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Colorado Avalanche well represented in the 2014 Winter Olympics

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With the upcoming Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia the Colorado Avalanche had four players selected to represent their home countries.

Matt Duchene, Gabriel Landeskog, Paul Stastny and Semyon Varlamov are the lucky players that will all be looking for their first gold medals.

Duchene, was a long shot to make the Canadian Olympic team when the season started but he parlayed a terrific start into a spot on the third line playing left wing. His versatility in being able to play all three forward positions is said to be a contributing factor in his selection to Team Canada. Duchene played for Canada in three of the last four World Championships, but will be making his Olympic debut this year.

Landeskog was considered a lock by many experts to join Sweden for his first Olympic appearance. The Avalanche captain helped Sweden win a gold medal at the 2013 IIHF World Championships, and is one of the leading scorers for the Avalanche. Sweden is a dark horse contender for a gold medal with a tremendous balance of youth and experience.

Varlamov is expected to be the starting goaltender in his home country of Russia. The Avalanche net minder has turned in a terrific season despite the assault charges he was facing earlier this season, that were later dropped. This is the second Olympic games that Varlamov has been selected for, after making the team in the 2010 games as the third string goalie but he did not play.

Stastny was named to the United States team for the second time in his career. The veteran center has had a surprisingly good year in his final season under contract for the Avalanche. Stastny was a member of the 2010 U.S. Team that won a silver medal after a disappointing loss to Canada in the gold medal game.

Looking forward to this year's Olympics, Team Canada is the projected favorite but all four members of the Avalanche will have tremendous opportunities to medal as they play for the four teams expected to compete for medals.

Two members of the Avalanche were left off Olympic rosters that were expected to participate. Defensive line mates Erik Johnson and Jan Hejda were both snubbed off of the United States team and the Czech Republic respectively. The two have been tremendous this season and are a primary reason as to why the Avalanche have had the NHL's best turnaround from last season.

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