents. However few answered "professional scouts" and one answered "Total Scouting Program" and also one "Psychology". Element, that did not occur earlier was "Player´s personal interviewing sheet" (Table 12).

4.8   Interpretation of main results of the questionnaire

Teams usually scout approximately 100-150 players per season (Table 1) but there are also teams that scout far more (1000-1500) or very little (5). Amount of signing varies also from 2 to 20 per season (Table 2). I believe those who scout more than 1000 may have a dual role which means they are professional scouts to some other team or organization as well and not only for some particular SM-league teams. However differences and investing for such activity varies a lot. Some teams put a whole lot more money or resources to find new players that fits to their team.

Many teams, 7 out of 12, mentioned the applicability to be very or most important element of the scouting process (Table 3). None said that it has no importance at all. This result means that subject is relevant and also that some teams put a great value for it. However the exact issues that are important in applicability seem to vary a lot (Table 4). Only issues like "character" and "mental issues" occurred in several answers. This means that teams have they own private way of seeing which issues are most relevant in applicability for their team.

According to results applicability takes about 45-50% of the whole scouting process in SM-League teams (see Table 5). Variation was from 25% to 70%. There are still differences in a way of thinking how much applicability takes and possibly requires. Four teams answered scouting is successful on a part of applicability "half the times" and eight teams answered "most of the times" (Table 6). For four teams this might mean that every other player they sign does not fit into a team. That is a huge amount of players and missed opportunities.

While scouting a player teams seem to value the answers of earlier coaches and team mates about the player. Also interviews and appropriate information are valued (Table 7). These are the main issues teams mentioned for successful applicability scouting. These seem to be the main methods of applicability scouting in Finland. Scouting seems to fail for example if the information given is false and when the player´s motivation is not right (Table 8). These issues occurred only twice and all the other issues once. It seems that there are no certain, particular, issues for failure of applicability scouting and according to the result material issues for failing seem to vary between teams a lot.

In Finnish SM-league teams seem to value players "habits" more than other elements. Its average value (4,17) and especially mode value (5) were higher than values of other elements (Table 9). "Background" of the player is the least valued and that is an interesting result. Some teams seem not to value so much where the player comes from.

Commitment, attitude and work ethics are highly respected by the teams of the Finnish SM-league (Table10). Their overall values in the result material were high. On the other hand player´s personality was not that important but also still relatively highly valued (3,82). Interesting is that "working under pressure" had only value 2 by some team. Ability to cope with pressure seems to divide opinions to low or very high.
Almost the same amount of teams, 3 and 4, have not mentioned to have documented scouting process and utilizing outside help (Table 11). Not any kind. Level, deepness or type of the documented process was not asked. Also most of the teams only answered "yes" or "no" to documented process or of utilizing outside help. The sort of the help did not occur in most of the answers. That is on the other hand at least partly

shown in the Table 12. Mostly outside help is mentioned to be "earlier coaches and team mates", "professional scouts etc.", TotalScouting database and contacts in Europe or in North America. Only one respondent mentioned the utilization of psychology.

4.9 Interview results

I managed to interview three persons who are or use to be professional scouts. Two of the interviews were made via telephone and one face to face. Interviews were structured and I had the questions already made before I started to interview. Some answers were given more than original questions required. I have only stated here some interesting results and points and not interviews totally. I asked differences of applicability scouting between NHL and Finland from Jarmo Kekäläinen (Kekäläinen, J. 31.8.2011) Main difference he mentioned between NHL and SM-League applicability scouting was the larger possibility to get to know a player in NHL. There is so much more information available in NHL. He mentioned that the definition of talent is same in both leagues and also anywhere in the world of Ice-Hockey. He has brought the idea of really getting to know the player and asking about the player from as many sources as possible to his team Jokerit now and tries to keep the level of getting information about the scouted player high.

My second interview was made about the Scouting program TotalScouting since one of the questionnaire respondents mentioned the TotalScouting to be a tool they utilize in scouting. Tommi Kerttula (Kerttula, T. 15.9.2011) is an ex-scout and first player coordinator in SM-league. He has founded a TotalScouting Ltd. and developed a tool; internet based program which is used by several SM-league teams and even some NHL teams. In TotalScouting they do not scout players themselves anymore but they offer a tool for clubs and in the program there are also certain locations in tool which teams could use in applicability scouting. Traits such as leadership, coachability and personality/ego can be marked down. Still Kerttula mentioned that personality scouting seems to be very rarely used in Finland. In NHL teams use it and do co-operation with specialized companies to assess player´s personality. Also in a tool there are places for "need of achievement", "players motivation", "development profile" and "own

thoughts about career". Such places are not too much used by the clubs in a tool and Kerttula sees that whole applicability scouting has only started and is part of future. Kerttula says that there are very few sport psychological studies on a part of applicability scouting if at all and coaches have a doubt about the whole applicability scouting. Kerttula mentioned that he understands that coaches have short contracts and some of them are maybe therefore more interested in players´ technical abilities than applicability issues. Such issues may partly be more like issues club management would like to see in their players continuously in the long run. Kerttula sees scouting as a supportive element and not an element against coaches. Kerttula says that applicability scouting style, in which the only method is to ask from earlier coaches and team mates about the player´s actions, is very and too subjective. The network is too small and narrow to get really objective information that way.

Comparing the applicability scouting in Finland and North America I asked experiences from Janne Vuorinen (Vuorinen, J. 20.9.2011) who is Chief European Scout of NHL Central Scouting. He mentioned they use psychological test for those they believe might have a chance to get into NHL. He said that in Finland or in Europe teams do not use psychological tests. They usually use practical methods like calling and talking to an earlier coach or someone who knows the scouted player. They also invite 100 best players of which about 25 from Europe to NHL combine event where NHL teams interview and test best amateur players. Teams are very curious to know background information about the players, even about their parents´ occupations. NHL teams value a great deal the personality and also even if players father has been a top level player earlier. Teams dig a lot deeper than in Finland and wish to really know about the motivation and preparedness to perform in high professional level day after day. Mental toughness, work ethics, maturity and self-directedness are must in order to succeed in NHL and that teams want make sure as well as they can that player has those traits. Without mentioned traits and self-confidence player is unlikely to play in a level he is expected according to his technical and physical abilities. Central scouting does mainly (95%) amateur scouting and therefore not all the issues mentioned are directly comparable with this thesis main scope group, professional players, which are scouted to play in Finland. Still, I believe, most of the demanded applicability elements and issues while scouting, are basically the same.

5   Discussion

In discussion part I will compare the results to thesis objectives and to supportive background theory. I will present possible reasons for results and evaluate methods and their reliability. Finally I will suggest new following studies and utilization of the results in concrete way. My own development and learning of the whole process will be also shortly discussed.

5.1   Thesis objectives and main results

Objective of this thesis work was to find out how much Finnish ice-hockey SM-League teams put value for player´s applicability issues in scouting process. Also objective was to find out what are those applicability issues or elements teams value mostly and how much they put effort to find them out. I had a hypotheses that teams do not, at least not all of them, value enough the player´s applicability issues while scouting them. First significant result that in a way justifies the scope of study is the fact that 4 out of 12 teams mentioned applicability scouting to only succeed half the times. All the rest mentioned it to succeed most of the times. I have been working more than 10 years in HR positions in international companies and I can honestly say that not a one single organization nor team can stand the 50% fail in applicability in their recruitings. Even though Ice-Hockey is challenging world still the rate of failure in this point is just too much. Not a one single team mentioned to succeed all the times and that is honesty that I was lucky to see in the results.

Also approximately same amount, 3 teams out of 12, mentioned not to have documented scouting process and 4 out of 12 mentioned not to utilize outside help. That also means, on my opinion, lack of resources in this area or unwillingness to put effort or value for the subject. It is just about the same amount of teams (5) that mentioned applicability scouting to be important or quite important. Those who mentioned to be very or most important, even most ruling element in scouting, assumably have thought more about the whole scouting process.

Teams had a chance to respond and write freely what issues they value most in applicability. Even though 4 mentioned "character" and 3 mentioned "mental issues"

which may include many things, still only one respondent mentioned "willingness to develop"! Is it really not valuated in teams? Also such issues like "work ethics", "goal – oriented", "competitive spirit" and "co-operation ability" were only mentioned once. I do understand that for example co-operation ability may be taken as granted and is too obvious to mention in a questionnaire, but still only one mentioned it. Also issues like "commitment" and "determination" were only mentioned twice. How could a team possibly get better results in applicability scouting, than succeeding "half the times" if commitment and determination are not prioritised in applicability scouting?

According to interview results and comparing them to questionnaire results it seems that in NHL players background is much more valued, tested, interviewed and evaluated. This is possibly also question of resources but would that make applicability scouting in SM-League better. That can be also one heavily cultural issue of wanting to know as much as possible about the player. Also according to interview of Janne Vuorinen, Finnish or European teams do not use psychological tests and in NHL they do widely. In questionnaire only one team mentioned utilizing services of psychologist. So that is probably quite true. How much help can you get out of psychological test is an other question. One thing is for sure. If the test was utilized with every player, the information would be valid and by the time, with the proper interpretation the help would come out. It would also make a whole proces more solid with one continuously comparable element which is not somebody´s (ex-coach´s or team mate´s) opinion.

5.2 Results vs Theoretical supportive background

It cannot be expected or demanded that all the issues in theoretical supportive backround could be covered professionally in every team´s scouting process. The whole area of relevant issues is wide and large. Still teams should find those issues, more than one or two, that are significant to their team and club culture and best relates to their working habits and work ethics. Most of the teams mentioned applicability scouting to be important and approximately 50% of their total scouting. This half should be well defined and evaluated. In theory part 2.2, Applicability, was shown combination of issues that usually produce success and effectiveness for relocated employee. If we believe such issues consern also ice-hockey players those

issues should occur in the answers some way. Professional activity, skills, we can rule out from this thesis scope but ability to apply those in the new environment, new team, with new coach is one of the key issues and part of professionality like one respondent commented. Do the teams scout this ability? Some respondents mentioned athat suitability to role or accepting a role are important and one mentioned co-operation ability. According to answers, only one responding team really seemed to make sure, that the role team is offering is suitable for the player´s own expectatations now and also possibly in the long run and that the player can apply for that role. Others may do that as well or think the same way but did not mention it in the questionnaire answers. Other issues for effective working in theoretical part about applicability 2.2 are Cultural interaction and Personal issues. These issues should be scouted too. Is the person willing to intreact with locals and learn new cultural issues, language and etc. Is the player and possibly his family going to be satisfied in a very different environment and can they be offered any meaningfull activities other than job, ice-hockey. Or do they really need anything else. Results did not directly show exact answer for this but players "character" was valued by 4 respondents and " Habits", cultural habits etc. were highest valued in the results of question 9 (Table 9). In free text (Table7) one respondent mentioned knowing of "day to day behavior" of the player to be issue to make scouting successful.

Typical value, according to results, teams put on a player´s earlier team, where the player comes from, was 3 (Table 9). According to theory (2.3) player should not be put a team or role too different from his earlier environment. Coaches should take extra care of this issue. Still some respondent mentioned "its all the same for me where the player comes from". This might be a point were my hypotheses of neglecting the applicability scouting occurs. In every recruitment the activity, team or job where from the newcomer comes is one of the key issues. Also according to results there were teams in which they didn´t have documented orientation process. With lack of these two dimensions together, on my opinion, start or even the whole project of a new player is even likely to fail.

According to theory (2.4) every recruitment is project and there should be a plan, process who does what in order to make the project efficient and successful.

According to results the scouting process is not documented at least in 4 teams. In 8 teams that process is documented but is it followed in teams was not asked. If it is not documented and/or followed it is likely that some aspect of the scouting process is not done or no-one is responsible for it. Also one respondent mentioned that when the time limit gets closer, pressure to hire technically good player gets high even if he may not be scouted within the process or does not meet the cultural-habitual demands of the team. These issues might be reasons why I believe scouting also fails on a part of applicability.

My theoretical background (2.5) suggests that committed worker, most of all issues, shares company goals. Is this highly valued or thought in a teams of SM-league? Commitment was valued most of all in results "4,75" (Table 10). This probably tells that teams value commitment a lot. However are they sure what does it mean and what does it mean in their teams? Only 2 teams mentioned exactly "commitment" as an relevant applicability issue in a free text space (Table 4). Of course some may mean it as well by saying "mental issues" to be relevant but exactly only 2 teams mentioned it by themselves. No-one mentioned sharing a common goal. One team mentioned goal-oriented. On my opinion sharing the team goals is the important part of success. Theory also tells that workers benefit for that. Not just the employer. According to a theory (2.5) motivation for learning is highest when the task is just enough challenging to a person. Therefore I believe some teams mentioned the role acceptance and suitability to a offered role to be important applicability issue. I agree, but still according to the results only few teams freely mentioned such issue. Are the others just waiting for the commitment and motivation to come naturally or with financial benefits? I know some professional players may do the job despite the motivational issues, but surely statistics show that committed and motivated by the task given are the hardest working employees.

Results show (Table 10) that "willingness to learn" was highly valued (4,25) by the teams. Motivation and commitment are highly related to learning (2.6). Therefore if team and coach, wants team to learn, player to learn, issues of commitment and motivation should be well covered. If someone seemingly is willing to learn in one

team it does not mean that he is willing to learn in another team unless motivation and level of commitment are high.

Theoretical part (2.7) suggest that work ethics is combination of desire and belief. In results work ethics was highly evaluated (4,33) by the teams (table 10). Still only one mentioned desire freely (Table 4) and belief was not mentioned at all. Of course once again desire can be meant under other elements such as "body language" and "attitude" or "mental issues" but exactly it was mentioned only by one respondent in freely written text (Table 4). I´m not saying teams do not want their players to have desire or good work ethics but are they scouting or assessing it? Do they think what work ethics mean or where it comes from? Tommi Kerttula, ex player coordinator and scout, who I interviewed, mentioned that old school SM-League coaches know things as a rule of thumb but the knowledge is necessarily not academically organized in their heads.

Player´s personality was explained through mental toughness and typical traits in theoretical part (2.8). According to results "personality" was least valued (3,82) by the respondents of all the personal issues asked from teams (Table 10). Differences in values were not too big but at the same time "working under pressure" had the second lowest result (4) of value. In a free text answer "personality" (Table 4) was not mentioned at all by the respondents. This supports loosely Janne Vuorinen´s statement that Finnish teams do not use psychology for personality tests. It seems, according to results, that teams are not that interested in player´s personality as a whole. Still I have to say that personality is an entity of many issue and some of those issues, like character, are mentioned by the teams freely. On my own interest is the fact that in theory (2.8) especially mentioned issues like mental toughness, ability to stand pressure, self –confidence, need of achievement and dominance were not freely mentioned at all. I believe such issues are very relevant. Mental issues was mentioned but not exactly mental toughness or toughness. One team mentioned that in case of failure in applicability scouting (Table 8), reason for failure may be that player´s self-confidence may increase or decrease from the level it was expected to be.

5.3   Surprises and reasons for results

One team whose potential respondent did not answer the questionnaire told me over the phone, when I tried to get him to participate, that "I don´t understand your theory, if we start to scout applicability of the players we get shitty team full of nice boys and not players, besides we don´t even have the money or resources for such activity". I´m not sure if he totally understood the idea of this questionnaire but still the attitude sounded like against the whole applicability scouting. Truth might be that they don´t actually do applicability scouting at all. One respondent send me an empty questionnaire sheet back and did not send new one even though I kindly asked and he did not even answer the phone anymore. All the same I believe there are several reasons for these results and few of them already occurred earlier in the text. Money and resources may be one reason why some players´ applicability issues are not scouted or valued. If you just cannot hire a person to do it or buy outside service, you will probably lose some relevant information of the player. Lack of interest is probably also one reason. Applicability issues are mostly not "on the ice"screenable and therefore not that interesting. Lack of knowledge, education or information might be one reason as well. If you don´t know too much about something you probably concentrate on things you know better while scouting a player.

Surprising result is that all the teams which answered mentioned that applicability has at least some importance and most of them mentioned it to be very or most important issue while scouting a player. Also the teams mentioned applicability to be between 25% to even 70% of the total scouting process. And usually some 50% of it. I would have expected less than that.

One surprise about the applicability issues that came out from the results is that leadership is not as much valued by the Finnish SM-league teams in scouting as it can be heard from the coaches and not as much as it can be read from books and studies. Out loud leadership is demanded but seemingly not scouted. Is it that it is not demanded from all or so many players? Only from few leading players? Anyways my opinion is that if team brings a professional player from abroad it should scout and then expect leadership from that player. Otherwise why bother.

5.4   Methods, reliability and validity

I chose this survey method and usage of questionnaire since I believe it is the best way to get answers for the problem that is an objective in this thesis. Who else could you ask or how else could you see how teams scout their players. Interviews were supposed to support or not support the issues seen in results and possibly give some added or comparable information. I believe I got the information I asked, not all of it so deeply, but enough to get the overall information. Hardest thing is to get the potential respondents to answer the questions and return the questionnaire sheet and that turn out to be the most effort needing part of the thesis. Interviews were relatively easy to arrange and there were not so many of them that they would have taken my time too much.

Always when respondents give answers from and evaluate their own activity there is a reliability risk. Therefore I asked the same or related issues in three ways. Open space to write freely, alternative choosing and numerical evaluation. That is how I made sure that answers were just not given to them. Answers from free written spaces, which were asked first (see attachment 1, questions 3 and 4), should have supported the numerical evaluation part. That I noticed did not always happened as I stated in discussion of results and therefore I might say that some respondents may have exaggerated their amount of value for some issues. Other explanation is that they do value such issues in their minds but not in actions or in their way of working.

I tested this questionnaire by one respondent first in the beginning to evaluate its validity to get the information about matters that are named in the thesis scope objectives. Since I got the "green light" from the respondent I spread the questionnaire out. I believe it is valid to those issues in scope but it does not go very deep in all the questions or better said it does not guarantee the deepness or amount of text in the answers. That is part I gave a thought first but I came to a conclusion that there is a maximum time limit of 15 min I can take their time. Anything more would lose respondents interest and live it without answering. I have been myself in a position in which I received several such a questionnaires through the years and I know that anything more time taking would have left me without answering. According to results I believe issues

quite well can be compared with the theory also. It shows the parts the applicability scouting is valued and not valued by the teams. Results give the information of issues teams believe are relevant in scouting and how big a share (even 70%) they see it in overall scouting process.

5.5 New studies, utilizing results, and suggestion

Next study about the subject might include the players´ point of view for the applicability subject. Scientifically problem to study could be for example ice-hockey player´s orientation and task definition. This should answer the question are the players really told where, into what kind of team culture, what sort of environment and game level they are actually entering? Have they been told particularly what they are expected to and what is the way of working in the team they are scouted for and possibly coming to play? These issues and study results could complete the whole element of player´s applicability.

These results received by thesis work could be utilized by any serious ice-hockey team. First of all, I wish to point out that on my opinion sport type technical abilities, physical abilities and game sense should be scouted first and only after these are found to be just right, then start the applicability scouting of the player. There is no point of applicability scouting if the player is not adequate enough for playing in a role demanded. If the player is found to be skilful enough then try to find out from as many sources as possible about his earlier actions on and off the ice, in a locker room and on his free time. From the issues found relevant in this thesis results team could pick up issues that they are mostly looking for in a player which suites their team. For example "working habits" had the highest value in the results. Team should define those particular issues they expect in day to day working of the player and then try to find out if this player, who is under consideration, poses those traits and habits. Then do same thing again with other elements of applicability team has decided relevant to their style. Another example is the "willingness to learn". Team management and coaches should think is it in their intention to develop their game and is this player under consideration willing enough to go along with it and learn the team´s new style or is it enough if he

plays just as he used to play before. If he needs to learn a lot it should be noticed heavily in scouting and evaluation. There is no point of just assuming the issues that you can check by proper background work.

And then what? Is it just that getting the results out of the thesis work or study as this is nice to know? I believe something more should be suggested if such an area as applicability is studied. As stated in the theoretical part, each recruit is a project and each project includes risks. Teams could do risk management which is based on some statistic or statistical visualization and not just intuition or opinion. In Figure 1 there is a very basic risk management matrix model taken from the web site of Treasury board of Canada secretariat.

Impact	Risk Management Actions		
Significant	Considerable management required	Must manage and monitor risks	Extensive management essential
Moderate	Risks may be worth accepting with monitoring	Management effort worthwhile	Management effort required
Minor	Accept risks	Accept, but monitor risks	Manage and monitor risks
	Low	Medium	High
		Likelihood	

Figuer 1. Risk management matrix (Treasury board, 2004)

In a matrix likelihood of any risk and possible impact can be visually evaluated. In this particular model theree are also stated the management actions. In the darkest (most blue) area risk is highest. This sort of a risk management could be used by the teams with every recruitment of a player. Idea is to pick up the applicability issues that are

possible risks or important elements to be evaluated. In the following figure (Figure 2) I will show a simplified example of risk management matrix that could be used by the teams. Applicability issues are derived from the results. I believe that after using it several times the evaluation gets more accurate little by little and risks can be estimated.

Player X	Ex coach	Psychologist	Scout	TotalScouting data	Total average:
Working habits	1	1	0	1	1
Role accepting	0	0	1	2	1
Commitment	2	1	0	1	1
Character	2	2	1	2	2
Working under pressure	1	2	3	1	2
Work ethics	1	2	2	0	1
Total average:	1	1	1	1	1,5

Figure 2. Own example of Applicability risk management matrix

In the matrix (Figure 2) there are places to be filled by the numerical risk values (0= no risk, 1=low risk, 2 = medium risk and 3= high risk). Values (How big a risk each issue is?) are directly asked or interpreted from the statements or records of Ex coach, Psychologist, Scout and TotalScouting data on a top row. Applicability issues are on the left column and the player is "Player X" as an example prospect. In the rows of "Total" there is an average calculated form each numerical evaluation in a column and row. At the lowest right corner there is an average of the averages calculated. So as an example I have filled the places with numbers from 0 to 3. I have simplified and put down a closest total number to the average cells and derived the final average and risk value (1,5) from them. Still this shows rouhgly the total risk value for "Player X" and it is between low(=1) and medium(=2) risk. Results of Figure 2 also shows issues to monitor or even manage by the coaches or management. For example "character"(av.

2) and "Working under pressure"(av.2) were highest risky valued applicability issues and therefore there should be a plan to manage those or make a decision if this "Player X) is applicable prospect to the team at all on behalf of applicability matters.

The risk matrix I showed is simplified and in no way 100% proof of finding the risks and estimate the player´s applicability. Still it is far much better than having no estimation at all. The thing is to find those relevant issues for the team, estimate those, learn the proper interpretation of the statements of others and learn the accurate evaluation of right values (from 0 to 3). As I stated earlier little by little team representatives will learn to use the matrix better and accurately and it becomes comparable. Earlier prospects´ risk values can be compared with newcomer´s values and their values to their later on behaviors and even performances.

5.6   Learning and development of the Author

I have now studied and made some research of applicability scouting and I can say that I have had a chance to look into the life and way of working of Finnish SM-League teams. On behalf of applicability scouting I can say that it has only just started. Like Tommi Kerttula said it is a part of future and so it seems in many teams. There are teams that do it more than others and possbily in proper way and also there are teams that do not value it or they can´t or will not put money and resources for it. Like I mentioned I had to call several team representatives and in many teams I talked to more than one person. Once again I realized that in any area of life you have to sell your idea to get it through and things done. Hadn´t I called to team respondents several times and explained the value of the outcome of this questionnaire they would have not answered at all.

This is not my first thesis work and therefore I knew what it takes to push it through. I chose the subject that I actually do wish to get an answer and worked for it. Making a thesis developed my information gathering skills again and I believe that I got better in quick evaluating if some research or article actually has the knowledge relevant to my thesis scope. That is not a bad skill. In work life such a skill is highly demanded. It saves time and helps to find relevant issues from any material.

I cannot say I did some or any mistakes even though there are always places for improvement. I probably should have read the Haaga-Helia`s thesis guide carefully and totally in the beginning and not after I already had some text done. Personally I still on the other hand value the inspirational working and drive so much that I did not want to stop it at that point when I got it on going. Best thing is to have a good plan and stick to it. I could have done better schedule for what and how much I do in any point or day. I cannot say if it changed the end result in any ways but I realized that in some days I did more than I should have and that made me sleepy occasionally. I could have had the thesis read more by someone else in and after each phase but could not find anyone trustable nearby. I would have like reading help from someone who has at least some knowledge of the idea and scope rather than someone who only wish to correct my spelling mistakes for me.

In the professional world of ice-hockey I believe I now have one area of expertise that I know better than average. I can hear and see many fan or journalist to complain about the player´s performance or behavior and their suitability to the team´s tyle but have they actually ever studied it. I have and know the reasons why some player´s may not fit to team´s culture and why some have been brought in any ways even though the risk of applicability had been realized earlier.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. Questionnaire sheet

to:

TEAM

Players Coordinator

ADDRESS

From:

Sampo Kärki

Student

Degree Program of Sport and Leisure Management

Haaga-Helia, Vierumäki

tel. +358 40 757 95 63

APPLICABILITY SCOUTING

Questionnaire for SM-league teams in Finland

INTRODUCTION

I am studying in Haaga-Helia Vierumäki. I am doing thesis work about applicability scouting. I sincerely would like Your Team to participate and you to fill this questionnaire and help me to gather information about applicability scouting and how it is done in ice-hockey teams of Finland. If the area of content is not yours I kindly ask you to pass this forward to the person whose area of responsibility player scouting is. After filling I would like you to send the questionnaire to the email address below.

All the information you release or might release is strictly confidential and single answers or teams names with an answer will not show in a study result or conclusion.

Thank you

Sampo Kärki

sampo.karki@gmail.com

In this questionnaire is targeted to players´ <u>applicability</u> scouting. It is not trying to study technical, tactical or physical abilities of the player.

1. How many players you approximately scout each season?

2. How many players you approximately sign each season?

3. How important you think applicability of the player is? Applicability here means player´s applicability to the team, team culture, to the environment, country, city etc.

4. What issues on your opinion are the most relevant when considering player´s applicability?

5. How much overall you pay attention to player´s applicability if you think about whole scouting process? How big a share it is for example 10%, 20%, 50%?

6. How often you think the scouting is successful on a part of player´s applicability scale 1-5?

     1.never 2. sometimes 3. half the times 4. most of the times 5. always

7. What are the key issues on your opinion if scouting on a part of applicability turns out to be successful?

8. What are the issues that fail on a part of applicability scouting?

9. How big a value on a scale 1 to 5 you would put on a following issues considering applicability scouting of the player? (most important 5, important 4, somewhat important 3, not so important 2, not all important 1)

Background; home, country, city, culture, environment __

Habits; cultural habits, training habits, eating/drinking habits __

Team; earlier team culture, organization (big, small, higher level, lower level) __

Club type to come to; family type of club, working place, legion __

10. How big a value you would put on a following player´s personal issues which might occur through applicability issues

Personality; self-sufficient, help needing, friend needing   __

Attitude: on Ice, off ice, happenings, meetings, other participation   __

Commitment: to team, to the team culture, to the club culture   __

Arousal level: being as "present" in all events and occasions   __

Work ethic: every day work spirit high or low?   __

Willingness to learn: Does the player things agreed in team or plays his own game   __

Working with the high pressure: Scouted and imported players are always expected a lot, usually more than from domestic players.   __

11. What other issues, not mentioned here, you value or check when you consider player´s applicability to your team?

Do you have in use documented scouting and orientation process?
Do you use any outside help?

12. Is there some other elements, not mentioned here, in your scouting process on a part of applicability scouting?