

Marko Pecarski (HM+)
Partizan (Serbia), NCAA Interest: Medium
6'9 / 225 lbs, PF/C, Age: 17.4, Serbia
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Pecarski was arguably the most productive big man at this tournament, scoring and rebounding at his typically ridiculous rates, getting to the free throw line at will, making an occasional 3-pointer, and dominating the defensive glass. He's always the first to react to the ball coming off the glass, despite not being overly long or explosive, he just gravitates towards the ball.

Pecarski has elite scoring instincts, both facing the rim and with his back to the basket. He can throw in turnaround jumpers out of the post, and will go right to work using his strong body when he sees a matchup he likes in the post.

He has a natural jump-shot that has plenty of potential to continue to develop into a real weapon, especially considering his career 38% 3-point and 79% free throw percentage in the 63 games he played in included in our database.

While he has short arms, he has no neck and big shoulders, giving him tremendous potential as a post player at the college level. His frame is fairly maxed out.

Pecarski's biggest shortcomings revolve primarily around his defense, which is porous at best and flat-out embarrassing at worst. He never bends his knees on the perimeter, playing the game completely straight up when stepping outside of the paint, and looks completely indifferent far too often, with a level of apathy that can be concerning. He never blocks shots, does not get any steals, and is also a very poor passer, being somewhat of a black hole, which is understandable to a degree considering how unstoppable he is at this level offensively, and the fact that he never turns the ball over.

Pecarski is without a doubt an elite-level talent in this class, even if he told us he's not yet 100% committed to taking the college route at this stage, he has to be considered a five star caliber recruit. His NBA potential is much more of a question mark due to his limitations, which will undoubtedly become a lot more pronounced against better competition, but that only makes him more attractive as a NCAA recruit.

Filip Petrusev (HM+)
Montverde Academy (FL), NCAA Interest: Very High
6'11 / 215 lbs, PF/C, Age: 17.2, Serbia
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

After getting an extended look at him in an AAU setting throughout the Under Armour Association, it was good to see Petrusev in a different environment back in the international game. Unfortunately, the coach of Serbia decided early on that he will not use any of him, Pecarski or Koprivica together at any time, which meant that one of the three would be the third string center, which limited Petrusev to a somewhat minor role.

Nevertheless, Petrusev was able to show some nice things operating full time at the center position, particularly defensively where he did a nice job of covering ground, hedging out to the perimeter, and recovering into the paint for blocks. He's mobile, smart and instinctive, giving him very nice potential in this area, which should allow him to play both big men spots alongside different types of big men.

Offensively, Petrusev did not see too many touches and certainly was not asked to step out to the 3-point line, which is where a lot of his value lies when combined with his strong basketball IQ and playmaking ability. He played his role fairly effectively though, not really stepping outside of what the coach asked him to do, which was nice to see.

In a class that is by all accounts lacking significant depth and star power at the big men spots, it is difficult not to wonder if people are not missing the boat not giving strong consideration to Petrusev for five star status.

Alexander Shashkov (HM+)
Helios (Slovenia), NCAA Interest: Medium
6'10 / 225 lbs, PF/C, Age: 17.4, Russia
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Shashkov had an up and down showing at the UI8s, demonstrating elite-level skill and potential at times, while also completely underwhelming in others.

He has ample size to play either big man spot in college, standing around 6' 10, with big shoulders, strong legs, and solid fluidity and athleticism. He is not overwhelmingly explosive, but is quite mobile and quick off his feet.

Shashkov can score from all over the floor, being a capable 3-point shooter, navigating closeouts impressively for his size, scoring out of isolations from the perimeter, and also showing some ability to operate inside the paint as well. He can even shoot off the dribble some, which is not something you typically see from a player his size. He also has a good feel for the game, finding teammates at times with impressive court vision.

While Shashkov can seemingly do virtually everything you would want your 6' 10 big man to do, he struggles to put it all together consistently, which is not shocking considering his age and the fact that he was playing up here by one year.

Shashkov is heavily reliant on catching and shooting the ball in rhythm, as he otherwise takes too long to get into his jumper, and can look a little bit stiff with the way he bends his knees and releases the ball.

He is still learning the nuances of how to play, and the environment he was in, alongside too many selfish guards without much of a feel, did not help matters much, as he tended to catch, hold, and dribble the ball excessively at times, getting frustrated after his teammates froze him out for long stretches, and pulling up for contested jumpers in turn.

Defensively, Shashkov needs a lot of work, as he is somewhat stiff in the hips, struggles to bend his knees, is upright on the perimeter, and is very much stuck between the big men positions. He gets lost off the ball, does not know where to rotate on pick and rolls, and could do a better job of protecting the rim considering his tools. He actually is a fairly competitive and smart defender with solid mobility and instincts overall, and it's likely only a matter of good coaching before he can become at least passable in this area.

Shashkov speaks five languages, being born into a basketball family with plenty of former professional players. His mother indicated to us that he may be interested in pursuing the college route, which has to be considered intriguing for even the highest of high major programs. He is reportedly a very good student.

Aleksa Uskokovic (HM)
Red Star (Serbia), NCAA Interest: Low
6'3 / 180 lbs, PG/SG, Age: 17.9, Serbia
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Uskokovic continues to impress in virtually every setting we see him in, as he is obviously making real progress with his frame and game, which is exactly what you would hope from someone yet to turn 18.

He looks every bit of 6' 3 now, and his frame has gotten a lot stronger as well, especially in the upper body. That helps him in particular on the defensive end, where he can really get up and guard, being physical with his approach and capable of moving his feet quickly to stay in front. He plays with great intensity, and gets in the passing lanes at a tremendous rate.

Uskokovic's shooting has really improved over time, and that trend continued at this tournament, where he made a good amount of 3-pointers both with his feet set and off the dribble, hitting 44% of his attempts overall. He is somewhat of a reluctant shooter at times (attempting nearly three times as many 3s as 2s), but certainly makes enough to lead you to believe he can be OK in time.

Known as a fairly wild kid early in his career, Uskokovic still had his turnover prone moments, driving into brick walls, heaving up some questionable shots in the paint, and being a little too ball-dominant. He can definitely pass the ball nevertheless, as he sees both sides of the floor, is good at finding teammates on the move, and generally keeps the offense running fluidly.

While the trend in college is definitely not to go after European guards, Uskokovic could be the rare case where making an exception is warranted. Like all Red Star players, there is quite a bit of mystery surrounding whether or not he will actually elect to pursue the college route, as he is reportedly been a bit wishy-washy regarding what he wants to do. Should he decide to commit to taking the NCAA path, Uskokovic is absolutely worth considering for high majors.

Jonas Mattisseck (HM)
Alba Berlin (Germany), NCAA Interest: Medium
6'4 / 185 lbs, PG, Age: 17.5, Germany
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

One of our favorite players at this event, Mattisseck made a strong impression playing up a year and being forced to carry a fairly heavy scoring load in his minutes on the floor. The lefty has grown to around 6' 4, and has tremendous creativity and instincts for a European guard. He is an excellent ball-handler who loves to operate in the pick and roll and can find teammates with pinpoint accuracy off the dribble with either hand. He uses shot fakes, change of

speeds, fancy footwork, and different tricks to keep defenders off balance. His stroke appears to be coming along nicely as well, as he made quite a few jumpers in the games we were at, even off the dribble at times, from deep range, and late in the clock. The ball comes out of his hand nicely, and even if his release needs to be sped up a bit, he undoubtedly has great potential in this area as well, making a blistering 16/28 3-point attempts in seven games.

On the downside, Mattisseck is still a pretty skinny kid without great length or explosiveness, which may limit his effectiveness against top-shelf athletes in the US in certain matchups. He needs to push off to turn the corner at times, and struggles to finish inside the paint over length. Defensively, he gets turned around easily, struggles to guard without fouling, and lacks the type of standout physical tools to contain elite-level shot-creators off the bounce. That did not stop him from getting into the passing lanes at an elite rate at this event though.

Mattisseck is nevertheless a serious baller, and schools looking for a PG at almost any level would be smart to look at him and figure out how to make things work. He is not 100% sold on college yet, mentioning his professional team repeatedly in our interview, but then discussing the opportunity to go to the NCAA enthusiastically once the camera was shut off. He asked to reach out to his parents, and contact him via Instagram. We would pursue him aggressively if we were building a team and needed a PG.

Ignas Sargiunas (HM)
Zalgiris (Lithuania), NCAA Interest: High
6'4 / 180 lbs, PG/SG, Age: 17.9, Lithuania
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Sargiunas did not have an overwhelmingly impressive UI8 statistically, but nevertheless looked every bit the part of a high major guard. His body continues to fill out nicely, and his ball skills are really coming along. He can handle it smoothly, play out of pick and rolls, find the open man, and also make shots with his feet set or off the dribble. He is more athletic than he appears on first glance, and his ability to operate at different speeds gives him really nice potential to grow into. He's also a capable defender with solid competitiveness and toughness.

Sargiunas's parents are interested in sending their son to college, and schools who are interested should reach out so we can put you in touch with the right people. He will likely fall somewhere between HM and HM- status, but needs to land in the right place stylistically like all European guards headed to the NCAA.

Yusuf Sanon (HM)
Dnipro (Ukraine), NCAA Interest: Very High
6'4 / 190 lbs, PG/SG, Age: 17.7, Ukraine
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Sanon is a 2017 high school grad with very poor grades that will make it difficult for him to get eligible without two years of junior college. His lack of proficiency speaking English will not help matters. A 6' 4 SG with a strong frame and some length, Sanon feels far more like an American guard than one from the Ukraine. Sanon has African roots with his father hailing from Burkina Faso.

An Athletic kid with long strides who plays at different speeds, gets low with his dribble and will go and dunk on people in the half-court, Sanon has plenty of shit to his game as a scorer, but can also drive and dish some. Shooting the ball with an impressive shooting stroke with his feet set or off the dribble Sanon is more than just an athlete. Playing some PG here and not look awful doing it Sanon flashes intriguing versatility.

Possessing good upside defensively, Sanon will rotate for blocks on occasion with great timing. He also makes impressive closeouts on the perimeter.

Not playing with the steadiest demeanor, his body language is not always great as he hangs his head, complains to teammates, and is very outwardly expressive. Functioning as a little bit of a volume shooter, at times out of necessity, he is still figuring out when to shoot or pass leading to some unforced errors, turnovers, and bad shots. Sanon flashes a great natural feel for the game, but has never been taught how to play seemingly getting by strictly off his talent.

It will be a long road to get Sanon eligible for college, and the fact that he speaks no english certainly won't make things any easier. Nevertheless, he could be a stud at the high major level if everything falls into place down the road.

Mathis Dossou Yovo (HM)
INSEP (France), NCAA Interest: Medium
6'9 / 220 lbs, PF/C, Age: 16.7, France
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

As one of the youngest players at this event, and by far the youngest on France's roster at just 16-years old, Yovo was not asked to do a great deal, but found ways to contribute with his physical tools and intensity level, particularly on the glass. He has a tremendous frame, solid athleticism, and a good understanding of who he is as a player. He runs the floor, cleans up the offensive glass, and keeps mistakes to a minimum. College coaches watching Yovo for the first time likely were not blown away, but it is difficult to find guys in his mold, and he undoubtedly has significant upside to continue to improve. His biggest issue is the fact that he graduates high school as a 17-year old, and thus will not likely be ready to produce much immediately at the high major level, where his potential indicates he should land. Regardless, mid-majors who feel confident in their recruiting ability, and high-majors willing to be patient, should pursue him aggressively, as he is already getting very good offers from pro teams in France.

Maros Zeliznak (HM-)
GBA Academy (Czech Republic), NCAA Interest: Very High
6'11 / 230 lbs, Center, Age: 18.4, Slovakia
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Zeliznak had somewhat of a coming out party in his home country of Slovakia at the UI8s, showing his strengths and weaknesses quite vividly, in front of a horde of college coaches. He has a high major frame at 6' 11, 230 pounds, and appears to have done some nice work with his body since the last time we saw him, shedding some of the baby fat he once had.

Zeliznak is an old school pivot and does not mind going to work with his back to the basket, where he can carve out deep post position and score over either shoulder with solid footwork and touch. He is limited as a finisher in traffic against better competition due to his lack of explosiveness, but should be able to find advantages at the college level as well due to his strength, hard-working style of play, and solid skill-level.

Zeliznak plays extremely hard and is able to make an on the offensive glass because of that. He was absolutely dominant crashing the boards in Bratislava, sometimes collecting his own misses. He is not afraid of contact and will relish the opportunity to finish through it if possible.

Zeliznak struggles with all the things big men in his mold typically do. He misses shots around the paint due to his inability to elevate quickly and explosively off the ground. He does not cover ground well defensively, being almost incapable of stepping outside of the paint, and is a complete non-factor as a rim-protector. He gets winded fairly easily, and is just an a passable free throw shooter at 57% for his career.

There's still a market for old school big men in Zeliznak's mold, and the fact that he is a nice, sweet, humble, hard-working kid who by all accounts who has made significant strides the past three years definitely bodes well in his favor for finding high major minus offers and having a productive college career in the right system. He is reportedly an excellent student as well.

Guglielmo Caruso (HM-) (Italy), NCAA Interest: High 6'9 / 200 lbs, PF/C, Age: 18.0, Italy [DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Caruso had a strong showing in Bratislava, emerging as a key piece for Italy and one of the most productive big men in attendance, catching the eyes of NCAA coaches in the process. He is not overly tall, nor strong, for a center, but has a massive wingspan (7' 2) and excellent mobility that allows him to play bigger than his size. Caruso is a fluid post who covers ground well and has good body control. His footwork on the block is sound and he will surprise you at times with some interesting moves over either shoulder that hint at some things to come down the road. His hands are soft and he is a fairly reliable roller who can catch and finish in one fluid motion on the move. He also almost never turns the ball over. He has always been an excellent rim protector at every level he has played at (career 3.3 blocks per-40) thanks to his length, instincts, mobility and the quickness in which he gets off his feet.

Caruso's frame is narrow, but may be able to make some strides in a NCAA weight room. He should likely be fine by the time he is an upperclassmen. His ability to cover ground helps him in pick and roll coverages.

He is a solid offensive rebounder, but a very poor defensive rebounder. He also shoots just 55% from the free throw line, raising some doubts about his ability to stretch his jumper and find some range on his shot, something that would come in very handy for him and allow him to see some time offensively at the 4. He's not a brilliant passer by any means either.

Caruso has never been considered a particularly physical or tough player, as he regularly backs away from contact and can get pushed around and backed down by stronger players with ease. That, combined with his lack of strength, may prevent him from being able to play at the higher levels of college basketball, as he will likely struggle early on in his career with the physicality of the college game.

Lukas Uleckas (HM-)
Zalgiris (Lithuania), NCAA Interest: Medium
6'7 / 200 lbs, SF, Age: 17.9, Lithuania
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Uleckas had a strong tournament for Lithuania, as he seems to be on a serious upward trajectory both physically and skill-wise. He has reportedly grown to 6' 7 now, and with his strong frame, solid athleticism, and fairly versatile skill-set, there is no reason not to consider him a high major prospect at this point. He shot the ball extremely well at the UI8s, can play pick and roll and find the open man with flashy passes, and is fairly creative overall. Uleckas is reportedly not the toughest guy around physically nor mentally, so it will be important for him to land in the right place college wise to maximize his full potential. There is still no consensus about who is running the show for Uleckas or whether he is definitely considering the NCAA route, but considering how difficult it is to find wings in his mold, he's absolutely worth pursuing for most programs.

Lukas Kisunas (HM-)
Brewster Academy (Lithuania), NCAA Interest: Very High
6'8 / 225 lbs, Center, Age: 18.5, Lithuania
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Kisunas had a strong showing at the UI8s, at 21 points and 15 rebounds per-40 in just 17 minutes per game, with college coaches saying he typically looks better in US settings than he did here. His appeal is obvious on first glance, as he has an absolutely massive frame that has gotten significantly bigger in the upper body in the past year.

Kisunas's primary value lies in his ability to crash the glass and use his strong frame to his advantage on both ends of the floor. He can play above the rim when he has time to gather, but is not skilled at all and struggles to score otherwise inside the post. He relies on brute force for the most part, tossing guys out of the way, drawing fouls and crashing the offensive glass aggressively. He struggles to pass the ball effectively, being strictly a roll-man finisher. Kisunas's average athleticism, skill-level and feel raises some doubts about his ability to translate his bulldozing style to the highest NCAA levels, and he may be well suited looking a notch lower, despite the visibility he is garnering at Brewster, which will likely land him significant college interest. He is reportedly an excellent student, which certainly will not hurt his cause either.

Nikola Zizic (HM-)
Barcelona (Spain), NCAA Interest: Medium
6'11 / 220 lbs, Center, Age: 17.2, Montenegro
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Playing up a year at this competition, Zizic saw only 17 minutes per game behind arguably the most talented big man at the event (Marko Simonovic), but still had a fairly productive, efficient showing. Zizic is about to enter his third

season in Barcelona, after which the team holds an option on whether to keep him or not. Once hyped (actually misevaluated) as one of the top prospects in his generation, there ' s a high probability that Zizic won ' t be extended, as he looks far from being able to play at the highest levels of European basketball at this stage. The better route for him could very well be to go to college and come back afterwards, at which point he will be far better suited to help a professional team win games. This is a conversation we have had with him and he seems very much open to.

As a player, Zizic has legit size, and a strong frame. He runs the floor with very short, choppy strides, and is not overly explosive vertically from a stand-still, but moves fairly well overall. Left-handed, he can play with his back to the basket a bit, primarily hunting hook shots over his right shoulder. He is not afraid of contact and is relatively physical overall. He has good hands and is reasonably skilled as a finisher, showing solid footwork, body control and touch.

Defensively, Zizic brings a lot of value. He has good awareness and timing, being a competitive big man with a solid IQ. He crashes the glass hard, gets out on closeouts, and knows how to position himself. A little upright, and hunched over in his stance at times, Zizic can continue to improve his defense stepping out on pick and rolls, as he lacks a degree of lateral quickness and can get blown by off closeouts. He is a very emotional kid on the floor, which can get the better of him at times.

Zizic ticks a lot of boxes that schools right outside the elite tier of programs are looking for in a big man, and is reportedly a good student as well. He speaks excellent English and comes off as being very intelligent off the floor.

Getting him over will be somewhat of a process, but it is worth exploring, especially as a backup plan in case an American big man goes in a different direction, as he is likely to pop late, if at all. It is worth exploring the concept of bringing him together with his teammate at Barcelona, countrymate, and good friend, Pavle Titic, who is extremely talented in his own right, but is highly introverted. They share the same adviser, Richi Gonzales.

Pavle Titic (HM-)

Barcelona (Spain), NCAA Interest: Medium

6'3 / 185 lbs, PG, Age: 17.4, Montenegro

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Playing up a year as a 2000-born prospect, Pavle Titic had an inconsistent, but still often impressive showing as the main facilitator for Montenegro. He has good size for a point guard at 6 ' 3, looking like a baby in the face and likely still having even more room to grow physically, which he will need considering his otherwise underwhelming frame.

Titic is a skilled and aggressive offensive player who can dribble, pass and shoot, and excels in particular operating out of the pick and roll. He has picture perfect shooting mechanics and is lethal making pull-up jumpers when defenders go under the screen. He sees the court nicely and uses both hands and sides of the floor to his advantage when operating in the half-court, dishing off unselfishly with plenty of creativity and flair. He tends to avoid contact in the paint, but has really soft touch on his floater and can make some difficult shots over defenders at times.

On the downside, Titic has short arms and a narrow frame, which will make his adjustment to high major basketball a little more complicated despite his natural talent and skill-level offensively. His defense needs work, and he lacks a degree of physicality seeking out contact in the paint and getting to the free throw line. His decision making can be very questionable at times as well, as he averaged an obscenely high amount of turnovers to go along with his identical number of assists.

Titic came to Spain with fellow Montenegrin Nikola Zizic via Richi Gonzalez, and has one more year in high school and on his amateur contract, similar to Zizic. There are no guarantees that Barcelona will elect to keep him as his adjustment to Spain has reportedly not gone very smoothly, with some of his teammates expressing concerns privately about Titic's off the court intangibles. For a school looking for a point guard/big man combination, willing to think outside the box a bit, Titic and Zizic could potentially be an attractive package deal option worth exploring, although it certainly will not be a slam dunk.

Joshua Mballa (MM+)

Arlington Country Day (USA), NCAA Interest: High

6'7 / 215 lbs, PF/C, Age: 17.9, France

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Mballa was highly productive (as he always seemingly is at every level) in a backup role, coming into games and making his presence felt with his physical tools and aggressiveness. He is noticeably grown since the last time we saw him, and should be able to play a role as an energetic 4/5 at the mid-major level, especially since it does not appear that he has finished his maturation physically.

Mballa's main virtues lie on the defensive end, where he is a multi-positional player who can put a body on almost any big man, but also flies around impressively on the perimeter, covering ground and wreaking havoc with his length and athleticism. He will meet guys at the rim for blocks, rebounds out of his area, and even shows occasional flashes scoring around the paint.

He does not have a high skill-level, can look fairly wild at times trying to go outside his comfort level, can be a questionable decision maker, and converted just 41% of his free throw attempts. With that said, his tools and intensity level are excellent, and he has a great deal of room to continue to grow still, something French players in his mold often do in their late teens and early 20s. Mballa's recruitment has been very slow from what he told us, likely due to the fact that he's at ACD. There is still plenty of room for new mid-major schools to come into the mix, and we think there is a lot of value here, so reach out if you are interested in learning more.

Didac Cuevas (MM+)

Joventut (Spain), NCAA Interest: Very High

5'11 / 150 lbs, PG, Age: 17.1, Spain

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Cuevas played up a year as a 2000-born prospect, but nevertheless emerged as Spain's best option at the point, helping them win some games with his energy off the bench. They ended up finishing 2nd at this competition, which was impressive considering they were far from the second most talented team here. Cuevas certainly played a big part in that, averaging an outstanding 19 points, 8 assists, 5.5 rebounds and 3.6 steals per-40 minutes, while shooting 56% for 2, 41% for 3 and 80% from the line.

Cuevas is an ultra-aggressive player on both ends of the floor, blessed with excellent quickness for a European guard. He loves to push the ball in the open court, where he can get right to the rim, or sometimes pull up for a Stephen

Curry-esque 3-pointer. He can also create off the bounce in the half-court with his quick first step, often rejecting the screen or just blowing by opponents in one on one situations in a straight line going left. He is a better finisher than you would think considering his size, often initiating contact to create space, showing more strength than you would expect. He also finds teammates with great creativity on the move, whipping the ball all over the floor with pinpoint passes. A very good outside shooter, making 12/29 attempts from deep in 7 games in Bratislav, Cuevas can make shots with his feet set or off the dribble, even if he can get a little wild at times forcing up tough shots early in the offense.

The best part of Cuevas' game might be his defense. He is an absolute pest and flies all over the court, covering tons of ground, getting right up in opponents' grills, and generating tons of steals in the process (4.1 per-40 career, 3.6 at the UI8s). He's a tough kid who also gets on the glass, grabbing 6.5 rebounds per-40 for his career, which would be a nice rate for a small forward, let alone a 5' 11 point guard.

Cuevas was one of the most fun and unique players at this tournament, bringing huge energy every time he stepped off the bench for Spain, and changing the complexion of every game he participated in with his speed, creativity and aggressiveness. There's likely a ceiling on what level in college he can accomplish those same things at considering his lack of size, but he would be a fan favorite at any mid-major program. He's open to being recruited according to his adviser. We had previously mistakenly labeled him as a 2019 recruit.

David Kralj (MM+)
Olimpija Ljubljana (Slovenia), NCAA Interest: Medium
6'4 / 190 lbs, SG, Age: 18.5, Slovenia
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Kralj emerged as the leader of this Slovenian national team, putting up some very impressive performances demonstrating his excellent scoring instincts and versatility. This was a breakout tournament for him as he averaged 14 points, 5 rebounds, 2 assists and 2 steals per game, and mid-major schools looking for versatility in the backcourt would be wise to give him a look.

The lefty has good size for a combo guard at 6' 4, with a strong frame and above average athleticism for a Euro. He can play above the rim a bit in space, and is aggressive looking to make things happen on the floor.

Kralj is a fairly complete offensive player for a mid-major guard, being capable of handling the ball, passing, and making shots at a nice clip. He is a creative player, particularly out of a ball screen, and has deep range on his jump-shot, regularly making pull-up 3s. He has a lot of moxie to his game, and also sees the floor fairly well and makes the extra pass unselfishly. He gets after it on the glass, posting huge rebounding numbers for a guard, and also gets in the passing lanes prolifically, a testament to his strong feel for the game and anticipation skills.

Kralj is a little bit of a wild kid at this stage, not always being capable of finishing what he creates around the basket, which limits his efficiency (44% 2P%). He is not an explosive leaper, being forced to rely on timing, aggressiveness and smarts, which puts a limit on his ceiling as far as the level he can play at.

He had a nice showing and be may on somewhat of an upward trajectory. Kralj told us he is very interested in college and mid-major schools who are in need of an aggressive combo guard in his mold should certainly reach out.

Konstantinos Kampouridis (MM+)

Aris (Greece), NCAA Interest: High

6'8 / 225 lbs, PF, Age: 18.0, Greece

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

A 2017 high school graduate, Kampouridis played quite a few minutes on a Greek team lacking any real athleticism in the frontcourt, and struggled quite a bit to score efficiently (40% 2P%, 25% 3P%) or contribute consistently in other areas. He is fairly skilled for a guy his size, showing nice footwork, a good looking jump-shot, the ability to attack a closeout, solid ball-skills, and some decent vision finding the open man. He is yet to figure out how to put these things together in an effective way, though, forcing the issue badly at times, settling for tough shots, running into brick walls, and having a difficult time finishing around the rim.

He clearly lacks polish in a serious way, and is certainly stuck between positions defensively, being a little bit too thick for a 4-man, and too short for a 5, not offering any rim protection or defensive rebounding at either spot. With that said, Kampouridis has good physical tools for the mid-major level, and a decent framework of skills to build off. There is some talent there to work with, he just has not figured out how to put it all together yet. He did win MVP honors of the Greek U18 league, though, so this might have just been an unusually bad stretch of games for him. Kampouridis has a high GPA and low ACT score, which may make it difficult for him to get eligible in 2017, and will likely make him more of a 2018 recruit.

Stefan Momirov (MM+)

Red Star (Serbia), NCAA Interest: Very High

6'6 / 190 lbs, SF, Age: 17.6, Serbia

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Momirov played a significant role for Serbia, seeing more minutes than anyone besides one player due to their lack of depth on the wing. He looked very similar to what we have discussed in previous settings, as he is very talented physically for a European prospect at 6' 6 with strong athleticism, is a monster defensively putting pressure on the ball and getting in passing lanes, and also has an excellent feel for getting teammates involved. He is at his best in the open court, where he has an extra gear, but will occasionally knock down a spot-up 3-pointer from the corner that makes you wonder if his jumper is not quite as broke as it looks in between his many airballs (21% 3P% here).

He is a super versatile wing that would likely be a fan and coaching staff favorite because of his intensity level, unselfishness and the amount of different things he contributes to winning. As with all Red Star prospects, there are plenty of question marks about what his future holds, but he told us himself that the college option is a real pathway for him that he may look to explore.

Francis Lacis (MM+)

(Latvia), NCAA Interest: Medium

6'7 / 195 lbs, SF/PF, Age: 18.4, Latvia

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

The son of a prominent [classical music composer](#) in Latvia, Lacis had a bit of a breakout tournament in Bratislava, helping his NCAA standing quite a bit with the way he played.

Having likely grown to around 6' 7, Lacis can operate from either forward position and brings intriguing versatility from a mid-major standpoint thanks to his solid skill-level and excellent feel for the game. He moves the ball crisply and fluidly within the framework of his team's offense, playing unselfish, and has a high IQ basketball. He shot the ball well at the UI8s, making 36% of his 3-pointers on a high volume of attempts, showcasing nice looking shooting mechanics that should allow him to play on the perimeter full time.

Lacis's narrow frame will likely relegate him to the mid-major ranks, as it's difficult to see him competing with high major athletes physically. He gets pushed around a decent amount already, struggling to make his presence felt on the glass, and being a bit stuck between positions defensively, an area he will have to ramp up his intensity level to compensate for his lack of strength.

A longtime friend of ours on the Latvian coaching staff raved about his intangibles and mentality to us, describing him as a great student from a big time family and an excellent worker (he was not high on anyone else from the team).

Mid-major schools searching for a high IQ combo forward (possibly with grades) would be smart to reach out.

Vasileios Gargalis (MM+) **(Greece), NCAA Interest: High** **6'9 / 220 lbs, PF/C, Age: 17.5, Greece** [DX Gold Profile Link](#)

The second youngest player on the team, born in 2000, Gargalis played a backup role at 14 minutes per game. He has a decent physical profile for a mid-major big man, standing around 6'9, with a solid frame, good shoulders, some length, and decent mobility. He was asked to play both big men spots, and looked capable of doing so, showing solid versatility in the process.

Gargalis has some skill facing the basket, knocking down a handful of spot-up jumpers, making some nice passes and showing the ability to put the ball on the floor a bit in a straight line. He lacks the explosiveness to finish above the rim consistently in a crowd, and thus will need to continue to develop his perimeter skill-set, as well as his feel for the game, as he was somewhat turnover prone at times, trying to do a little too much with the ball.

Defensively, Gargalis is somewhat stuck between positions at the moment, not covering ground well enough to go chase after most 4s, even if it is not for a lack of effort. He may be better suited to playing the 5 at the college level, but he will have to improve his rebounding prowess to get there.

Gargalis is extremely interested in college and is rejecting offers from pro teams in Greece who are not willing to help facilitate leaving in a year from now for the NCAA. He has reached out to us asking for help with the process of getting eligible/going through the clearinghouse, so any MMs looking for big men should reach out immediately so we can help get the process started.

Panagiotis Kalaitzakis (MM+)
Aris (Greece), NCAA Interest: Medium
6'6 / 195 lbs, SF, Age: 18.4, Greece
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

The lesser of the Kalaitzakis' twins did not get much playing time in a fairly crowded Greek backcourt, but showed some flashes of scoring ability when he did, dropping 45 points in just 72 minutes of action. He can really make shots, both with his feet set and off the dribble, and can attack a closeout a bit in a straight line. His feel for the game is a work in progress, and he is not an exceptional athlete, which limits him as a shot-creator in the half-court.

Considering his excellent size, length and shooting prowess on the wing, it should not be too hard to find him a home in the mid-major ranks if he decides to pursue that route, but playing at a slightly higher level might not be out of the question either. Kalaitzakis is "50/50" on going to college at the moment his adviser told us.

Andre Gustavson (MM+)
HBA (Helsinki), NCAA Interest: Very High
6'3 / 170 lbs, SG, Age: 18.2, Finland
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Gustavson was again one of the leaders of this Finnish generation, as the team's second leading scorer, something that has always been the case since we first started evaluating him. He continued to show impressive aggressiveness and scoring instincts for a mid-major off-guard, doing a nice job in the open court with his above average athleticism, and finding success attacking the rim in the half-court when Finland could get him going downhill. He plays at different speeds, can get to the basket with long strides, and has the basketball IQ needed to find teammates on the move as a secondary ball-handler/playmaker.

Gustavson's average size, length and frame will likely hinder him as a half-court creator against US athletes, something that is noticeable already at this level on the defensive end, where he mostly struggles despite his strong anticipation skills getting in the passing lanes and solid competitiveness. It would be easier to project him as a fringe high major player if he were a better shooter, but unfortunately he's just a career 30% 3-point and 67% free throw shooter in the many international competitions we have in our database. He can shoot off the dribble some, but has never been particularly reliable with his feet set. He is always been someone we have enjoyed watching nevertheless, though, as he is obviously well coached (thanks to his mom), and knows how to play. He could carve out a great college career if he goes to the right level, but could really struggle if he does not.

Federico Zampini (MM+)
(Italy), NCAA Interest: Very High
6'4 / 200 lbs, PG/SG, Age: 18.0, Italy

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

This was Zampini's first time playing for the national team, after a strong showing in the Italian UI8 Championship with Torino.

He has great size for a guard at 6'4, with a strong frame and a solid wingspan. He is a solid athlete for a European player, but nothing exceptional by NCAA standards. He likes to use his superior strength, ability to change speeds and long strides to get to the rim in transition or on straight line drives, being capable of getting low with the ball, even if he can't always finish what he creates, as he's not overly explosive.

Zampini played quite a few minutes at PG for Italy, and proved to be highly unselfish, with a knack for finding the open man. He sees plays developing on the fly, and will make timely passes to cutters for layups. He also can play some pick and roll, primarily to hit the roll-man with bounce passes or open shooters on the wing spotting up.

He is big enough to play any of the backcourt positions, and seems to have no problem operating off the ball as well. He can space the floor with his spot-up jumper, and is smart cutting off the ball, being a high IQ guy generally.

Zampini sports a big wind-up, but can toss in an open 3. He'll need to improve his ability to shoot off the dribble, though, as he looks a little off balance at times, not always shooting at the apex of his jump. The ball comes out of hand nicely, and there is no reason to believe he can't become at least a decent shooter in time.

Where Zampini struggles at times is when handling the ball under pressure, as he tends to throw the ball all over the place when trapped. He is not a brilliant isolation player either, as he is not going to turn the corner in the half-court against elite level athletes. For that reason, he probably needs to play alongside another creative guard, but thankfully he has the size to do that without much issue.

Zampini shows good potential defensively, getting in the passing lanes at an outstanding rate (3.1 per-40 career), and putting good pressure on the ball. His size should allow him to guard up to 3 positions at the mid-major level. He can even switch onto bigger guys at times on the pick and roll, and not get pushed around. He generally plays with a high intensity level, and seems to be smart as well. He will get blown by off the dribble at times by elite athletes, as he lacks a degree of lateral quickness, which is why he projects better towards the mid-major ranks.

All in all, Zampini, is versatile player, the type of which can be valuable to have in a NCAA rotation, as he can do a number of different things and can play along various types of players in different lineups.

Miika Heinonen (MM)

HBA (Finland), NCAA Interest: Very High

6'3 / 220 lbs, PG, Age: 18.3, Finland

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Finally fully healthy, after a disastrous UI7 World Championship, Heinonen had a breakout tournament at the UI8s, carrying the load at times for Finland and showing really nice versatility, confidence and feel in averaging an impressive 14.7 points, 4.6 rebounds and 4.4 assists per game.

Heinonen has great size, an exceptionally strong frame, and a very aggressive mindset, not being afraid whatsoever to try and make things happen. He is a good ball-handler who sees the floor well and is comfortable operating out of pick and rolls. He has deep range on his jumper and a quick trigger, often pulling up from well beyond the 3-point line in the early offense with a very pretty (albeit streaky) stroke.

On the downside, Heinonen is just an OK athlete, as he is so strong, stocky and thick in the lower body that he can't always create efficient offense in the half-court, especially when forced to turn the corner. That is a big part of why his shooting percentages (36% 2P%, 30% 3P%) are so low, as he makes a living off difficult shots that he will likely have a hard time getting off against better athletes in the US. Despite being big enough to play either guard spot, Heinonen is a little ball-dominant at times, and has some irrational confidence that will need to be reeled in by the right coach. He is an excellent prospect for the mid-major level, but could struggle if asked to play at a level higher than that.

At one point Heinonen looked set on going to Spain, but he recently made the move to HBA and appears firmly on the college track. Heinonen had a different Finnish coach handling his recruitment at one point, but Hanno Mottola will likely be a key point of contact now that he is at HBA.

Badu Buck (MM)

Alba Berlin (Germany), NCAA Interest: High

6'4 / 185 lbs, SG, Age: 18.3, Germany

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Buck did a nice job of carrying the scoring load early in the tournament for a fairly talent-deprived Germany in stretches, getting out in transition, and making shots with his feet set and off the dribble. He has nice scoring instincts and a fairly aggressive mentality, which is highly beneficial at this level. With that said, there are some question marks about just how high of a level Buck can score consistently, as he's just an OK athlete, is not very long, has just a decent frame, and does not appear to have great upside. He has somewhat of an inefficient offensive game, needing a lot of dribbles to get anywhere, being a streaky shooter, and struggling to get to the line or finish around the basket, and can be a fairly indifferent defender at times. With that said, mid-major schools looking for scoring punch and shot-making ability would be well served to consider Buck, as he can get fairly hot at times. His mother wants him to go to college.

Matthew Meredith (MM)

Ludwigsburg (Germany), NCAA Interest: High

6'7 / 210 lbs, SF/PF, Age: 17, Germany

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Meredith really struggled to get much of anything done at this tournament, looking somewhat overwhelmed at times.

He has a strong frame at 6' 7, with legit length that should allow him to play power forward at almost any level in college. His skill-level is a work in progress, but he shows you minor flashes as a ball-handler and shooter, even if he has a lot of work to do in both areas, as he's not polished at all. Despite his struggles, Meredith is extremely young, having just turned 17 and playing up a year here, and is worth continuing to track for mid-major schools looking for

versatility at the combo forward position. The fact that he will graduate high school in 2018 means he will not be able to be very picky due to how young he will still be.

Daniil Kasatkin (MM)

Mountain Mission (WV), NCAA Interest: Very High

6'7 / 200 lbs, PG/SG/SF/PF, Age: 18.5, Russia

[**DX Gold Profile Link**](#)

Kasatkin did not have a good tournament statistically, but left a fairly positive impression in our in-person viewing, as he has a number of interesting traits that could make him a solid prospect for mid-major schools to explore.

First off, Kasatkin has grown to at least 6' 7 and has also filled out his frame impressively. He plays point guard legitimately despite having the size and strength required to check most power forwards at the mid-major level, giving him very nice lineup flexibility and versatility.

Kasatkin's shooting was inconsistent in Bratislava, due to his tendency to hunt shots at times, but he has a nice looking stroke overall, and can be a fairly reliable option with his feet set.

As a ball-handler, he is slow and methodical, but plays at his own unique pace, using his strong frame to his advantage to keep defenders off balance. He has excellent court vision, whipping the ball all over the floor unselfishly, even if he needs to do a better job of cutting down on turnovers.

On the downside, Kasatkin is not very quick or explosive, which raises some question marks about his ability to play the role he does against US athletes. He does not have much length, and struggles to guard at times, as he lacks much in the way of lateral quickness. Additionally, Kasatkin will need to do a better job of learning how to play without the ball, as he looks far more comfortable operating as the lead ball-handler, which might not always be feasible. Kasatkin is in high school at Mount Mission Academy and is looking to drum up his so far slow recruitment, so any schools interested should reach out.

Matevz Mlakar (MM)

Olimpija Ljubljana (Slovenia), NCAA Interest: Medium

6'9 / 230 lbs, PF/C, Age: 18.2, Slovenia

[**DX Gold Profile Link**](#)

After playing up by two years at the U20 European Championships in mid-July, Mlakar joined this Slovenia team late in their preparations and played an important role, averaging a solid 9.8 points and 4.5 rebounds over 21 minutes per game, showing a solid skill-level offensively.

Mlakar has legit size, but a bad body, with wide hips, a doughy frame and poor athleticism, needing to shed at least 20 pounds to hopefully improve his quickness and explosiveness some. He is nevertheless a fairly skilled big man, with a really nice-looking stroke, complete with a high release point and a smooth follow through. Mlakar sets wide screens and can hit the short roll man in stride, or play high low. He also has good footwork attacking closeouts,

being capable of making floaters with soft touch. He's also a big body and wide target in the post, capable of getting deep position and hitting hook shots with soft touch over his left shoulder.

Mlakar's challenge will be finding a team that can hide him on defense. He does not have any tools to get the job done here, as he's slow, unexplosive, and not very long to compensate. He struggles badly stepping out onto the perimeter, even on close outs, where he simply does not cover ground quickly enough to be a factor. His lateral quickness is poor and he can't jump over a phone book, making him easy to shoot over in the post. Mlakar can put a body on guys with his strong frame, and shows a little competitiveness at times, but he will have to be considered a liability at the college level unless he is able to get his body right. He is a very poor defensive rebounder on top of that.

Mlakar told us he's open to pursuing the NCAA route, but we have not followed up much recently and probably will not again unless we have something concrete to discuss with him.

Nikolas Susa (MM)
(Slovenia), NCAA Interest: High
6'6 / 200lbs, SF/PF, Age: 18.2, Slovenia
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Susa had a solid showing at the UI8s, averaging 10 points per game while rebounding and passing the ball at a good rate and shooting 36% for 3, after struggling to play up a year in 2016.

Playing primarily the 4, despite standing only around 6'6, Susa is not an unathletic kid, as he can play above the rim some. He has improved his jump-shot significantly over the past year it appears, catching and shooting with solid form and a quick release. He likes to go to work with his back to the basket against similarly sized matchups, and is pretty aggressive in the post. Susa does a good job taking advantage of the spacing he enjoys at the 4 with timely cuts, straight line drives off closeouts, spot up jumpers and rim-runs getting out ahead of the defense. He's a pretty physical guy who uses his body to his advantage, and has a hunger to score that will serve him well.

On the downside, Susa's basketball IQ is just average, as he plays the game with a boundless energy that works against him at times. He is not immune to throwing the ball out of bounds, tossing up an occasional bad shot, or getting his shot blocked trying to score on a 7-footer, as he does not quite know his limitations. He will need to improve his awareness defensively as well, as he tends to get lost off the ball on pick and rolls, spun around on rotations, and will take bad angles on closeouts. Susa plays hard, and has decent tools, so there is room for optimism here, he just needs to get coached up on that end.

The fact that Susa has improved his jumper makes him a legitimate mid-major prospect, especially in leagues where having a 6'6 guy manning the 4 isn't a deal-breaker. His toughness, aggressiveness and versatility will suit him well. He does not have much recruitment going right now, so MMs or lower looking for combo forwards should reach out.

Raimon Carrasco (MM-)
Barcelona (Spain), NCAA Interest: Medium
6'2 / 170 lbs, PG, Age: 17.8, Spain

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Carrasco played a minimal role for Spain, which made the championship game and lost to Serbia. He actually started the final four games of the tournament, in order to set the tone for the team, but only saw 10-12mpg in those games. He did a nice job of defending, rebounding, and making the right play in a backup role (11 minutes per game overall), but struggled to put the ball in the basket, which has always been his biggest drawback.

Possessing decent size at around 6' 2, Carrasco lacks strength, length and top-shelf athleticism, He is a classic Spanish floor general who loves to execute offensively, running his team's offense and trying to get others involved. He is at his best driving and dishing, and making post-entry passes, and can make some very flashy passes. He's also a tough defender who puts strong pressure on the ball and gets in the passing lanes frequently. Carrasco is not a brilliant shooter, but he has a good looking stroke and will make open 3s with his feet set. Where he struggles is in terms of going out and creating offense on his own, as he is not adept at handling intense ball pressure, does not turn the corner at a high rate, and is not going get you a bucket at the end of the clock. He struggles to finish inside the paint due to his lack of strength, length and explosiveness.

Carrasco has tons of experience underneath his belt, having played in three straight FIBA competitions at the UI6, UI7 and UI8 level, and also being Barcelona's main point guard in the junior categories. He is battle tested, competitive, well coached, and knows his limitations as a player. He would be an ideal backup PG at the MM level, and could probably start for quite a few teams at the LM level, if surrounded by the right type of players (scorers).

Aljosa Jankovic (LM+) **Partizan TS (Bosnia), NCAA Interest: High** **6'7 / 180 lbs, SF, Age: 18.4, Bosnia** [DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Playing his third straight summer for the Bosnian national team, Jankovic again had a prominent role as a secondary ball-handler and facilitator. He's a unique player in the sense that he rebounds like a power forward (10.1 per-40), but does a lot of shot-creating offensively, even though it remains to be seen how high of a level he can do either of those things at the college level. He has a long, thin and narrow frame that does not have great potential, and is an underwhelming athlete on top of that, playing the game at a slow and deliberate pace, and struggling to finish efficiently around the basket. He likes to handle the ball in the open floor and can also create in the half-court, showing nice ball-handling skills, footwork, creativity and the ability to keep defenders off balance with hesitation moves. He's an excellent passer as well, averaging 4.8 assists per-40 minutes (4.5 for FIBA career). The biggest downside to his game, besides his lack of athleticism, is his complete lack of a jump-shot, never having made a 3-pointer in FIBA competition, and knocking down under 50% of his free throw attempts on top of that. Defensively, Jankovic is limited by his tools, but plays extremely hard, has length, and finds ways to make plays with his excellent feel for the game (2.5 steals per-40). Jankovic is a strange and unique player who could be an interesting fit for the right half-court oriented team at the lower levels of college basketball, especially ones willing to use him as a combo guard offensively and combo forward defensively.

Martin Bizub (LM+)
(Slovakia), NCAA Interest: Very High
6'9 / 200 lbs, Center, Age: 18.3, Slovakia
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Zeliznak's backup for Slovakia, Martin Bizub, came in and provided toughness and energy for Slovakia, despite not being blessed with impressive athleticism, skill or feel.

Bizub has decent size for a low major big man at 6' 9, with a strong frame and long arms to boot. He is a competitive guy who plays hard, rebounding at a nice clip and doing his best to fly around defensively and make things happen. He does not have any moves with his back to the basket or any type of skill-level, being almost entirely relegated to scoring off cuts or by way of the offensive glass. Bizub's basketball IQ is a work in progress, as he tends to make some careless mistakes at times. He is also somewhat turnover prone, and is not immune to blowing wide open layups, struggling to get up off the ground dunk.

2019

Balsa Koprivica (HM+)
Windermere Academy (USA), NCAA Interest: Very High
7'2 / 220 lbs, Center, Age: 17.2, Serbia
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

It's difficult to say much about Koprivica considering he barely played much at all (30 total minutes), even racking up one DNP early in the tournament. The coach of Serbia decided early on that he will not use any of him, Pecarski or Petrusev together at any time, which meant that one of the three would be the third string center.

Nevertheless, some doubts are beginning to emerge about Balsa's status as the can't miss, sure-fire top ten recruit he's being billed as in the States, particularly in terms of his lack of physical and mental toughness, and just decent basketball IQ.

Koprivica is undoubtedly a major talent, standing over 7' 2 in shoes with a 7' 3 ½ wingspan and 9' 1 ½ standing reach. He is mobile and light on his feet for a player his size, being quick to elevate off the ground for finishes and to protect the rim. He can also step out a bit on the perimeter defensively and not embarrass himself, and has very soft hands and the ability to finish impressively at times.

Koprivica's very high waist makes for a high center of gravity, allowing opponents to knock him off his path easily. He lacks some balance in his lower body, and is more smooth than explosive as a leaper, making it difficult for him to finish in traffic at times despite his size.

As mentioned, it's Koprivica's lack of toughness that is perhaps most concerning, as he seems to go into a shell easily and does not look like the most naturally competitive guy. He gets spun around easily defensively, is an extremely mediocre rebounder, and demonstrates a questionable feel for the game and awareness. He is not the most reactive guy, struggling to assert himself into plays at times, and can get pushed around by smaller players fairly easily, leading to excessive foul trouble.

Koprivica undoubtedly has significant talent, but there are some similarities we see with Isaac Humphries and Dusan Ristic at the same stage. The amount of hype he's generated at such an early age likely hasn't helped matters, and the fact that he's now moving high schools and AAU teams is somewhat of a red flag as well.

Mikael Jantunen (HM)

HBA (Finland), NCAA Interest: Very High

6'9 / 220 lbs, PF/C, Age: 17.2, Finland

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Jantunen had somewhat of a break out tournament, ranking among the most productive big men at the event. He looked a lot more confident offensively than in the past, and was able to hold his own against most any post player he matched up with thanks to his strong feel for the game, high intensity level, and solid skill-level. His confidence level has ebbed and flowed in the tournaments we've watched, but he was really on his game here in Bratislava, at least early on when we were present.

Jantunen is first and foremost an outstanding rebounder, corralling 14.7 per-40 minutes at the UI8s, which is right around his career average. He has excellent hands and moves very well, which also makes him a legit threat as a pick and roll finisher. He has some ability to handle the ball as well, helping to break the press at times and even showing some ability to attack closeouts or mix in some fancy ball-handling moves on face-up isos from the elbow. He struggles at times to handle contact against stronger players, which may be a concern projecting him to the highest levels of college basketball, especially on the defensive end where he can get pushed around.

Jantunen remains fairly thin, even if his body has improved somewhat, and at possibly 6' 9 (in shoes) or less, with average length, he does not have exceptional tools for a high major big man physically. Nevertheless, he shows some ability to move his feet on the perimeter and plays with an extremely high energy level, being capable of impacting the game even when he is not scoring.

It will be interesting to see how Jantunen's shooting stroke evolves over time, which would help him see more minutes at the power forward spot, where his size and frame are better suited. He did not really shoot many jumpers in the games we watched, although he has a very nice stroke from the free throw line. He could very well be considered a high major big man depending on how his frame evolves over the next two years.

Mert Akay (HM)
Darussafaka (Turkey), NCAA Interest: High
6'5 / 180 lbs, PG, Age: 17, Turkey
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Akay had an excellent tournament playing up a year and just recently having turned 17 years old, earning an invite to the NBA Basketball Without Borders Europe Camp, which will feature a who's-who elite 2000-born prospects, in the process.

His frame has improved considerably and he appears to have grown to at least 6' 5 now, and may not be done. He should be able to continue to get stronger in the next few years, as his frame is not bad. He has some length too, which serves him well defensively.

Akay is a high IQ, pass-first point guard who wants to run the show and get everyone involved, sometimes to a fault. He executes the offense at all costs and likes to make post entry passes or drive and dish to open teammates, being highly unselfish and showing excellent timing. Akay has a little juice off the bounce and shows nice creativity on the pick and roll, particularly in terms of finding the roller with pinpoint bounce passes. He's a reluctant shooter who can make a pull-up jumper when the defense goes under, but needs to break out of the very vanilla mindset he has at times, which can make him a little too passive.

The best part of Akay's game, besides his passing, is definitely his defense. He puts great pride into this part of his game and can pick up opponents 94 feet and make their life miserable with his quick feet and solid length. He averaged 3.1 steals per-40 at this tournament, which has been the case everywhere he's played, as he has great instincts getting in the passing lanes. He is very fundamentally sound, being super under control with his closeouts.

The next step for Akay will be to improve his scoring ability, as he simply does not look for his own offense enough now, which slows the game down excessively and forces his teammates to try and improvise with the shot-clock running down. He did not make a single 3-pointer at this competition, and is just a career 26% 3-point shooter in the 38 games we have in our database, so that will certainly be a priority for him moving forward.

Akay is an elite student who should be able to get into virtually any college he chooses. He's interested in pursuing the college route and should be recruited aggressively by high major and high major minuses, especially those with strong academics.

Hendrik Drescher (HM)
Alba Berlin (Germany), NCAA Interest: Medium
6'9 / 220 lbs, PF/C, Age: 17.3, Germany
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Drescher seems to be making considerable strides both physically and skill-wise, and remains a very solid option for high major minus schools to consider. He has a very strong frame that he appears to have worked on considerably,

shedding a good amount of baby fat since the last time we saw him. Offensively, Drescher is strong and can make his presence felt in the paint as a finisher or with his back to the basket, using power moves and utilizing both hands around the rim. He shows some flashes facing the basket as well, putting the ball down in a straight line from the perimeter at times, and even shooting 3-pointers when left open, with solid mechanics.

On the downside, Drescher is more of a 5 than a 4, despite standing no taller than 6' 9, and does not have great length or athleticism to compensate for that. He is limited as a defensive rebounder, and struggles to cover ground on the perimeter and move his feet.

There is certainly a ceiling on Drescher's upside, but players in his mold can still be effective at most levels of college basketball. In a private conversation following a game, Drescher said he's leaning towards the pro route, but has his college options open still at this stage, and wouldn't be opposed to hearing from some coaches to learn more about what's out there. Deirunas and Gilad Ziv will be key contacts in his recruitment.

Armands Berkis (HM-)
St. James (USA), NCAA Interest: High
6'9 / 220 lbs, Center, Age: 16.9, Latvia
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

After a strong showing at the UI6 European Championship, Berkis took a major step back at the UI8s, which is somewhat understandable considering he's one of the younger players here, not having turned 17 yet. Berkis has a tremendous frame and looks like a high major center on first glance, being well proportioned and strong to go along with his solid mobility.

While Berkis averaged 17.7 rebounds per-40 minutes at the UI6s, but he struggled badly in that area at the UI8s, especially on the defensive glass. He was pushed around quite a bit by the older players, and didn't offer enough toughness or resistance to avoid giving up offensive rebound after offensive rebound. Berkis couldn't get anything going offensively, shooting just 29% from the field at the UI8s, as his skill-level is very rudimentary and he struggles to finish in the paint over length, making it difficult for him to take advantage of his strong frame. His feel for the game leaves much to be desired as well.

We interviewed Berkis after one of Latvia's games, and he said some very questionable things, talking about his desire to become a small forward, and how his jump-shot and ball-handling skills are the biggest things he needs to work on. He does not seem to have any grasp of what he is as a player, and the word out of his high school in Maryland is he struggled badly academically and will have to find a new place.

Someone will probably take a flyer on Berkis' frame at the HM- level, if he can get eligible, but there are real question marks about his long term outlook.

Mattia Palumbo (HM-)
Stella Azzura (Italy), NCAA Interest: Medium
6'6 / 200 lbs, SG, Age: 16.8, Italy

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

The youngest player on the team, and one of the youngest players in Bratislava, Mattia Palumbo had a highly inconsistent tournament, scoring 0 points in 8 minutes against Lithuania, and then going off for 26 points in 23 minutes the very next game against Bosnia.

He has great size for a guard at 6' 6, to go along with a very strong frame that should allow him to play any of the backcourt spots. He's an aggressive scorer who loves to shoot from the perimeter, firing off a huge amount of 3-pointers and connecting on a solid 36% of them at this event. He's shot the ball very well at every tournament he's played at that we've tracked (37% 3P on 138 attempts), and is capable of making 3s with his feet set or off the dribble, despite the rainbow nature of his attempts and the fact that he appears to contort his body sideways on his release at times.

Palumbo is primarily a shooter/scorer at this stage, but he does show some flashes of court vision and some ability to get low to the ground with smooth footwork and body control and attack to the rim in the open floor. He's more flash over substance at this stage, though, as he's not really a great ball-handler, with most of his forays ending in difficult pull-up jumpers or tough layup attempts. He's averaged a good amount of assists in his career, but also quite a few turnovers, as he's still trying to figure out exactly what type of player he is, whether it is a secondary ball-handling shooting guard, a big point guard (like he played at the UI6s), or more of a spot-up shooter, something he can do with his quick release and soft touch on his perimeter jumper.

Defensively is where Palumbo will need to improve the most to reach his full potential. He's a little indifferent on this end of the floor currently, looking upright in his stance, and soft getting over the top of screens. Palumbo has been unresponsive on social media, but his presence on Stella Azzura's team means there's a decent chance he will pursue the NCAA route. He has some intriguing talent as a versatile guard/wing who can shoot the ball with range and possibly do a little more than that in time, and considering he's just a 2019 grad, and still only 16 years old, he has plenty of room to continue to improve.

Marco Hollersbacher (HM-)

Phoenix Hagen (Germany), NCAA Interest: Medium

6'7 / 200 lbs, SF/PF, Age: 16.7, Germany

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

The youngest player on Germany's roster, not turning 17 until October, Hollersbacher carved out a solid role regardless, being highly productive on a per-minute basis as a scorer, rebounder and passer. Playing the 4 primarily, Hollersbacher has an excellent frame, looking like a prototypical collegiate forward physically, with a strong, well-proportioned body and very good athleticism.

At his best in the open floor, Hollersbacher likes to push the ball off of defensive rebounds. He can also attack a closeout and likes to play above the rim when he can gather a head of steam. He shows some ability to get to the rim in the half-court as well, driving in both directions, even mixing in some changes of speed. He is a very good passer (3.4 assists per-40), playing unselfishly, and having a solid understanding of how to use both sides of the floor, which leaves a lot of room for optimism regarding his future development. With that said, his decision making still needs quite a bit of work. He is not a great ball-handler at this stage, struggling to dribble under pressure. His shot-

selection isn't ideal either, as he's still figuring out what his role is offensively, being overly aggressive at times and looking very sped up.

The biggest thing Hollersbacher will need to improve on to reach his full potential is his outside shot. He can make an open 3-pointer, and certainly is not shy about tossing up jumpers, but he shoots the ball with very funky mechanics that make his jumper hard to believe in long-term unless he significantly improves. He has a slow release, with tons of back spin, flinging the ball at the basket awkwardly at times, making just 2 of his 12 attempts at the UI8s and 13/43 last season in the NBBL.

Hollersbacher makes up for that to an extent with his defense, which is arguably his most attractive trait. He shows real versatility here, guarding anywhere from 1-4 at this tournament. He covers ground fluidly, and plays very under control relative to how sped up he looks at times offensively. He should be able to develop into an excellent defender in time, as he has the physical tools required, to go along with good instincts and the mentality to want to get stops.

Hollersbacher has two years to continue to improve his skill-set and all-around polish before heading to college, and he appears to have the upside to make it worth monitoring his progress considering his frame, athleticism, intensity level and budding versatility.

Federico Miaschi (HM-)
(Italy), NCAA Interest: Very High
6'6 / 190 lbs, SG/SF, Age: 17.2, Italy
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Miaschi played up a year as the second youngest prospect on Italy's roster, after finishing 3rd in scoring at the UI6 As last summer. He saw just 10 minutes per game in what was a very crowded Italian backcourt, getting squeezed out due to his lack of experience, and sometimes lackluster defense.

He has good size, listed as 6' 5, but he could very well be 6'6 in shoes by now. He has decent frame that should fill out in time, with a solid wingspan, and is a decent athlete, although nothing exceptional by US standards.

Miaschi has solid scoring instincts, always putting up points in almost every setting he's played in. He can make an iso pull-up 3-pointer, and also has a nice spot-up stroke on the wing, looking fairly reliable with his feet set. His 3-point percentages have been mediocre throughout his career, partially due to his shot-selection, but he shoots the ball with confidence, good looking mechanics, and it wouldn't be surprising at all to see him emerge as a good shooter in time.

Miaschi is just an average ball-handler at this stage, being mostly a straight line driver. He gets a little wild when he tries to do more than that, throwing the ball out of bounds, heaving up tough shots, or barreling in for charges. Right now he creates off the bounce primarily to pull-up. He has some minor ability to change speeds and throw in floaters that can possibly be harnessed into a more consistent scoring weapon off the bounce as he gets stronger. But he needs to improve his ability to draw contact and get to the free throw line.

Miaschi shows a solid energy level on defense when he's locked in, but that is not always the case. He covers ground, can move his feet, has the size to guard either wing position, and will play the passing lanes effectively. The problem is that he does not always play with the same intensity, sometimes looking too straight-up, not closing out on shooters with a hand up, and not being physical enough. He struggles to get over screens, which may come down the

road with added strength, but his effort-level needs to improve, especially his second effort after making the initial play.

Denys Bachurin (MM)

Bella Vista Prep (USA), NCAA Interest: Very High

6'8 / 200 lbs, PF, Age: 17.3, Ukraine

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Bachurin had a bit of a difficult tournament, being plagued by a minor knee injury that prevented him from seeing more playing time. His numbers were down compared with the UI6s last year, but he still showed some nice things, primarily revolving around his solid skill-level and feel for the game. Bachurin is a capable outside shooter who can even knock down jumpers running off screens. He has no problem playing a role offensively, moving the ball unselfishly and finding the open man with his solid court vision. He also has the makings of a very competitive defender, utilizing his high basketball IQ to be in the right places, and also coming up with quite a few steals thanks to his strong anticipation skills. Bachurin is not oozing with talent, lacking elite-level physical tools, and not being much of a shot-creator offensively, but he has the makings of a guy who will make the most of his talent, and looks like someone who would blend in well with a disciplined and well-coached mid-major squad.

Maris Ramanis (LM+)

(Latvia), NCAA Interest: Very High

6'10 / 210 lbs, Center, Age: 17.3, Latvia

[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Playing up a year as a 2000-born prospect, Ramanis was utilized in a backup role (14 minutes per game) on one of the least talented teams in the tournament. He has good size at 6' 10, with a solid frame that should be able to add more bulk in time. Fairly mobile, he runs and moves fairly athletically, but is not a very explosive guy, struggling to play above the rim or protect the basket effectively.

Ramanis' primary value at the moment lies on the defensive end, where he can put a body on opposing big men, has some mobility hedge in the pick and roll, and looks fairly competitive crashing the glass.

Offensively, Ramanis is mostly a non-factor, not showing a very high skill-level and committing unforced errors when trying to do anything besides catch and finish underneath the rim. He's not the most coordinated big men at the moment, struggling to catch the ball on the move or do anything complicated, but considering his youth and relatively solid motor, it is possible that he can improve with time and coaching.

Ramanis is interested in pursuing the college route in 2019, and should be viewed as a fringe mid-major player at the moment unless he's able to make considerable strides in the next two years, which is not out of the question considering his youth.

Nedim Omerovic (LM+)
OKK Slobda Tuzla (Bosnia), NCAA Interest: High
6'7 / 195 lbs, PF, Age: 16.9, Bosnia
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

Omerovic was playing up at this tournament as a 2000-born player, despite not yet even turning 17. He struggled to get much done, impressing primarily with his excellent frame, length and mobility on the perimeter. He appears to be at an early stage of development physically, with plenty of room to fill out and likely even grow to true big man status. Skill-wise, Omerovic does not bring much to the table at this level at this stage, but is worth tracking to see how he continues to progress.

2020

Tomas Pavelka (HM-)
(Slovakia), NCAA Interest: High
7'1 / 215 lbs, Center, Age: 16.8, Slovakia
[DX Gold Profile Link](#)

One of the youngest players here, not turning 17 for another six weeks, Pavelka has some intriguing characteristics that make him worth tracking to see how he continues to progress over time.

The main one is the fact that he's 7'1, and has reportedly only been playing basketball for around two years. He has a narrow frame that obviously has some room for growth considering his youth. He has decent length as well, and looked impressive with his mobility in warmups, even if that is very far from translating to game settings at this stage.

Pavelka has very impressive instincts defensively, doing a nice job of covering ground and protecting the rim in his limited minutes on the court. He blocked a huge number of shots on a per-40 minute basis, but the sample size is so small it is best not to get overly excited about that.

Beyond that, Pavelka is still at the very awkward stage that most big men find themselves at when they are extremely young and raw. He does not really have any idea what he's doing on the floor, showing poor awareness and fundamentals, and struggling to do basic things like catch the ball or get into the right position offensively.

Pavelka was at the Canarias Basketball Academy but did not learn anything there because he does not speak any Spanish, just sitting in the classroom aimlessly for almost an entire year, which obviously set him back academically. He will reportedly play in the Slovakian league next year with American coach/trainer Ryan Pannone, and is someone to monitor over the next three years.