**Rangers need Olympian Nash to be elite down the stretch | New York Post**

This was in mid-November, when Team Canada general manager Steve Yzerman and his advisory board gathered in Toronto to review the selection process for the squad that would go to Sochi, a meeting captured by CBC for the half-hour inside-access program, “Defending Gold — The Making of Team Canada” that debuted on New Year’s Day and is currently available on CBC.ca. Yzerman, the general manager of the Lightning, brings up Rick Nash, who had played in the 2006 and 2010 Games, winning gold in Vancouver four years ago, and who has been a fixture in international tournaments since the 2002 World Juniors. “Is Nash the same player as he was in 2010?” Yzerman asks rhetorically. Yzerman guesses it’s debatable. Holland says that’s the question. Boston GM Peter Chiarelli chimes in to say in five games he has seen Nash this season, “he’s been bad.” Yet, Nash is going to Sochi, joining Roberto Luongo as the only players on Team Canada for three straight Olympiads. He is going to Sochi when wingers Marty St. Louis, Logan Couture, Claude Giroux and James Neal are not. He is going to Sochi, quite frankly, because of what he has done in the past for Canada and not what he is doing in the present for the Rangers. This is well and good for our friends up north. This is not so well and good for the folks in New York. Because as the Blueshirts prepare to meet the defending Stanley Cup champion Blackhawks Wednesday night in Chicago, it is clear Nash most certainly must be the player he was in 2010 if the Rangers are going to be anything more than the middling 21-20-3 outfit they are at the moment. Maybe this honor will provide a boost to Nash, who has been more assertive in the last two games, and who played one of his better games of the year in Monday’s 4-3 shootout defeat to the Blue Jackets in which he recorded two goals after having scored once in his previous 11 matches. “I always try to worry about right now. I wasn’t worrying about the roster,” Nash told The Post following Tuesday’s practice in Westchester. “I knew I wasn’t off to the fastest start and I’d been injured, and I knew that could affect my chances but it’s nothing I focused on. “Now that it’s done, though, the trust that Team Canada’s management has put in my game and the way they’ve stood behind me, it’s definitely on me to show that they made the right decision.” It’s also definitely on Nash to show the Rangers made the right decision in breaking up the Blueblood core of the team in trading for him following the 2011-12 season in which the 109-point Black-and-Blueshirts — how dated is that reference? — captured the Atlantic title and advanced to the conference finals. The Rangers don’t have enough depth to succeed with Nash as ordinary as he has been thus far, having scored nine goals with nine assists in 27 games, and without providing a consistent presence. Yes, there was the concussion that sidelined him for 16 games this season, the second brain injury he sustained in eight months as a Ranger, but Nash played forceful hockey upon his return from injured reserve, getting five goals in his first nine games and displaying an edge before somehow falling off a cliff the last month. From Dec. 7 against the Devils, the start of the Rangers’ nine-game homestand, until this past Monday against the Blue Jackets, Nash has been passive and ineffective, mostly on the perimeter. I told him on Tuesday I thought he hadn’t been aggressive enough. “You’re trying to say I’ve been spending too much time on the outside, and I have,” he said. “Sometimes in the big picture you think that you’re effective on the outside, but I have to get to the inside and I know that. “I know what I need to do here.” The Rangers need Nash to answer Yzerman’s and Holland’s question in the affirmative. They need No. 61 to be the player he was in 2010. If he can’t be that, or close to it, then it will be the Rangers who are on the outside. Do you expect Nash to give the Rangers that jolt? Let's trade Sather for a bag of rocks. (Equal value) Then bring in a GM who knows what they're doing and can work towards improving the team. Outside of a couple of years under the entitled one, Ranger team has been middle of the pack for a good decade now. Good enough for Mr. Hockey James Dolan, revolting to the entire Ranger faithful. (Sorry Gordie, all in jest) What do we matter to Lord James anyway. In his mind he has the best hockey man he can possibly get in Slat's. Delusional to say the least. No end in sight to this nightmare. TOTAL FRUSTRATION has set in. Makes you want to become a quasi Blackhawk fan. (Now there's an organization that's turned things around and get's it right) Prust, are you kidding? That's the difference between this team and the so called "blue bloods" ? If you look at the trades for Gaborick and Nash, with the exception of the first round pick for Nash, it's a push. Dubinsky and Anisomov are the same players they were here. Third liners on a good team. Erixon and Moore are a push. This crap about Prust being a big difference is just that, crap. I do think Nash has the potential to be a great player for this team.  He did show that in the regular short season last year (though not the playoffs).  However, I really would have liked this short sighted GM in Sather to have kept the team together for at least one more year from the 2012 almost President's Trophy winnier!!  Black and Blue were their Identity, and I think with the heart & soul  of Prust still leading and keeping the same identical team with maybe a minor tweak (do you really believe Sather could do that - NAH!), we would have at least seen this team's potential or not!  Now, we will never know and Sather has effectively brought this team back to 1998 to 2004!  We had a real shot with the 2012 team - it is too bad this terrible GM (who incidentally allowed McIlrath picked over Cam Fowler!!) has destroyed what had been built up. It will take more tha Nash to take this team seriously as a contender. He only plays 20 minutes a game. What about the other 40? Stepan and Brassard need to be more consistent and raise their game. Poulliat has actually been quite good. Callahan needs to get back to his roots. Richards needs to be as good as he was with Tampa. Someone has to grab the fouth and fifth defense spots and play well. Lundquist is as big a key as Nash. He needs to be what we have all been accustomed to seeing the last 6 years. If not, they need to give Cam more starts. Nash played for a team that was out of the playoff picture by week 4. There were no expectations so he was able to roam and score goals because the opponents didn't have to worry about covering him. Once again, the Rangers pick a guy who excels in a small market with a team that is not competitive. He has never been a power forward and he excels with team Canada because he played on a line with guys who got him the puck. HE IS NOT A GAME CHANGER. Range problem is with their president, the conductor of all these deals. Sather has been at the helm for how long? We have a new team every year? Rangers do not scare anybody and have counted on Lunquist to be superman game after game. They are a below average team, both skill wise and compete level. If they played out west, they would be 10 games below 500. I remember Nash in Columbus. I remember all the 'let's get Nash' talk...that he would be the difference maker to a cup...especially by Larry Brooks. I have the TV hockey package and personally didn't notice Nash being so dominant in Columbus. Well, Nash is very soft. Brooks described Nash as though he was a Lindros type....he is...Lindros after 3 concussions-soft. This guy Nash has basically ruined the NYR franchise. Sather never should have traded for this guy. Nash is heartless, soft, uninvolved. Let's trade Nash for Gaborik...at least Goborik scores goals. I think a major factor with Nash is his stamina.  Concussion injuries can force a player to be virtually inactive, not much keeping in shape during recovery.  I'm sure it's something most players don't readily admit but even being at 90% top form could put a player at a disadvantage.  This is why we may see spurts and inconsistencies because Nash is trying to find a balance of how to budget what he has in the tank while being effective.  Nash can go all out early in the game and look like a champ but then fades.  Even if it's because teams play him close and physical it still amounts to him not having enough energy and stamina to over come the opposition against him.  In this sense I think playing in the Olympics could help him because he might play himself into a zone and reach top shape this season.  Of course the negative side of it is that he might end up even more tired or even injured. Anyway, my take is that Nash doesn't have his peak form stamina yet.  Hopefully as he improves his conditioning he'll be more consistently dominant. Up until now we've seen flashes of it but he doesn't assert himself on a consistent basis. Sometimes that's even the case in the same game. Example of that was a road game against Boston this year. Nash scores a great response goal to the Bruins to tie the game in the first period. Then for the rest of the game he's virtually invisible. If he's our go to guy on offense he's got to show up every game not when he feels like it. Bottom line is I'll believe it when I see it. Hasn't been a difference maker on the power play either when he has more ice to operate. If he keeps up his on and off routine maybe we should try to deal him and get two good players back. Oh, scratch that. With Sather working the trade we'll wind up with the short end of the stick 90% of the time so why bother. crawlface - Hope your theory is correct Christopher. Guess we'll just have to wait and see. Wish he was more hard nosed. When the going gets tough and teams play him physical there doesn't seem to be much, if any, push back in him. Very skilled but very soft big man. I think if we could add a hard nosed veteran who also has the ability to play with Nash - and can take care of himself when confronted - then we may see Nash be more of a consistent force. Other teams wouldn't be able to play that physical and intimidation game against him that's effective. On another note, what is it with us getting snakebit by concussions? Our two biggest recent aquisitions - Nash and the departed Clowe - got multiple concussions. Add losing Sauer to one and the role they've played in effecting Staal's play, we've been really hit with some back luck to key players over the last few years. Paul D I agree 100%. He's been so inconsistent. He doesn't seem to play with any sense of urgency. Now I'm not asking him to throw his body around (although that would help but appears not to be his game), but he definitely needs to be more aggressive on offense. He needs to shoot the puck more and stop trying to be a playmaker with errant passes. He also need sot cur down on the number of silly penalties he's been taking. You can't score if you're sitting int he box.