

TASTE VICTORY!



DOBBER HOCKEY'S 2010-11 FANTASY GUIDE

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I think we're at the point in the fantasy hockey universe where DobberHockey.com is either known in a fantasy league, or the GM's are sleeping. Besides my column in The Hockey News' Ultimate Pool Guide, and my contributions to this year's Score Forecaster (fifth year doing each), I put an ad in McKeen's. That covers the big three hockey pool magazines and you should have at least one of them as part of your draft prep. The other thing you need, of course, is this Guide right here. It is not only updated throughout the summer, but I also make sure that the features/tidbits found in here are unique. I know what's in the print mags and I have always tried to set this Guide apart from them.

Once again, this is an automatic download – just pick it up in your downloads section. Look for one or two updates in August, then one or two updates between September 1st and 14th. After that, when training camp is in full swing, I will be updating every two or three days right into October. Make sure you download the latest prior to heading into your draft (and don't ask me on one day if I'll be updating the next day – I get so many of those that I am unable to answer them all, just download as late as you can).

Any updates beyond this original release will be in **bold blue**. BUT, as usual, on September 17 (to save your ink, for those who print this) the **bold blue** will be removed. Any updates after September 17 will again be in **bold blue** – so if you want to know what has been updated prior to September 17, make sure you download this again by that date. I will **not** be highlighting my line combo changes, because potentially the entire chart will turn blue. I will list all the changes at the end of the guide, although **on September 17, I will delete this list and start over**.

Still coming to you picture-free. I want to squeeze as much gold into this preseason fantasy primer as I can. Inserting an awesome action shot of Patrick Kane going top shelf would just take up space that could be used to give you more data.

Enjoy the read. Enjoy the early lead. Then enjoy your trophy.

Dobber

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Dobber's 2010/11 Fantasy Hockey Guide

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THE WILD WEST

By Ryan Ma

Dreaming of winning a fantasy championship? Allow me to play the role of Leonardo DiCaprio and insert a few thoughts into your dreams. Following along the same lines as last year, here are a few of the “sleeper” candidates that you need to be aware of in 2010-11.

2010-11 Sleeper Picks – Western Conference

Joffrey Lupul – RW, Anaheim – Lupul disappointed many fantasy owners with an injury plagued season last campaign, but there were definitely some positives. In the 23 contests that he did suit up for, he spent 36.25 percent of his shifts with Ryan Getzlaf and 29.78 percent with Corey Perry. If you pro-rated his stats to a full 82-games, he would have had 50 points, 64 PIMs and 235 SOG, which wouldn’t have been a bad investment as a bench third winger. Look for a bounce back season from Loops if he can overcome his back issue.

Mark Giordano – D, Calgary – Giordano really took a big step forward in his offensive development as he cracked the 30-point plateau for the first time in his NHL career. Jay Bouwmeester and Robyn Regehr are more stay-at-home blue-liners than offensive threats, which should open the door for Giordano to be more offensively focused in 2010-11. I’d look for a 35-point, 100 PIM campaign from 26-year-old.

Viktor Stalberg – LW, Chicago – The Hawks had their “fire sale” this off-season and out the door went a lot of their offensive depth, but the return that came back could certainly surprise. The 6-3, 210 Swede certainly opened plenty of eyes in his debut with the Leafs and certainly has the opportunity to gain a valued top-six role with the reigning Stanley Cup champions. Chicago lost Buffy the goalie slayer, but Stalberg could be a more talented replacement.

Kris Russell – D, Columbus – It usually takes a few years for junior defensemen to get used to the NHL level, and it appears that Russell is taking the typical development path as planned. In his junior career with the Medicine Hat Tigers, he registered 235 points in 307 career contests, which is almost unheard of from a young developing blue liner. Russell will certainly have the opportunity to become a 30-point defenseman in 2010-11.

Peter Mueller – RW, Colorado – With 17 points in 54 contests, many poolies left Mueller for dead last year. Then boom, 20 points in 15 contests in Colorado turns his career from disappointment to elation. Many pool/league providers base their pre-season draft rankings on the previous year’s production. With only 37 points next to his name, Mueller’s draft value is going to be lower than expected. Definitely don’t forget his name come draft day.

Andrew Raycroft – G, Dallas – Heading into the 2010-11 season with Kari Lehtonen as the number one could be a dangerous situation for the Stars. Prior to last season, Lehtonen averaged just 48 starts in the last four seasons, so the Band-Aid Boy moniker still remains and is certainly well deserved. Raycroft had a solid bounce back season by backing up Roberto Luongo with respectable numbers of a 2.42 GAA along with a .911 SP. If Lehtonen is injured once again, Raycroft could see his fantasy value skyrocket.

Jiri Hudler – RW, Detroit – As mentioned above, most pool/league providers base their pre-season rankings on the previous year’s production. So what value do you think a player with a goose egg next to his name will receive on draft day? Hudler spent a year in the KHL after tallying 57 points with the Red Wings in 2008-09. Hudler should have a guaranteed top-six role for this upcoming season, which should equate to a very productive season. His name will be largely forgotten by unsuspecting poolies.

Sam Gagner – C, Edmonton – Last season was a wash for the Oilers, but it did give them an opportunity to re-tool the shed. One positive note was the development of Gagner in the latter half of the campaign. The former sixth overall pick started the season with 22 points in the first 40 contests, but tallied 19 points in the next 28 contests before being shut down with a hip injury. Another positive note is that Ales Hemsky spent 31.92 percent of his overall ice-time alongside Gagner and the two did show some solid chemistry at the beginning of the season. If the duo gets paired up with Taylor Hall, it could be fantasy jackpot for Gagner.

Oscar Moller – RW, Los Angeles – I wish I was an Oscar Moller owner, that is what I truly want to be, cause if I were an Oscar Moller owner, everyone would be in love, oh everyone would be in love, everyone would be in love with me! Ok, maybe not at the present moment, but perhaps by the end of the season owners could certainly be singing that song. The Kings have a gaping hole to fill in their top-six and if Moller can manage to secure that spot, he will be in for a great season that we can all sing about.

Andrew Brunette – LW, Minnesota – It never ceases to amaze me how Brunette always seems to fly under-the-radar. In the past five seasons, he has posted numbers of 81.6 appearances, 16:25 TOI/game average, 63.2 points and 134.8 SOG per campaign. The great thing about the 37-year old is his consistency. If you don’t expect anything more than the above numbers, you will be happy with the yield that you’ll receive from Brunette in a top-six role in Minny.

Martin Erat – RW, Nashville – Speaking of consistency, Erat is probably another one of the poster boys for consistency. For the past four seasons, he has averaged 72.3 appearances, 18:33 TOI/game average, 53.3 points, and 153 SOG. Erat has a guaranteed top-six role in the Music City, so if you can handle the odd scratches due to injury, he may be a worthwhile investment.

Scottie Upshall – RW, Phoenix – Last season, I mentioned Upshall as “sleeper” candidate, which proved to be true as Upshall was on pace for a breakout season (32 points in 49 contests) prior to tearing his ACL in January. As discussed last year, Upshall was once a sixth overall pick as well as a recipient of a CHL rookie of the year award, which demonstrates that he was highly-touted back in the day. The Coyotes aren’t going to blow their opposition out of the water with offense, but Upshall should be sufficient enough as a depth winger.

Marc-Edouard Vlasic – D, San Jose – With Rob Blake retiring this offseason, it has opened the door on the blue line for the Sharks. My candidate to be the first to walk through that door would be the 23-year-old Vlasic. In the final year of his junior career he tallied 102 points in 89 contests (including playoffs), which does show that he has plenty of offensive upside. In the past, he has always been hurt by the Sharks’ depth on the blue line (Matt Carle, Christian Ehrhoff, Craig Rivet, Brian Campbell, Dan Boyle, and Rob Blake), but this year it seems that he has the all-clear for the number two gig behind Boyle.

Alex Steen – C, St. Louis – Steen posted a very productive 47 points in 68 contests for 2009-10. He also ranked third amongst the Blues’ forwards for power play ice-time per contest, which is definitely a big positive. The problem for him might be the depth chart as he sits in third place behind both Andy McDonald and T.J. Oshie. Steen’s a perfect high-risk/high-reward candidate for 2010-11.

Mikael Samuelsson – RW, Vancouver – Samuelsson spent 52.8 percent of his overall ice time during the playoffs with both of the Sedin twins, which to me shows that the Canucks have plenty of faith in a Swedish trio. His 15 points and 42 SOG in 12 post-season contests certainly provide plenty of evidence for his fantasy worth this campaign. Alex Burrows does provide some competition for Samuelsson, but the upside is certainly worth the gamble on the 33-year-old.

Matt Stajan – C, Calgary – The Olli Jokinen signing might take some wind out of Stajan’s sails, but he remains a solid fantasy option. Jokinen carries the “big name” but Stajan certainly appears to have more chemistry with Jarome Iginla than the unpredictable Finn. You won’t see Stajan share 79.81 percent of shifts with Iggy again, but even if it’s roughly 50 percent, he’ll see a productive campaign.

Keith Yandle – D, Phoenix – Yandle really took a big step forward last season by tallying 41 points in a full 82-game schedule. The fact that he averaged 3:05 of power play ice-time per contest shows that he has plenty of offensive upside, especially when his 16 PPP ranked him tied for 30th in the league amongst blue liners. He’s buried a bit behind Ed Jovanovski and Adrian Aucoin, but his offensive skills should shine through for a repeat performance in 2010-11.

Sergei Kostitsyn – LW, Nashville – Kostitsyn has been criticized for many things as part of the Montreal organization and rightfully so, which is probably why he was sent packing from Hab country. One thing that you can’t criticize is his offensive potential (209 points in 122 contests with the London Knights and 35 in 38 with the Hamilton Bulldogs). Nashville might be the perfect place for the reclamation project, as they have plenty of opportunity for him to flourish in a top-six role if he decides to grab the bull by the horns. He’s another example of a high-risk/high-reward candidate.

Nikolai Khabibulin – G, Edmonton – There’s no doubt that Tom Renney is a defense-first type of coach. From 2005-2009 he had the Rangers ranked eighth, sixth, third, and fifteenth overall in terms of shots on goal allowed to the opposition. If he can instill that type of philosophy to the Oilers’ lineup this campaign, the Bulin wall should enjoy a solid bounce back season (if he avoids jail time). Last season, his .909 SP actually would have stood alongside Semyon Varlamov, Dan Ellis, Brian Elliott and Antero Niittymaki.

Tom Gilbert – D, Edmonton – Gilbert’s season could have easily been considered a wash as he was on pace to finish the season with just 13 points. Suddenly a switch flipped and he went on a 20-point tear for the final 21 contests to finish the year with a respectable 31 points. One reason for the turnaround might have been the increase in ice-time. Prior to the break he was averaging just 21:48 but upped that to 24:15 post-Olympic break. It appears that Sheldon Souray is out the door, and if that happens, Gilbert could have unconditional number one status in Edmonton, which should produce a nice yield for the upcoming season.

Dave Bolland – C, Chicago – Bolland’s production was limited to just 16 points due to a herniated disc, which sidelined him for nearly three months of last campaign. He found his stride in the postseason as he tallied 16 points in 22 contests, as the Hawks’ second-line center during their Stanley Cup run. With Marian Hossa healthy for a full season, it might not be too much to ask for Bolland to surpass the 55-point plateau.

Ty Conklin – G, St. Louis – Conklin is starting to build himself quite a name as a career backup. He’s never seen a season where he’s started more than 40 contests, and he doesn’t seem to be poised to break that streak this campaign. The Blues awarded Jaroslav Halak with a large contract based on half a season’s worth of brilliance and roughly 100 starts, which isn’t exactly a large bank of evidence to draw from. If Halak busts, Conks could surprise himself with a number one gig this season.

Shawn Horcoff – C, Edmonton – Ales Hemsky has been bitten by the injury bug for the last three seasons, but has still managed to tally quite a few points, 159 to be exact, and 105 of which involved being on a line with Horcoff. I seriously doubt Horcoff’s offensive potential on his own, but one thing that you can’t deny is his chemistry with Hemmer. If Tom Renney decides to keep the duo together instead of using Gagner, Horcoff could certainly make last season’s minus 29 rating or his \$5.5 mil price tag all but forgotten.

Ryan Ma’s column “The Wild West” can be found every Tuesday on DobberHockey.com throughout the season



THE EASTERN EDGE

By Russ Miller

It's often said that you don't win your pool in the early rounds, but you can certainly lose it. Nailing some sleeper picks in the twilight of your draft is where pools are won. That's because the point differentials tend to be greater in the late rounds; one guy could get you 45 points and the other might contribute next to nothing after being demoted early in the season. Here are 20 players who might just give you a decided advantage:

2010-11 Sleeper Picks – Eastern Conference

Anton Babchuk, Carolina – He is back with the Hurricanes after a one-year sabbatical in the KHL where he recorded nine goals and 22 points in 49 games. In his last NHL season, Babchuk scored 16 goals and 35 points in 72 games. The big defenseman has a blistering point shot and will be in the mix for top power-play time.

Zach Bogosian, Atlanta - During the offseason, Bogosian added muscle to his lanky frame. The Thrashers let Kubina walk, which means they think Bogosian is ready for a larger role. In 81 games last year he had 23 points, but the previous season he recorded 19 points in 47 games. Bogo scored 61 points in 60 games in his last year of junior hockey. With Kovalchuk gone, there is room for another defenseman on the point during the power play.

The Boychuk Brothers (okay - not really brothers): Zach, Carolina and Johnny, Boston - Zach spent much of his rookie season shuttling between Albany and Carolina (recalled on six separate occasions). He had nine points in 31 NHL games and 36 points in 52 AHL games. Over his final three seasons of major junior, Boychuk scored at a 104 point pace (had he played 82 games each season). He will be given a chance to get into a groove this season and with a little luck, he might even find his way onto a scoring line.

After a 2008 trade into the Bruins organization, Johnny's AHL point total leapt from 26 to 65 and he was named the AHL Outstanding Defenseman in 2008-09. In his first full NHL season, the 26-year-old recorded 15 points in 51 regular season games and had six points in 13 playoff matches.

Dustin Boyd, Montreal - Trading malcontent Sergei Kostitsyn for Boyd was a smart move by Montreal. There is one spot up for grabs in the Canadiens top six and the versatile 24-year-old may have the edge. Boyd has offensive ability - in his last year of junior hockey, he recorded 90 points in 64 games and followed that up with 60 points in 66 AHL games in his first pro season.

David Clarkson, New Jersey - If he hadn't missed 36 games with a leg injury, Clarkson would have recorded a career high 43 points. The Devils added quality veteran centre Jason Arnott, meaning Clarkson may threaten the 45 point mark this season. Clarkson is very valuable in leagues that use penalty minutes as he will almost certainly reach 150.

Brandon Dubinsky, New York - Entering his fourth full NHL season, Dubinsky has recorded consecutive seasons of 40, 41 and 44 points. Last year, Dubinsky scored at a 52-point pace and capped his year by finishing second only to Ilya Kovalchuk in World Championship scoring. This guy has a legitimate shot at 65 points and will be afforded every opportunity with the Rangers. Dubinsky is a restricted free agent at the conclusion of the campaign.

Tyler Ennis, Buffalo – Ennis may have to put on some weight, according to TSN he weighs 146 pounds, yet still recorded nine points in 10 NHL games. He finished tied for the team lead in playoff points with four in six games and received top six ice time. In 2009-10, Ennis was the AHL rookie of the year recording 65 points in 69 games and over his last two seasons of junior, he scored 176 points in 131 games.

Eric Fehr, Washington – Fehr scored 59 goals and 111 points in 71 games in his final junior campaign. He followed that by potting 25 goals and 53 points in the AHL. The 24-year-old has had some injury troubles since, but over a 35-game stretch last season he recorded 27 points (63 point pace) even though he averaged just over 12 minutes of ice time and very little power play time.

Michael Grabner, Florida - Florida gave up a top four defenseman in Keith Ballard, in large part for Grabner. He's only 22 years old, has speed to burn and can light the lamp. Last year, Grabner had 11 points in 20 NHL games and 26 points in 38 AHL games. The season prior, he notched 30 goals in 66 AHL games and in his last year of junior, he had 39 goals in 55 games.

Victor Hedman, Tampa Bay - A new General Manager and Head Coach mean new hope in Tampa. Hedman averaged nearly 21 minutes of ice time per game last season, but only 1:19 with the man advantage. Even Andrej Meszaros logged more power play ice time. That will change under the new regime. Hedman has offensive ability and this year he will add his name to the growing list of impressive young blueliners playing in the league.

Evander Kane, Atlanta - Kane stepped right in from junior and realized a decent rookie season with 26 points in 66 games. What really made people turn their heads was his inclusion on Team Canada's World Championship team. He did not disappoint with four points in seven games and that will only further his confidence. All in all, a very good year for an 18-year-old. This season, he'll play in the top six and build upon his rookie campaign.

Kris Letang, Pittsburgh - Now that Sergei Gonchar is out of the mix in Pittsburgh, look for Letang to shine. His offensive abilities were off the charts in his last two seasons of major junior hockey where he recorded 120 points in 100 contests. The 27 points he put up last season and the acquisition of Paul Martin will have other fantasy managers thinking more of the same from Letang, but it says here that he hits 45 points.

Shawn Matthias, Florida - With the Panthers in rebuild mode, Matthias might have a leg up for the second line centre job behind Stephen Weiss. Matthias split last season between the NHL (16 points in 55 games) and AHL (13 points in 27 games). In his final junior season, he recorded 79 points in 53 games. The 22-year-old will have to stave off 34-year-old Steven Reinprecht, who had 38 points last season, to take advantage of this opportunity.

Jamie McBain, Carolina - The future looks very bright for McBain. He had 40 points in 68 AHL games before being recalled to play in the Hurricanes final 14 games. He recorded an amazing 10 points in 14 games while averaging nearly 26 minutes of ice time per game, second only to Joni Pitkanen. He went on to net six points in eight AHL playoff games for Albany.

Mathieu Perreault, Washington - When the Caps let both Brendan Morrison and Eric Belanger go, Perreault's path to fulltime NHL duty became a little clearer. Perreault split last season between Washington (nine points in 21 games) and Hershey of the AHL (50 points in 56 games). Over his final two seasons (132 games) of major junior hockey, Perreault ripped up the Quebec league to the tune of 233 points. If the 22-year-old can impress at camp, he might be looking at some big numbers.

Teddy Purcell, Tampa Bay - Purcell managed nine points in 19 games with Tampa last season. He logged a healthy average of 16:05 minutes per game including 1:57 on the power play, but that was under former bench boss Rick Tocchet. Purcell has proven all he can in the AHL, scoring 121 points in 105 career games. Can the 24-year-old bring it at the NHL level?

Peter Regin, Ottawa - During last year's playoffs, the 24-year-old Regin spent over 90 percent of his even strength ice time paired with Jason Spezza. That plum assignment helped Regin register four points in six games. He carried that confidence over to the World Championship where he notched seven points in seven games for Denmark. In his only AHL season (2008-09), Regin recorded a promising 47 points in 56 games.

Jiri Tlusty, Carolina - Tlusty has scored at every level he's played. The 22-year-old Czech recorded 34 points in 37 OHL games and in 125 career AHL games, he's scored 118 points. All that's left to conquer is the NHL. He won't be handed the ice time in Carolina, he'll have to earn it with a good showing at camp, but the offensive pedigree is there.

Mats Zuccarello-Aasen, New York - A pint-sized 22-year-old Norwegian with a cool name is getting his shot at the big leagues thanks to his showings at the Olympics and World Championship. Last year, Zuccarello-Aasen led the Swedish Elite League in scoring with 64 points in 55 games and was named the league's MVP. The Rangers are not deep in talent on the left side, meaning MZA has a legitimate shot at a top six spot and may join MDZ in NYC.

Russ Miller's column "Eastern Edge" can be found regularly on DobberHockey.com. He also contributes under "The Comish" (one m) in the DobberHockey forum

Dobber's Tip:

The Top 10 Forwards (minimum 10 games) in minutes of ice time per point last year were:

1. Daniel Sedin 14:01
2. Alex Ovechkin 14:24
3. Henrik Sedin 14:33
4. Sidney Crosby 16:19
5. Alexander Semin 16:25
6. Nicklas Backstrom 16:36
7. Tyler Ennis 17:03
8. Joe Thornton 17:37
9. Steven Stamkos 17:44
10. Patrick Kane 17:53



2010 PROSPECTS REPORT - REVISITED

By Matthew Bugg

Although the 2010 NHL Entry Draft failed to generate much excitement in the way of trades - either involving picks or star players - as always, story lines of intrigue and astonishment popped up throughout the first round and into the second day. Which players have seen their fantasy stock rise following the Draft and which have dropped?

Rising

LW Taylor Hall (Windsor OHL)

Drafted by: Edmonton (1/1)

While it might seem sort of strange for the top pick's stock to get any higher, now that the Taylor vs. Tyler debate has been decided, what will matter for at least the next three years is where each will play. In Taylor's case, that's Edmonton, a team bereft of returning offensive talent... and really any kind of talent. While LW is surprisingly strong for the Oilers - 30-goal man Dustin Penner and fellow blue-chip prospect Magnus Paajarvi play there - Hall is guaranteed an audition at some point during the 2010-11 season next to Ales Hemsky and/or Sam Gagner.

C Ryan Johansen (Portland WHL)

Drafted by: Columbus (1/4)

Any center drafted by the Jackets in '10 received a boost right off the hop thanks to the state of the team down the middle. While Derick Brassard owns a great of potential - when he's healthy - he's the most promising of a drab group. Johansen changes that; a surprise pick in the top five, the 6'4 center is a natural fit for 6'4 winger Rick Nash. Blessed with soft hands, above-average vision and good top-end speed, Johansen will be given every opportunity upon graduating to the NHL to prove he belongs on the top line.

RW Nino Niederreiter (Portland WHL)

Drafted by: Long Island (1/5)

It was only fitting that Portland's dynamic duo went back-to-back in the top half of the first round; it's just a shame they're in different conferences. Niederreiter's stock goes from unstable to rock-solid now that his home has been decided; the only team to lavish the Swiss power winger with extra attention outside of the Combine, NYI's history of promoting their young talent quickly bodes well for fantasy owners of 'El Nino'. Fellow first-round picks John Tavares and Josh Bailey both cracked the NHL immediately after being drafted, and the Islanders haven't exactly become a world-beater down the wing so far this off-season.

RW Brett Connolly (Prince George WHL)

Drafted by: Tampa Bay (1/6)

When you've got Vincent Lecavalier, Martin St. Louis, Steve Stamkos and Victor Hedman to look forward to as teammates, you've got it made as a young forward. But what has really caused Brett Connolly's chances of NHL success to jump is the type of mentorship he's going to receive - and already has received. Beyond GM Steve Yzerman, purportedly a huge fan of the winger's work ethic in the face of adversity, summer prospect camp sessions with team skating instructor Barry Karp resulted in faster times by the end of the first session. Now that's development!

RW Beau Bennett (Penticton BCHL)

Drafted by: Pittsburgh (1/20)

Although being drafted by the Pittsburgh Penguins didn't exactly help Angelo Esposito out much, it's impossible not to think of a prospect's future in a more positive light upon envisioning them next to Sidney Crosby or Evgeni Malkin - or how about both? A gifted playmaker with tremendous one-on-one ability, Bennett's eye for the passing game would look awful good as the final piece of a top-line trifecta.

Falling

C Tyler Seguin (Plymouth OHL)

Drafted by: Boston (1/2)

No, we're not saying Tyler Seguin's chances of being a bust have increased merely because a team deep at center picked up the... well, center, but it's impossible to argue it helps him short-term in terms of being a fantasy asset. If Seguin is not sent back to junior - a definite possibility should he not win a spot in the top six - he'll line up as a winger. No matter how talented, such a transition is going to be difficult for an NHL rookie who must already learn how to compete against men.

RW Riley Sheahan (Notre Dame NCAA)

Drafted by: Detroit (1/21)

One word describes the Detroit development philosophy: glacial. The Wings rarely ask a player to leave college before their junior season is complete, even if they're a Hobey Baker nominee - see Smith, Brendan and Nyquist, Gustav. On top of that, add in a minimum of two years at the AHL level and you're looking at a half-decade of incubation time. That timeline may be even slower in the case of power winger Riley Sheahan. A gifted forward tethered to the boards in a highly defensive scheme at Notre Dame, Sheahan may need even more time to find his offensive game again at the pro level. You've been warned.

**Matt Bugg's column "Bugg Bytes" can be found on DobberHockey.com every Saturday throughout the season.
Bugg also co-penned the Fantasy Prospects Report, on sale now at DobberHockey.com**

Dobber's Tip:

Forwards 11-25 – best ice time per point ratio:

11. Alex Hemsky 17:56
12. Evgeni Malkin 18:08
13. Brad Richards 18:21
14. Marian Gaborik 18:47
15. Martin St. Louis 19:02
16. Teemu Selanne 19:05
17. Zach Parise 19:32
18. Daniel Alfredsson 19:40
19. Ilya Kovalchuk 19:42
20. Jason Spezza 20:04
21. Chris Stewart 20:05
22. Dany Heatley 20:14
23. Jussi Jokinen 20:38
24. Nik Antropov 20:41
25. Ryan Getzlaf 20:43



PANNING FOR GOLD

By Ryan Van Horne

Taylor Hall, Tyler Seguin and Jordan Eberle will be popular choices for pundits making pre-season Calder Trophy predictions. That's why you won't be reading about them here. They're obvious candidates and it's not that we don't like their chances, we'd just rather tell you about some other guys – some of whom you might not have heard of.

So, without further ado, here are 20 players who have a good chance of getting nominated for rookie of the year in the NHL this season. (In alphabetical order).

Calder Nominees

Note: To be eligible for the award, a player cannot have played more than 25 games in any single preceding season nor in six or more games in each of any two preceding seasons (this is why Nikita Filatov and Alex Pietrangelo are not eligible) in any major professional league. The player must not be older than 26 years before September 15 of the season in which he is eligible.

Mikael Backlund, Calgary – Two more games played last season and he'd be ineligible. The signing of Olli Jokinen might have torpedoed his chances of getting much ice time at centre – especially on the top two lines, but Backlund could slip over to the left wing as a rookie and produce. If Calgary handles him well – a big if – then he's a candidate.

Kyle Beach, Chicago – If Beach wins the award, we'll call it the Cap Crunch Calder. He'll also be a major coat-tail rider. The Hawks have moved out some salaries and are thin on the left side. If Beach shows up at camp in good shape and can keep his head on straight, he could win the lottery and get a spot in the top six. A 52-goal scorer in junior last season, he's also a good PIM option if your league counts that.

Jonathan Bernier, Los Angeles – Jonathan Quick is in his way, but Bernier was excellent in the AHL last season and is ready to start pushing for more NHL time. He's a Quick injury away from being a Calder candidate – especially on a talented Kings team. Remember how a Pascal Leclaire injury helped vault Steve Mason into a starting job? That could happen with Bernier.

Luca Caputi, Toronto – He just barely qualifies for the Calder this year and his experience should help him. While he won't get to ride shotgun with Sid or Geno, he'll get an opportunity to produce for Toronto. A top-six role is not guaranteed, but Toronto is thin and will need some players who can create offence.

John Carlson, Washington – What you have here is an elixir for success. An offensive defenseman tears up AHL, scores clutch OT goal in world junior championship and gets playoff cameo with star-studded Capitals team. Are you ready to start counting the points? Don't expect Green-like numbers, but John Carlson is in a great position and has awesome skills. He just needs the ice time to light it up.

Logan Couture, San Jose - His soft hands and great hockey sense were evident in his early teens and while he had an up-and-down junior career with Ottawa because of injuries, he finished off strong with a solid final year with them and then had an excellent pro debut last season with Worcester. With 25 games in the regular season and 15 games in the playoffs, Couture is the Calder candidate with the most NHL seasoning. Unless there's an injury in San Jose's top six, there isn't room for him and he'll likely be the third-line center. His play-making savvy will earn him some second-unit power-play duty, though.

Corey Crawford – A big if. If the Hawks can shed themselves of Cristobal Huet's salary and if they don't come to terms with Antti Niemi, then Crawford could be their man. With all the talent still on the Hawks roster, that could add up to some hefty win totals for Crawford. Almost too old for Calder eligibility, he has lots of AHL seasoning to help him earn a spot.

Oliver Ekman-Larsson, Phoenix – It's rare for a defenseman to win this award because you usually need to put up points. Only three blueliners have won it in the last 20 seasons and Barrett Jackman is the only one to do it without decent production. Ekman-Larsson is an amazing talent though and if he gets any power-play time with Phoenix, he could be a fantasy asset in one-year leagues sooner than expected.

Lars Eller, Montreal – No, this isn't a response to Pierre Gauthier's spin doctor. Eller already has two solid pro seasons under his belt – one in Sweden and one in the AHL – during which he proved he can produce. He's more likely to put up Calder type numbers as a winger, unless something happens with Scott Gomez or Tomas Plekanec. A good playmaker with sound two-way instincts, he should make an easy transition.

Tyler Ennis, Buffalo – Don't underestimate Last year's AHL rookie of the year because of his size. He's met every test and has produced at every level – including nine points in a 10-game trial with Buffalo last season. During many of those games, he was among the Sabres' best players. Lindy Ruff likes his game and will give him the opportunity. He's a versatile forward with great speed and hockey sense.

Michael Grabner, Florida – It will be tough for Grabner to get the ice time in Florida. He will need a few breaks and the Panthers are not the richest offensive environment. Still, he's a talented sniper and if a winger or two falls to injury (Hello, David Booth and Cory Stillman) then he could produce.

Evgeny Grachev, New York – Struggled with the adjustment to the pro game with Hartford of the AHL, Grachev is unlikely to tear it up at the NHL level this year. However, it was just his second season in North America and he lit up in junior two years ago. His talent is undeniable, so he could burst on the scene in the Big Apple.

Cody Hodgson, Vancouver – It all depends on his health. He skipped Vancouver's prospects camp to stay with his training regimen. He was almost considered a shoo-in to be a finalist last year, but it was a rough season for Hodgson because of his back injury. He played in just 13 games in the OHL. Should he get a year of seasoning in the AHL to help get his timing back? It's unlikely Vancouver will rush him, but there's no denying the talent.

Jacob Markstrom, Florida – Not a guy that I would predict to win because of his situation, but he certainly has the talent to pull another Steve Mason. He's had two stellar seasons with Brynas in the Swedish Elite League and is ready for the next challenge. If it's the AHL, he'll dominate. If it's the NHL and Florida moves Tomas Vokoun and he leapfrogs Alexander Salak, he'll benefit from Florida's system and with enough playing time and little punch from the O, he could garner enough attention.

Jamie McBain, Carolina – Offensive defensemen and the Carolina Hurricanes seem to be like oil and water in recent years. They've had some okay producers on the blueline, but McBain could change that. He excelled in a 14-game cameo with Carolina after scoring 40 points in 68 AHL games.

Jordan Schroeder, Vancouver – The Canucks have moved out Steve Bernier, but they signed Manny Malhotra and are deep at center. If Schroeder gets a shot on the wing of a scoring line, he could produce Calder-type numbers. Ideally, he'd play a season in the AHL, however.

Magnus Paajarvi-Svensson, Edmonton – A dangler that oozes talent and skates like he was made for the ice in Edmonton, which is known for being one of the fastest surfaces in the NHL. MPS has speed to burn. Hey may not be the greatest fit on a line with Ales Hemsky because of their similar styles, but he'll help someone produce.

Sergei Shirokov, Vancouver – Quietly went about his business in the AHL and didn't make a fuss. He said he wanted to do whatever it took to make it in the NHL. Well, Sami Salo's injury and Mason Raymond's arbitration award could put a cap crunch on the Canucks. Shirokov is an affordable solution to the Canucks if they need to boost their scoring punch.

P.K. Subban, Montreal – No doubt, there are many Habs fans who are already asking the engraver to put his name on the trophy. I don't disagree with his potential and talent, but winning the Calder as a defenseman is difficult. Subban was a treat to watch in the playoffs as he seemed to have ice-water in his veins. That sang-froid will help him.

Eric Tangradi, Pittsburgh – Tangradi made a slow transition to the pro game with Wilkes-Barre Scranton Penguins. He made a similarly slow transition to major junior, but caught on quickly. With a good training camp, Tangradi could be riding shotgun with Sidney Crosby or Evgeni Malkin. He has the skill and the Penguins will like his cap hit.

Mattias Tedenby, New Jersey – A long shot, especially since the Devils like to take their time with prospects. A lot of his chances depend on whether they sign Ilya Kovalchuk (and it gets approved). A left winger like Kovalchuk and Parise, you might think Kovalchuk re-signing with New Jersey would hurt Tedenby's chances. Just the opposite: Kov's big contract will increase the chances of cheap young players like Tedenby.

Honorable Mentions: Vyacheslav Voynov, L.A. (could go back to KHL); Michal Neuvirth, WAS (injury away); Cory Schneider, VAN (injury away).

Ryan Van Horne's column on NHL prospects "Panning for Gold" can be found every Saturday on DobberHockey.com

Dobber's Tip:

At the top of DobberHockey.com, in the banner, you will find tabs. Click on "Fantasy Tools" and discover the best fantasy hockey tool that you have ever seen. Literally. Any player in the NHL and who they played with during any period of time – there is no more accurate a line combo finder than that. Also – line production - that is finding out who a player was playing with when he got each of his points. Not to mention custom made roto-ranker, compare-a-player, chart-a-player, preseason stats and more. Jump into the "Frozen Pool"! Created by Jason Arbuthnot.

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ANGUS UNLEASHED

By Jeff Angus

A player with a one-way contract (meaning he earns the same salary at the AHL level if he is waived or sent down) immediately has an advantage on a player with a two-way contract (for example, an NHL salary paying \$700,000, and an AHL salary paying \$75,000) coming into training camp.

The One-Way Deal vs. the Two-Way Deal

Most NHL teams are unwilling to pay full NHL salaries to have players skate for their AHL affiliates, although recently some teams have shown a willingness to pay a premium for farm team talent (players like Jason Krog and Alexandre Giroux). Some recent examples of players who have leveraged their one-way contracts into roster spots over the past few seasons include Johnny Boychuk, Antti Niemi, Kurtis Foster and Rich Peverley. Often times that extra couple of games is the difference between sticking with the NHL team and getting demoted to the AHL.

Already Signed to One-Way Deals

Joel Perreault, Vancouver

The Canucks signed the offensively talented Perreault on the first day of free agency. As it stands right now, he will compete for the 4th line center position in training camp. Perreault is not a prototypical 4th line center – he is talented offensively and is neither gritty nor strong in his own zone. However, the Canucks already boast two elite defensive centers in Ryan Kesler and Manny Malhotra. If Perreault sticks, he could even see some time on one of the power play units, much like former Canuck Kyle Wellwood.

Jiri Tlusty, Carolina

Tlusty will be competing for a roster spot with the likes of Zach Boychuk, Drayson Bowman and Oskar Osala. Tlusty is the only of the four who has a one-way contract in his pocket, virtually guaranteeing himself the spot. He is a solid two-way player who does everything well (and nothing very well – very steady player). Look for him to slot in on the second line. Tlusty's upside might be high (or not...jury's still out), but he is a safe bet to become a solid top six winger.

Derek Meech, Detroit

The swift-skating defenseman has yet to really get a fair shot at being a productive player in Detroit. His ability to play forward helps his chances at making the Red Wings, but it does nothing for his fantasy value. Meech will compete with Jakub Kindl, Brendan Smith, and perhaps a veteran or two in training camp for the final spot in Detroit's top six. Meech has a good shot and knows his way around the offensive zone, but I don't see him reaching his potential in Detroit – look for him to breakout if/when he is traded from the Wings.

Brandon Yip, Colorado

Yip burst onto the scene for the Avalanche last year, scoring 11 goals in only 32 games. He wrapped up a successful four-year college career in 2008-09, scoring 20 goals for Boston University. Yip only saw six games of AHL action before making the jump to the big club. His best attributes are his speed, shot, and work ethic. His versatility won't keep him locked in on one line or in a certain role – he can check and score. Look for him to come close to 20 goals and 40 to 45 points.

Jack Skille, Chicago

Skille smartly took less money than his qualifying offer to ensure he received a one-way contract. As a former first round draft pick, his contract (over \$1 million per season) was too rich for the cap-strapped Blackhawks, but his new contract (\$600,000) ensures that he will be on the roster for 2010-11. Skille was originally thought to be a big sniping winger, but he has developed into more of a two-way player since turning pro. However, he still possesses offensive talent and may flourish with the right linemates in Chicago. Skille will probably start off on the checking unit, but he could still score 15 to 20 goals in that role.

Derek Dorsett, Columbus

Dorsett is a personal favorite of mine and I think he is on the verge of becoming one of the next great agitators in the NHL. Dorsett's final season in the WHL saw him record 64 points and 209 PIM in only 61 games. He had decent numbers with Columbus last season as well – 14 points and 105 PIM in 51 games (limited minutes, too). He is a much better hockey player than Jared Boll and should eventually find his way onto the checking unit (9-11 minutes per game instead of 5-7 on the fourth line). His upside of 10-15 goals and 200-225 PIM makes him a very valuable combination player.

Pierre-Alexandre Parenteau, Long Island

Parenteau will get a long look at camp because of his one-way contract. He has a ton of skill and has dominated the AHL over the past few years. Moulson came out of nowhere to score 30 for the Islanders last year and they are hoping Parenteau does the same. For every Moulson there are a dozen great AHL players who fail to do anything at the NHL level, but the key with Moulson was opportunity. He got a great one and seized it. Parenteau hasn't been given a fair shot at playing top six minutes with an NHL club to this point, but the young and offensively-inept Islanders will give him just that.

Jakub Kindl, Detroit

The Red Wings have been unsurprisingly patient with Kindl, who has now spent three full seasons in Grand Rapids. He was drafted in 2005 out of the OHL as primarily an offensive defenseman, but he has improved leaps and bounds in his own zone. Many Detroit fans are afraid that GM Ken Holland is going to sign a few veterans, blocking the potential roster spots for the likes of Kindl, Smith, or Meech. Kindl projects to be a very solid top-four defenseman capable of playing in all situations. Detroit has a good one on their hands with Kindl. Other teams should take note and see how to properly develop a young defenseman.

Sergei Kostitsyn – Nashville

Kostitsyn was very quick to sign a one-year, one-way contract with the Predators after the trade from Montreal. His poor attitude was a hot topic of debate, and the anonymity of playing in Nashville should be a nice change of pace after the drama in Montreal last year regarding his off-ice connections and activities. From an on-ice perspective, Nashville is one of the best places Kostitsyn could have ended up. They are lacking talent in the forward group, and especially on the wing. Kostitsyn has a good chance at sliding in on the left side on the second scoring line. The Predators will spread out their limited offense on three lines.

Dustin Boyd – Montreal

Boyd will be in tough to get any sort of offensive minutes with the Canadiens, but at least he will be in the NHL. While with the Flames, his linemates consisted of goons and grinders. Boyd is a great skater but he has a bad habit of taking a few shifts off each game. Look for him to start the season on Montreal's energy line with Tom Pyatt and Ryan White. Boyd had 11 goals and 24 points last season split between Calgary and Nashville – not horrible numbers, considering the limited ice time and lack of quality linemates he was receiving. His development in Montreal bears watching in all league formats.

Matt D'Agostini – St. Louis

The Blues are blessed with great depth at forward, but for whatever reason they struggled to score goals in 2009-10. With the retirement of Keith Tkachuk and the departure of Paul Kariya, there will be more ice time for the younger forwards, including D'Agostini. He'll start off on the third line, but St. Louis will try to balance their scoring out on three lines (it seems like quite a few teams are opting to do this). He's not big or fast, but he has great hands and is very crafty. With enough power play time, he could become a relevant fantasy player even in one-year leagues.

Vladimir Sobotka – St. Louis

Acquiring Sobotka for a prospect back in June was absolute thievery by the Blues. The Bruins, for whatever reason, deemed it necessary to overpay for veteran defensemen and grinding forwards, and had no problem letting a young, energetic, two-way forward in Sobotka leave for peanuts (no offense to David Warsofsky). Even if he doesn't develop as expected offensively, Sobotka is a hard-hitting speedster who brings a lot to the table in all three zones. Both Boston and St. Louis are relatively deep teams at the forward position, but a change of scenery could help him break out of the defensive role he seemed to be placed in by Claude Julien.

Matt Lashoff – Tampa Bay (update: now with Toronto)

The Andrej Meszaros trade was great news for Lashoff, as it took away one potential competitor for power play time in Tampa Bay. The Lightning lack a true power play quarterback (expect Pavel Kubina to do his best to fill that role) in the short-term, but they are still holding out hope that Lashoff can develop into that kind of player for them. He is still a bit rough around the edges without the puck, but his offensive game is very, very good. Tampa Bay is a top-heavy team so the second power play unit won't see that much ice time, but Lashoff could use the limited minutes with the man advantage to finally prove to be a legitimate NHL defenseman. If he is able to lock down a roster spot, he bears watching in all keeper league formats.

Sami Lepisto – Phoenix

The Coyotes have one of the best young offensive defensemen in the game (Keith Yandle), and one of the best defensive prospects (Oliver Ekman-Larsson) as well. It isn't surprising that the steady Lepisto has been overlooked since being acquired last year from Washington. He is big, mobile, and solid with and without the puck. His upside isn't all that high, but he is already a solid defenseman and should hit the 30-point mark sooner rather than later, especially if he sees more than 18 seconds of power play time per game (his 2009-10 figure).

Davis Drewiske, Los Angeles

The Kings are the next big thing in fantasy hockey. Pittsburgh started the trend a few years ago, and Chicago quickly became the team to target. Los Angeles has tons of young talent at every position, and the trickle-down effect will boost the fantasy value of every single player on the roster. Drewiske is a solid young defenseman and the Kings really like him (enough for a three-year, one-way contract, at least). Drewiske is more known for his defensive play, but he moves the puck well and has some untapped offensive upside. Unless you are in a deep league, he probably isn't worth owning just yet.

Bryan Bickell – Chicago

Bickell earned a cup of coffee on the top line with Kane and Toews during the playoffs this past spring, but he was obviously more than a bit above his head. He has great size and skates pretty well, but is far from a top line NHL forward. He will only have fantasy value if Chicago experiences a few injuries or needs an injection of size into the top six. He'll be on the team this fall, but probably in more of a defensive or grinding type of role.

Jonas Andersson – Nashville

Nashville isn't a team that hands out one-way contracts to players they don't expect to be playing on the big club. But they gave Andersson a one-way deal. Andersson, who hasn't played in North America since 2003, recorded 20 points in 30 games for Minsk Dynamo of the KHL this past season. The last time he suited up for the Predators, their leading scorer was Cliff Ronning (2001-02). Nashville is hoping to find the proverbial needle in the haystack by signing players like Andersson and trading for Kostitsyn. He'll be on the team barring a poor training camp, but it remains to be seen what sort of role he will be placed in. GM David Poile mentioned Andersson's size, skating ability, and defensive acumen during the press release to announce the signing. Normally I'd sweep a transaction like this under the rug, but if he gets hot, he could be worth owning on a team that is constantly searching for more goal scoring.

Not Signed (Yet)

Justin Abdelkader – Detroit

The hard-hitting Abdelkader won't ever become a 30-goal scorer at the NHL level, but he may develop into just as impactful a player. In his final season at Michigan State, he had 107 penalty minutes, which was more than double any other player on the team. In his past 109 AHL games, he has managed to rack up 188 penalty minutes. He will skate on Detroit's fourth line this season, but will probably sit in the sin bin enough to be fantasy relevant in leagues that record PIM as a category. He has some upside in the offensive zone but there are no open spots on Detroit's top three lines. UPDATE: Signed a one-way contract.

Christian Hanson – Toronto

Hanson was one of three highly touted college free agents signed last summer (the other two being Tyler Bozak and Matt Gilroy). He was billed as a swift-skating potential second line center that could play in all situations. His 2009-10 season started off well for the Marlies, and after the trade deadline he earned a call up to the Maple Leafs. He failed to show much of anything in his time up, however (two goals and seven points in 31 games). Hanson has a lot of natural ability (size, speed, strength), but he appeared to be a step or two behind the NHL game mentally last season. 2010-11 will be a big test for him as Toronto will want to see some return on their investment.

Mark Dekanich – Nashville

The backup position behind Pekka Rinne in Nashville is wide open (at the moment, at least). Dekanich had a very solid season for Milwaukee as the starting goalie in 2009-10. He is the de facto number two behind Rinne on the depth chart right now, as the promising Chet Pickard is still too raw for the NHL level. Nashville could sign a veteran free agent goalie, but if they don't, Dekanich bears watching. The Predators are always a strong club defensively and have a history of developing solid and underrated goaltenders. UPDATE: Signed a two-way contract.

Worth Watching

Ryan Potulny – Chicago

The Oilers decided to not even qualify Potulny, and the move got lost in the weeds a bit as Edmonton also cut ties with the likes of Ethan Moreau, Patrick O'Sullivan, and Robert Nilsson around the same time. Potulny had a relatively productive season with the lowly Oilers, scoring 15 goals in 64 games. The knock on him throughout his career has been effort and willing to battle physically, and he was much improved in both of those areas last season. He'd make a great fit on a team looking to sign an offensive player for a low cap hit. UPDATE: Signed two-way contract with Chicago

Jeff Angus' column "Angus Unleashed" can be found on DobberHockey.com every few days. Angus also covers the Daily Ramblings from Thursday to Saturday.

Dobber's Tip:

Bounce your ideas off of other fantasy hockey fanatics in the new and improved DobberHockey forum. Now with added features and lightning-quick page loads, more than 38,000 registered members talk nothing but our passion: fantasy hockey.



AN EXPERT'S AUDIT

By Ian Fergusson

In many fantasy leagues out there you're going to need a troglodyte since Lady Byng is rosterable ... although he's a lot less fun to watch. So let me ask you, how many NHL'ers have hit the 40 pt/200 PIM level over the last 5 years? One. Steve Downie had 46 points and 208 PIMs last year and he was the only guy to reach that mark in five NHL seasons. It truly is a rare thing and for fantasy leagues it is a significant accomplishment to roster Downie in a PIM league, particularly a keeper. The definition of a true fantasy power player in my books is 40/200 but since only one guy has hit the mark recently, I'll have to lower my sights a bit; let's say 30/150 for forwards and 20/120 for defensemen.

Penalty Minute Monsters

There's more to fantasy hockey than getting the most goals and assists; it's good strategy to target guys who'll contribute across the board instead of just the point categories. It's difficult to predict plus/minus from season to season so one of my favorite approaches is to peruse the available PIM options. If you can roster two guys who reach my point/PIM level in standard leagues then I'll predict that you'll be well on your way to dominating in the PIM category without taking a bite out of your bottom line in terms of offense. Looking historically we found some candidates who reached the level in the past and a handful who look ready to burst into the grouping. I'll look at options who've made the grade, guys who just barely missed the grade and potential options for breaking into the grouping as soon as this upcoming season.

2009-10 Made the Grade

Steve Downie, Tampa Bay – I've got to be honest, I wasn't a fan before the season began last year and I was late to join the parade to roster him. I do have him on one of my teams and you'll be lucky to have him too. I'm predicting he makes the grade again this season, but be aware there is an injury and attitude history to watch here. That's not scaring me off however and he's most definitely a keeper option in any PIM format.

Sean Avery, New York – In last year's article I was betting that he'd be the best point/PIM option in the league for the season. It turned out he was second best with 31 points and 160 PIM. He's the only NHLer to make the grade four out of the last five seasons.

Scott Hartnell, Philadelphia – he's hit the list two out of the last five seasons and I think he fell short last season because there were more PIM options available on the Flyers and his hands kind of turned to stone on occasion with only 14 goals. I can see a possible return to 30 goals with 20 being much more certain. I don't think that 150 PIM is going to be hard for him to reach at all since he's gotten there two out of the last three seasons.

Steve Ott, Dallas – he got 36/153 last year and could've gotten past the 40-point mark if he had played in more games (he missed nine). This is a guy that you can get in mid to late rounds in drafts who could solidify your PIM category as a C3 or C4.

The Last Half Decade

David Backes, St. Louis – he went 54/165 two seasons ago and then the PIM fell off last season. The PIM are bound to come back up, particularly with plenty of opportunity protecting the Smurfs that man the rest of the Blues top line. See what I did there? Smurfs? Blues? I kill me.

Alex Burrows, Vancouver – he also hit the list twice out of the last five seasons although he fell short in PIM (121) last year. Burrows produced best when he lined up with the twins last year and he's likely to continue to contribute as he gets the same opportunities. I'm not worried about the PIM for him this season, he's an agitator and he'll do his sandpaper thing.

David Clarkson, New Jersey – he made the grade two seasons ago with a 32/164 but last year blew up in front of him taking out his legs. Essentially he played half a season and if you extrapolated over a full season he would've hit the mark again. If he's healthy and he has his legs under him again he'll be back in this article for a lot of years to come.

Chris Pronger, Philadelphia – he was monstrous in the playoffs and when the chips are down he'll knock down anyone who needs some graphite upside the head just so he can get the job done. He's one of the best all around D in the league and if he's on your team then you love him. Despite all that he's only made the grade once over the last five seasons.

Dion Phaneuf, Toronto – in 07-08 he put up 60/182 which is an absolutely monstrous tally for any D at any time. After that season I started to call him PIMy-D and then as a Leafs fan I was absolutely STOKED to get to see him in Blue and White. During this season if I'm betting on any D making the grade, then my money is on PIMy-D because he's got more to prove right now.

Zdeno Chara, Boston – he's actually never hit the standard as a Bruin but as a Senator he made the grade three times and only missed the fourth time by two minors. That doesn't mean he doesn't have great value as a Bruin since exceptional point production can offset PIM production, particularly if plus/minus is perpetually stunning.

Chris Neil, Ottawa – I've got to admit that I have had an affinity for taking Neil as my PIM option. He's hard-nosed and he gets plenty of opportunity with the Sens amongst the top two lines. He made the list five seasons ago and he's fallen just short on offense three times since. He'll make the list again and I'm inclined to roster him just because I like him as my PIM option.

Brendan Morrow, Dallas – a full five seasons ago he put up a very exciting 65/183 season ... and they made him the captain. As the captain he's made a conscious decision to be less aggressive and that has hurt his value for this discussion. That doesn't mean he doesn't have significant value, in fact if he can get in the neighborhood of 60 pts and 100 PIM then I'd still love to have him on my roster, I'd just want a couple more PIM options too. If he combines with Steve Ott to bang around on the ice then I think they can be a duo that puts the fear of God in anybody, if that God has a crooked nose and missing teeth.

Kevin Bieksa, Vancouver – he got 22/85 in only 55 games last season and the word on him has always been that if he can stay healthy then he's an absolute beast on the back end of any NHL blueline. He made the grade in the only season over the last five years where he's played more than 72 games.

Sheldon Souray, Edmonton – he brings more offense to the table than Bieksa does but he's just as much made of fine china. He put up 64/135 in the monster season in Montreal in 06-07. Even if he's healthy and traded somewhere else for this season I don't see him making the grade again in his career. He'll keep putting up offense but I think it's wise for him to shy away from the pounding for the most part.

Craig Rivet, Buffalo – the Sabres captain put up 24/125 two seasons ago and he gets easily forgotten as a PIM option in many fantasy leagues. Consider him an end draft option where you can shore up your PIM with a D4 who'll get his share of offense too.

Shane O'Brien, Vancouver – he got 21/154 four seasons ago and it has never been much of a doubt that he'll get PIM but would he get to the right point level? Actually I'm thinking that his ice time will be going down as the years go on and I don't expect him to reach the level ever again.

Steve Montador, Buffalo – Seriously you didn't expect this name to be on this list, did you? In '08-'09 he put up 21/143. I think he'll be able to get to the 20-point level again fairly easily but I see guys like Rivet stealing away his PIM opportunities.

Ready for Point/PIM Primetime

Dan Carcillo, Philadelphia – surprisingly he's never met the points standard in a single season although he's easily met the PIM target every season. I've got to admit that I like it when he goes all snaky sometimes.

Milan Lucic, Boston – the Looch that shows up this season will determine whether he'll ever make this list. Will it be the 08-09 version with nearly two PIM/game or the 09-10 version with nearly one PIM/game? Looch only played 50 games last year but he also cut his PIMs/game in half from the year before. Fantasy guys want the Looch with some edge to be the guy that shows up this year and we'll just have to wait to see who he is.

Ryan Getzlaf, Anaheim – if you have a shot at finishing in the top 10 in scoring then I'll lower my PIM expectations down to about 100 for the season. Getzlaf has the skills to post over 90 points on the season so I'd be thrilled if he can get close to the same tally for PIM. Obviously you'd have to get him early if you're going to get him but it's not because you're trying to lock up your PIM.

Cody McLeod, Colorado – two seasons ago he was 20/162 and last year he was 18/138 so it looks like an uptick in offensive opportunity could move him onto this list. I put him in this same section last year and it turned out that he took a step back, but I still believe he has a shot to make the grade, as good a shot as any of the lower offensive options listed here.

B.J. Crombeen, St. Louis – I had him in this section last year too and he pumped up his PIM level to 168 but his offensive output remained in the teens. I still say he's got a shot at making the jump. The PIM will be there (he had 18 majors last year), it's just a question of whether the offense will get there or not.

Shane Doan, Phoenix – I mention him for sentimental reasons. I live in Winnipeg and he's still very much loved in this town. Five seasons ago he put up 66/123 and then he never came close to putting up those sorts of PIM totals since. I don't suspect he'll ever break 100 PIM in a season again but he could still be used to supplement your PIM if you added him for his offensive output.

Wayne Simmonds, Los Angeles – he got 40/116 this past season in his second year of full time duty. He'll keep getting the opportunity and if you wait later than mid-draft in your league then I say you won't be getting him on your roster. I'm making this call now, he'll have 40/150 this season at least.

That's a quick look at your knuckle-dagger options. Like I said, I'll be targeting at least two of these guys in any draft I'm in so if you're going to beat me in my league then you'll have to be quicker with the draft button than I am. Happy drafting, unless you're picking the guy I want ... then you're looking at a punch upside the head and a stick in the teeth.

Ian Fergusson pens the column "An Expert's Audit", where he selects team that a reader submitted and helps the reader for a month with trades, strategies and advice – and then presents the results on DobberHockey – every month throughout the season



LEMON-AID

By Brent Lemon

If you want to be a champion, there's precious little room for sentimentality in fantasy hockey. And while it may seem a bit depressing, it pays to consider if a certain player's performance is likely to decline, especially if they sizzled in the recent past. With that in mind, here are 20 NHLers who, because of age, injury, or an altered situation, you might want to think twice about before drafting this season.

20 Skaters to Avoid on Your Draft Day

Marion Gaborik, RW, New York – Last year, the 28-year-old Slovak's 44 goals and 86 points were impressive personal bests, but a repeat performance is always in doubt for a man who has missed 127 of the 410 games he might have played since the lockout. There is likely nowhere for Gaborik to go but down, particularly in the event of yet another serious injury. While the addition of Alexandre Frolov is intriguing, the potential pairing does more for Frolov owners and the Russian's streakiness may only amplify the frustrations of owning Gaborik.

Mike Fisher, C, Ottawa – Any year in which you tie the knot with one of country music's biggest stars and set a personal best for points is going to earn you a few extra pages in the family scrapbook. However, he enjoyed a point-per-game pace in October and November, but slowed down steadily over the year, and only put up 12 points in his final 25 games. Don't tell Carrie, but Fisher's unlikely to match last year's points, even with Sergei Gonchar in the mix.

Bill Guerin, RW, Pittsburgh – The fifth overall draft selection of 1989 was instrumental in the Pittsburgh Penguins' championship run in 2009. And he put up the points last year, especially early on. However, at 39 years of age, how much longer can Guerin keep it up? Further, Sidney Crosby was on the ice for all but four of Guerin's 45 points last year, which suggests the possibility that if Guerin plays with lesser linemates, his scoring will suffer.

Teemu Selanne, RW, UFA – Since winning the Cup in 2007, the Finnish Flash hasn't been the same, but each year his potential retirement – and eventual return – builds excitement in some fantasy corners. Since his 94-point campaign in 2006-07, Selanne's scoring rate has hovered near 0.90 points-per-game mark, but it is his limited number of games played that should concern potential owners. Even if the 40-year-old Helsinki native does return for another season, it is unlikely his final scoring numbers will be deserving of a spot on your roster.

Jamie Langenbrunner, RW, New Jersey – The 16-year NHL veteran's production dipped to 19 goals and 61 points last season after a career campaign in 2008-09, when he put up 29 goals and 69 points. In particular, the 35-year-old Devils' captain was less productive after the Olympic break, perhaps owing to fatigue. While his ice-time varied somewhat over the season, he ended with far less than he began with. He has already seen his best scoring days come and go.

Dustin Penner, LW, Edmonton – The sometimes maligned Oiler posted his best numbers so far in 2009-10, scoring 32 goals and 63 points. As one of the hottest point producers in October, the 27-year-old was on his way to silencing his critics. But by the beginning of December, Penner had cooled off dramatically until finally posting a couple of productive weeks at the end of the season. While that late push might encourage Penner's fans, the rest of us should remember that half of his points last year were in the books before November was over.

Maxim Afinogenov, RW, UFA – Those who gambled on the former Buffalo Sabre's rebound in Atlanta last year were rewarded, as the injury-prone Russian played all 82 games for the first time in his NHL career and racked up 61 points, including a career high of 24 goals. The Thrashers wide-open style likely suited the 30-year-old, who has been described as 'defensively indifferent'. Should the currently contactless Afinogenov end up on a defensively tighter squad his ice-time could plummet. UPDATE: Signed in the KHL

Nikolai Antropov, C, Atlanta – Nik posted a career best with 67 points earned last year. The often-injured center played a respectable 76 games and also benefited from Atlanta's offensively-minded style last year. Neither condition is guaranteed for next year, and so while Antropov did finish strong, center is too deep a position to consider taking a player who may well have just enjoyed his best season in the NHL.

Daymond Langkow, C, Calgary – While he was a 30-goal scorer as recently as two seasons ago, Langkow has slowed significantly in recent years. His point total has fallen steadily from a high of 77 points in 2006-07, to last year's 37-point performance that ended suddenly in March when he was hit in the back of his neck with a puck. It remains unclear when he will return. Apparently, the Olli Jokinen re-signing was in part a reaction to the uncertainty surrounding Langkow.

Steve Sullivan, RW, Nashville – After battling back injuries for the last several seasons, the former Bill Masterson trophy winner finally played a full 82 games in 2009-10. Sullivan hadn't played a full season since 2002-03. After posting more than one point-per-game season during his shortened campaigns, fans were excited to see what he might do with a full year. The 36-year old finished with a respectable 51 points. Sullivan's return is a super-human feat of perseverance to be sure, but his value to your fantasy squad is limited.

Tomas Kaberle, D, Toronto – Last year, Kaberle seemed to play his best hockey when the Toronto Maple Leafs were at their worst. The 32-year-old Czech earned a respectable tally of 42 points when everything was said and done in April, but amazingly, he earned all but 14 of those before New Year's Day.

Ryan Malone, LW, Tampa Bay – It looked to be a career year for Malone, who started off hot, with 35 of his season's 47 points recorded before January, but slowed before finally deciding to undergo arthroscopic knee-surgery in mid-March. As good as last season was for the 30-year-old Olympic medal winner, the addition of fellow-LW, Simon Gagne, will affect the quality of Malone's ice time.

Patrick Elias, RW, New Jersey – Like Langenbrunner, Elias had a very good 2008-09, and was a point-per-game player. But the 33-year-old ran into injury troubles last year, missing more than 10 games in a row twice, and finished with 48 points in 58 games played. Age is catching up with Elias. His games played and his points scored will once again reflect that this season.

Shane Doan, RW, Phoenix – Doan's numbers were down last year with 18 goals and 55 points, shedding 13 goals and 18 points from his previous year's totals. Some might suggest that a rebound is likely, but Doan lacked his late-season scoring push of the previous year. His ice time has eroded slightly, but noticeably, and the significant drop in goals (his first time below 27 goals since 2002-03), suggest that the 33-year-old might be in the process of adopting a new role within the revived Coyotes' team.

Vaclav Prospal, LW, New York Rangers – Many subscribe to the up-year/down-year theory to explain Vinny's scoring. According to that theory, last year's 58 points in 75 games (with 17 scored in October) was an up year. While the up/down theory may be better suited to predicting the length of the 35-year-old's hair, there can be no argument that the general trend of Prospal's scoring has been downward for the past several seasons. Even if you only count his 'up' years.

Andrew Brunette, LW, Minnesota – Brunette reversed two years of scoring decline last year, finishing with 61 points – 11 points better than his previous year. However, his scoring was front-loaded and he will be 37 before the season gets underway. Don't expect another improvement.

Stephan Weiss, C, Florida – Weiss got people's attention by catching fire in November and December of last year, and finished with 60 points. However, Nathan Horton was on the ice for most of Weiss' 121 points scored over his past two seasons, and 49 of last year's 60. With Horton now wearing a Boston Bruins' sweater, it remains to be seen if Weiss will be the same player.

Tomas Holmstrom, LW/RW, Detroit – Hockeytown's gritty forward with the short, ugly stick gave Detroit 25 goals and 45 points last year, the Swede's best totals since 2006-07, and he finished strong to boot, benefiting from the return of his injured teammates. However, at 37, and with the return of Jiri Hudler to Detroit depth chart, expect to see Holmstrom's scoring dip in the coming season.

Tim Connolly, C, Buffalo – Like Gaborik and Afinogenov, Connolly enjoyed a banner campaign in 2009-10. He set a personal best with 65 points, and was scoring at a blistering 1.43 point-per-game pace during the month of January. But also like Gaborik and Afinogenov, Connolly benefitted from avoiding the seemingly endless injuries that have plagued him since 2003. It's asking a lot for an encore.

Rene Bourque, LW/RW, Calgary – With 73 games played in 2009-10, the 28-year-old Bourque suited up more often than he had since his first NHL season in 2005-06. He was rewarded for his endurance, earning career highs of 27 goals, and 58 points. But after playing with his hair on fire in the first two weeks of the season (and earning 12 points), Bourque fell into a volatile pattern of scoring peaks and valleys. While his scoring in March, 14 points in 15 games, was impressive, half of those came in two games. That volatility, combined with his past tendency for injury, make him a risky pick for the coming season.

Lemon's column "Lemon-Aid" can be found on DobberHockey.com every second Wednesday throughout the season

Dobber's Tip:



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SCHOOL OF BLOCK

By **Justin Goldman**

As I enter my fourth season of covering goalies for Dobber, I take great pride in providing his fellowship of fantasy managers with surefire prophecies that will provide a definitive edge against the competition. Last season, I accurately projected the rise of Craig Anderson, Tuukka Rask, Jonathan Quick and Jaroslav Halak. This year, let's again look beyond the obvious "high risers" like Antero Niittymaki and Semyon Varlamov and expose those who can win NHL games, but won't need NHL experience to do it.

Goalies To Watch

Ondrej Pavelec, Atlanta – Playing under a cost-efficient two-year contract, many will think of Pavelec as a young and inexperienced starter paired with a sturdy and even keeled backup in Chris Mason. As such, his name will appear quite low on most managers' draft lists. But realize he's a true high risk, high reward goalie worth watching. Despite a 14-18-7 record last year, he posted better than a .900 save percentage in 22 of his 44 games and stole at least six wins for the Thrashers.

Henrik Karlsson, Calgary – It has been a long time since a goalie backing up Miikka Kiprusoff was worth watching, but Karlsson should garner some of your focus. He'll not only get plenty of chances to prove he's capable of handling a bigger role, but he will only improve as time goes on. He's also a very well-trained, efficient and positionally sound goalie with great size. So similar to Jonas Gustavsson's situation last year, Calgary will play him at least 15 games in order to gauge whether or not he's worth re-signing.

Justin Peters, Carolina – Over the last two years, Cam Ward has suffered some kind of nagging or partially serious injury. Last year, it was his leg getting slashed by Rick Nash. Then a Manny Legace injury allowed Peters to prove he's NHL-ready. Peters has the backup job locked down and will get more starts than last season. A battler with great size, expect him to post good stats, but still fly under the radar in most fantasy drafts.

Kari Lehtonen, Dallas – When discussing the fantasy value of an oft-injured goalie, one must look for signs that those injury concerns have been suppressed. Look no further than Stars goalie coach Mike Valley. He's known for his ability to refine bigger goalies and maximize their durability and mental toughness (see Brent Krahn). Therefore I feel that Lehtonen is primed to finally prove he's an elite fantasy talent. It's a huge risk, I know, but you cannot discredit the fact that when healthy, he's one of the NHL's finest puck stoppers.

Brent Krahn, Dallas – Although Andrew Raycroft was signed as Lehtonen's initial backup, it's based on a two-way deal. That means Krahn has a clear-cut opportunity to win the backup job in training camp. As you'll come to learn over time, there will be no shortage of opportunities for Krahn, as his size is heavily favored by the Stars coaching staff. We all know of Lehtonen's injury issues, so even if Krahn starts the season in the AHL, don't be surprised if he gets some NHL action, just like Matt Climie did the last two seasons.

Jonathan Bernier, Los Angeles – Even though Jon Quick and Erik Ersberg currently hold down the two jobs in LA, expect Bernier to find his way into the lineup at some point during the season. Backed by his stellar poise and confidence, it's only a matter of time before he's winning NHL games on a more consistent basis. Every time he's been called up, he's done extremely well, so the opportunity is clearly there. He has the ability to be a true catalyst and leader on a team that is quickly becoming a force in the Western Conference.

Dan Ellis, Tampa Bay – Increased minutes are guaranteed to give him the consistent starts needed to take his game to the next level. It was really the only thing that held him back in Nashville. He has clear-cut skills, durability and mental toughness. He can win games in a variety of ways and will thrive behind a much-improved Lightning defense. Even while stagnating on the bench during the season, he was able to post a save percentage of .900 or better in 19 of his 31 games.

Michal Neuvirth, Washington – He'll most likely start the season as Semyon Varlamov's backup, but I'm sticking to the same analysis I've had over the last two years. He won't necessarily fly under the radar, but you can expect him to play more games and post better stats than Varlamov.

A Few Others to Watch – Some guys you'll need to watch out for, but I didn't cover them individually due to the fact you already know their skill set and ability. That includes Josh Harding, Mathieu Garon, Curtis McElhinney and Chris Mason. They all hold down the backup position on their teams, so if they play well, or the starter is struggling, they will be rewarded with more minutes. McElhinney's value is at an all-time high after a strong run in March last season. Harding is coming off hip surgery, but clearly has the skills needed to win plenty of games. Mason's no slouch behind a volatile Pavelec, and the same can also be said about Garon and Steve Mason.

Third-String Machines – If injuries rear their ugly head, remember that there are a handful of AHL goalies capable of doing major fantasy damage in the NHL. Braden Holtby, Gustav Wesslau, Al Montoya, Dustin Tokarski and Tyler Weiman are all very worthy of a spot on a fantasy team and all should be watched closely throughout the season. With Jonas Gustavsson and J-S Giguere in Toronto, there's also a chance big bad Jussi Rynnas will play some NHL games as well.

Don't Forget About... Dwayne Roloson – He's one of the hardest workers in the NHL, constantly proving naysayers wrong. He's playing behind the most injured goalie the game has seen and he's capable of playing 65+ games without losing a step.

**Goldman's column "School of Block" can be found on DobberHockey.com every Monday throughout the season.
For more goalie coverage, visit his website at TheGoalieGuild.com.**



DOBBER'S TEAM BY TEAM PROJECTIONS

Notes from Dobber

- (%) in the charts indicates the percentage certainty that the **prospect** has of making the team, or the percentage confidence that Dobber has that the **sleeper pick** will hit the given point total.
- Just a quick note on a player's long-term upside. You may notice that generally speaking the younger players have a higher upside than the older ones. This is because they have not yet established a pattern of production. Their upside could be dramatically lower in as little as a year from now. Whereas a 30-year-old is pretty set in terms of what he can do...a prospect's upside does not mean he will even make the NHL. Take the upsides with a grain of salt. Dallas's Sergei Korostin has a listed upside of 72 points, but he may never get into the NHL.
- The (above) columnists' opinions may not necessarily reflect/match Dobber's...or even each other's, for that matter. Ditto for the Angus Prime Cuts feature. These extras are here to give you another perspective (i.e. some of their predictions/statements may be completely different from what you read below). The writers' opinions are not stifled and they are not forced to conform to a DobberHockey "party line". Another advantage to this Guide versus the other ones out there.
- **Goalie wins may not add up on each team because a trade may be in the cards. There may also be too many GP for the skaters – again, this is 'trades' or injuries.**
- Roughly speaking, offensive players make big jumps in their production in years two through six. In the fourth year, 24 percent of players jump by 25 percent. Use this as a rough guide for a breakout year for players entering their second, third, **fourth**, fifth, or sixth seasons: 14%, 17%, **24%**, 14%, 9%...and go with 5% for seventh seasons and beyond. I note the players entering their fourth year.
- Plus/minus is a team statistic. I'm not sure why some roto-leagues have it as a category, but some do and that's a fact of life. I don't break down predictions by player in this category because chances are it will be very similar to last season – unless the team as a whole gets worse/better. As such, I make a comment on the team impact on plus/minus to give you a ballpark idea of how it will shake down and I discuss any extreme examples.

Legend

1st Power-Play (2.5 PP minutes/game +)	●○
2nd Power-Play (0.75 – 2.5 PP min./game)	○●
Both 1st & 2nd Power-Play (almost all PP time)	●○

The Prime Cuts Grading System

Jeff Angus' new feature: Angus Prime Cuts (may not always agree with what Dobber has written in the team-by-team, but we want to provide you with another opinion).

Filet Mignon – Jeff sees a career season for this player in 2010-11

Porterhouse – 2010-11 will be a productive season

Prime Rib – Similar to last season, or a slight improvement

Sirloin – A slight regression should be expected

Rump – Prepare to be a bit disappointed

ANAHEIM

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Bobby Ryan	79	38	74	88	Ryan Getzlaf	77	25	87	95	Corey Perry	81	34	80	110
Joffrey Lupul	50	18	38	30	Saku Koivu	74	18	52	50	Teemu Selanne	64	25	50	24
Dan Sexton	74	17	44	30	Todd Marchant	76	8	17	36	Jason Blake	81	21	45	42
Troy Bodie	71	8	15	68	Kyle Chipchura	76	6	18	92	Matt Beleskey	74	12	26	76
Aaron Voros	45	6	14	72	Nick Bonino	35	3	12	14	George Parros	41	3	4	122
Ryan Carter	0	0	0	0										
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
L. Visnovsky	75	17	52	28	Toni Lydman	79	3	25	58	Jonas Hiller	36	3		
Paul Mara	65	5	22	102	Andy Sutton	67	2	16	80	Curtis McElhinney	2	0		
Luca Sbisa	75	5	27	60	Sheldon Brookbank	71	1	11	118	Marco Cousineau	3	1		
Brendan Mikkelson	67	4	14	38	Brett Festerling	20	1	3	10					
Cam Fowler	9	0	3	2										

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
		Sleeper	Pts	%
Ryan Getzlaf	110	Dan Sexton		95%
Corey Perry	88	Matt Beleskey		90%
Bobby Ryan	88	Luca Sbisa		80%
Joffrey Lupul	78	Brendan Mikkelson		65%
Nicholas Deschamps	78	Cam Fowler		45%
Saku Koivu	75	Marco Cousineau		0% - CUT
Peter Holland	75	Brett Festerling		0% - CUT
Dan Sexton	72	Nick Bonino		0% - CUT
Nick Bonino	72	Sleeper	Pts	%
Jason Blake	68	Joffrey Lupul	70	20%
Emerson Etem	68	Dan Sexton	60	20%
Lubomir Visnovsky	65	Saku Koivu	65	20%
Ryan Carter	62	Nick Bonino	50	5%
Matt Beleskey	62	Matt Beleskey	55	15%
Cam Fowler	58			
Jake Gardiner	58			

Angus Prime Cut: Lubomir Visnovsky Grade: Porterhouse

The once dominant Anaheim defensive core has been reduced to one of the league's worst in three short seasons. Gone are Chris Pronger, Scott Niedermayer, and Francois Beauchemin. Visnovsky will be counted on to pick up a great portion of the slack. The Ducks are extremely top heavy talent-wise at forward, and Visnovsky will benefit from logging lots of minutes on the first power play unit with Getzlaf, Perry, and Ryan. He moves the puck very well and has a bomb of a shot. Look for him to approach 60 points in 2010-11.

Dobber's lowdown on: Cam Fowler – Prior to the trading of James Wisniewski, I still had Fowler making the team. Not because he's NHL ready – he actually seemed to regress a little in the last three months of junior – but because the team needs a face on the back-end. A name that gets the fans excited now that Scott Niedermayer has retired. It's not as though Fowler is miles away from being NHL ready. He's a year, maybe two. But he can learn on the job and sometimes that works, sometimes it doesn't. But there is no need to raise an eyebrow over his big drop at the Draft. Teams had other needs that they wanted filled. If the Ducks picked fourth they would have still taken him I'm sure. He won't develop as quickly as Drew Doughty did, but he should post respectable 30- to 40-point numbers for a few years until he is ready for the next step.

- The signing of Finns Koivu and Lydman were partially to give Teemu Selanne a nudge towards re-signing for one more year. His addition would completely throw the above charts into a total re-do, so check back for that. UPDATE: Selanne has signed for one year. He still has 25 goals in him, but probably not 70 games.
- Ryan had 39 of his points at home last year (so 25 on the road). Perry had similar results, 47 and 29.
- Ryan flourished when Getzlaf was hurt. He had 16 points in 16 games, obviously producing much better when the team leans on him more. Bears noting, especially if he is traded (no contract yet as August 1). On the other hand, it's unsurprising that Perry managed just 11 points during those games Getzlaf was hurt.
- How good can Sexton be? From December 8 through January 17, he had 16 points in 19 games. He replaced an injured Selanne in most of those games, so if he wins that second-line role he'll be a keeper.
- Five of Blake's 15 points (in 26 games) in Anaheim last season came in the same game. He's been in and out of the coach's doghouse for two years now, so there is an element of risk.
- Lupul played a handful of games on the top line with Getzlaf and Perry and was quite successful there. If coach Randy Carlyle goes that way again (and keeps it that way), my projection will obviously fall short. However, he is still experiencing back pain and is considered a risk to start the season. Update: The blood infection in his back has returned and his season is in jeopardy. This dark horse will miss training camp and the start of the season. Do not count on more than 50 games from him, anything more would be gravy. **Update (Sept. 29): he has been cleared to begin workouts and do some light skating. He could/should be back by early December. I think my 50-game prediction is a good one.**
- Koivu had 33 points in his last 38 games as he grew comfortable with Carlyle's system. That's a 71-point pace, making him a solid dark horse.
- The team jettisoned J.S. Giguere, making Hiller the undisputed starter. McElhinney needs to get several starts in a row before he posts the numbers. He won't get that in Anaheim, barring a Hiller injury. So the youngster Cousineau, with a strong camp, could get a look. **Dobber's confidence in Hiller being the full-time starter: 100%**
- PIM: Naturally, you turn to Parros if you want PIM on this team. But wait a minute – his ice time was cut and he was scratched a lot down the stretch. The presence of big Bodie – without the heavyweight tilts, made Parros expendable. Also, Brookbank really came on in the second half and found a full-time role as that No.6 rearguard. In the end, he could very well usurp Parros as the PIM leader. The scrappy Chipchura will also be a solid PIM option. Voros will be a big part of this stat in the first half, but every year he seems to fall out of favor and his numbers drop, leading to scratches.
- Contract year: Marchant, Bonino, Sexton, Belesky, Chipchura, Carter, Bodie, Festerling, McElhinney. With the most to prove and earn that next contract: Bonino, Sexton, Eminger, Carter and Chipchura.
- This will be Ryan Carter's fourth NHL season. Add in the contract year and there could be something here. As you can tell by my projection, however, I don't have a lot of faith. Too many chances already with little to show for it.
- Plus/minus: Most of the PP guys were above zero while the PK guys were below zero. Koivu was a surprise plus-14 to lead the team by a wide margin. That was a career high, so it's hard to imagine a repeat.
- Injury: Toni Lydman experienced double vision and is undergoing a battery of tests by the team. He is not allowed to skate until cleared. This reintroduces Fowler to the possibility of making the team at least for a 9-game look. Stay tuned for an update.
- **Lineup: Ryan has been tried out at center in training camp. This bumps Koivu down to the third line and would obviously hurt his production. However, lines do get juggled and I think by Game 10 Ryan will be back on the wing on the top line. In the meantime, Beleskey is getting a long look on the big line.**

ATLANTA

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Evander Kane	77	21	43	88	Nik Antropov	78	29	73	32	Nicklas Bergfors	79	19	47	18
Andrew Ladd	82	18	48	62	Rich Peverley	82	19	56	30	Bryan Little	79	22	52	24
Fredrik Modin	52	11	20	32	Alexander Burmistrov	9	1	4	2	Nigel Dawes	65	10	32	20
Ben Eager	65	10	24	154	Chris Thorburn	79	7	17	106	Eric Boulton	58	1	8	108
Anthony Stewart	55	4	15	38	Jim Slater	65	12	22	72	Fredrik Pettersson	24	4	11	10

Defense	GP	G	Pts	PIM	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Goalies	W	SO	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Zach Bogosian	82	10	35	70	Tobias Enstrom	82	7	50	40	Chris Mason	20	3			
Johnny Oduya	79	5	30	38	Ron Hainsey	80	6	28	42	Ondrej Pavelec	16	3			
Boris Valabik	62	1	5	136	Dustin Byfuglien	80	15	38	108	Peter Mannino	3	0			
Brent Sopel	60	1	8	40	Fred Meyer	60	4	17	38						

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
Evander Kane	87	Arturs Kulda		90%
Bryan Little	85	Fredrik Pettersson		80%
Nikolai Antropov	78	Patrice Cormier		5%
Angelo Esposito	78	A. Burmistrov		20%
Rich Peverley	75	Riley Holzapfel		0% - CUT
Carl Klingberg	75	Spencer Machacek		0% - CUT
Nicklas Bergfors	72	Carl Klingberg		0% - was not in camp
Andrew Ladd	70	Akim Aliu		0% - CUT
Alexander Burmistrov	70	Sleeper	Pts	%
Riley Holzapfel	65	Evander Kane	65	35%
Spencer Machacek	62	Zach Bogosian	50	15%
Tobias Enstrom	62	Bryan Little	65	10%
Dustin Byfuglien	60	Dustin Byfuglien	60	10%
Akim Aliu	58			
Zach Bogosian	58			
Jim Slater	50			

Angus Prime Cut: Niclas Bergfors Grade: Filet Mignon

Atlanta added a lot of size and grit to their forward group this summer with the acquisitions of Dustin Byfuglien and Andrew Ladd. Those two will open up a lot of open space for the smaller, skilled players, like Bergfors. He is extremely quick and fearless with the puck. Look for him to become Atlanta's go-to scorer at both even strength and on the power play. He had 21 goals last season and will approach 30 in his first full season in Atlanta.

Dobber's lowdown on: Bryan Little – It will be interesting to see how several players fit into their roles, as there are only so many top six jobs. Antropov, Bergfors and Kane are the only locks. You can probably add Peverley to the list, because he always over-performs beyond expectations. Many have Byfuglien in there as well, thanks to his playoff performance but don't be so sure. Ladd, Little, Pettersson and MacArthur make five players for the final two spots. I give the edge to Little because he has the most talent and last season could have been a sophomore slump (even though he wasn't technically a sophomore because he played half of 2007-08). I don't believe his breakout year is coming, but I am confident that a rebound is in store. For what it's worth, I think that Ladd will take the sixth and final spot and Byfuglien will bounce between the second and third lines and be a mainstay on the top PP unit.

Dobber's lowdown on: Ondrej Pavelec – The big Czech has a lot of upside and is still young, but he lacks the consistency to thrive as a full-time starter. At least so far in his pro career. Meanwhile, Mason has a history of stealing the No. 1 job when it's in question. Look for split duty early on and then Mason will step forward and take most of the starts in the second half. Pavelec is best off as an apprentice for two years before given another shot at a heavy workload.

- Bogosian had 20 points in 55 games (30-point pace) before the Kovalchuk trade. After that, with Oduya on board, Bogosian managed just three points in 26 games.
- Bergfors is a candidate for a sophomore slump. Not only are rookies who are older than 21 twice as prone to them (per my work in this year's THN Ultimate Pool Guide), but he seemed to fade with his teams after an early impact. He had just one point in his final 16 games with New Jersey and just four in his last 11 with Atlanta. Take my prediction with a bit of caution.
- Antropov's production actually increased when Kovalchuk left (25 points in 25 games). He'll be fine without him.
- Peverley had 33 points in 33 games to kick off last season, which earned him a two-year contract. He had just 22 points 49 games after that, but was still getting tons of ice time (23:54 in the final game). I think he'll recover and get off to another hot start, though you may want to deal him by midseason in case he struggles to sustain it again.
- Contract year: Byfuglien, White, Thorburn, Boulton, Bogosian, Sopel, Valabik. I like Bogo the best here, in terms of stepping up large. Byfuglien would be Choice #2.
- Eager and Valabik will be the top PIM guys on the team. Watch a decline in the PIM numbers of Thorburn and Boulton as a result of Eager and Byfuglien joining the squad. Slater has let us down in terms of what we saw in him five years ago as a potential power forward. But he seems to be finding more of a niche on the "power" side of it – his PIM per game has been steadily climbing each season and he'll find that's the key to getting ice time. Could be a 20/100 guy (points/PIM) this year.
- I'm still not thrilled with Pavelec. I'm sold on his talent, but insisting on NHL starts and threatening to go back to Europe (two years ago) doesn't sit right with me. I also think Mason tends to come up big when it comes to earning the starting job. Either way, neither of them will start 50 games, making them fringe fantasy goaltenders. **Dobber's confidence in Mason being the starter: 60%**
- Peverley, Byfuglien and Little are entering their fourth full NHL seasons (I count 35+ games as good enough for me). Another reason to like Little for a rebound.
- Plus/minus: as a team the plus/minus number will be rough. Antropov's plus-13 last year was impressive, but expect that to take a hit. Peverley had a solid plus/minus over the first 33 games, but that went downhill with the rest of his stats. Oduya may be your best bet here, as he has been a plus-player his entire career after his first season.
- The longer it takes for Atlanta to sign a depth center, the better the odds for Cormier, Burmistrov or Holzapfel to make this team.
- The Thrashers will be using Byfuglien on defense to start the season, which will hurt his point totals (especially goals). Although, he could/should be used as a winger on the power play.
- Dawes' contract is a two-way deal, so he could possibly be cut or sent to the minors at some point.
- Injury – Cormier took a shot off the foot Sept 16 and will undergo X-rays. Update: his foot is broken. Probably not making the roster.

Dobber's Tip:

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BOSTON

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Milan Lucic  	70	20	43	118	Marc Savard  	53	15	47	34	Nathan Horton  	72	32	68	62
Blake Wheeler  	82	24	53	58	David Krejci  	78	21	70	26	Michael Ryder	77	20	36	24
Marco Sturm	56	15	32	30	Patrice Bergeron  	70	17	51	24	Mark Recchi  	78	15	36	28
Daniel Paille	77	11	27	18	Gregory Campbell	75	9	28	80	Brad Marchand	42	1	7	48
Jordan Caron	9	2	2	6	Tyler Seguin  	78	23	62	36	Shawn Thornton	71	1	9	118

Defense										Goalies	W	SO		
Zdeno Chara  	80	14	47	88	Johnny Boychuk  	77	10	38	75	Tuukka Rask	31	6		
Dennis Seidenberg  	80	7	38	40	Matt Hunwick	71	7	26	38	Tim Thomas	15	3		
Andrew Ference	71	2	18	70	Adam McQuaid	74	2	8	106					
Mark Stuart	81	5	16	74	Yuri Alexandrov	48	4	17	44					

Long-Term Potential		Prospect	%
Tyler Seguin	100	Tyler Seguin	99%
Marc Savard	95	Brad Marchand	45%
David Krejci	88	Yuri Alexandrov	0% - CUT
Joe Colborne	88	Maxime Sauve	0% - CUT
Nathan Horton	85	Zach Hamill	0% - CUT
Patrice Bergeron	80	Carl Soderberg	0% - not in camp
Blake Wheeler	75	Joe Colborne	0% - CUT
Maxime Sauve	75	Jordan Caron	Made team
Brad Marchand	72	Sleeper	Pts %
Zach Hamill	72	Blake Wheeler	65 30%
Jordan Caron	70	Patrice Bergeron	70 25%
Carl Soderberg	70	Milan Lucic	60 25%
Milan Lucic	70	Nathan Horton	80 20%
Marco Sturm	68	Jordan Caron	45 10%
Michael Ryder	65		
Zdeno Chara	60		
Mark Recchi	58		

Angus Prime Cut: Johnny Boychuk Grade: Porterhouse

The Bruins loved what the right-shooting Boychuk brought to their power play last season. With Dennis Wideman being dealt away, Boychuk will see even more time patrolling the back end with the man advantage. He saw an average of 1:10 of power play time per game last season; Wideman was close to three minutes per game. Expect Boychuk to replace the bulk of those minutes. He had 20 goals and 65 points in the AHL in 2008-09, and should develop into a solid 30-35 point defenseman for Boston in 2010-11. He hits extremely hard as well.

Dobber's lowdown on: David Krejci – Krejci is a steal this summer. Not only is he coming off of a broken wrist, but he also had a horrible season. That was due to his recovering from hip surgery. He returned from it too soon and as a result, recovering took far longer. But he had 26 points in his last 26 regular season and playoff games and you'll see something like that in the season ahead. His owner has probably rolled back expectations/hopes to 65 points so if you can pick him up for that type of player, go for it. He'll get at least 70 and possibly 80, as long as he doesn't get hurt.

Dobber's lowdown on: Nathan Horton – A proven 30-goal and 60-point man, Horton is still just 25 years old. Poolies are writing him off already...and these are the owners you should be contacting. His prime seasons are still two years away and now, with top set-up men all around him, there is no reason why he'll set career highs in all offensive categories. His upside of 85 points is still very achievable, though he may still be a year or two away from that. Only his health will hold him back in Boston.

- Savard will either sustain a concussion and miss much of (or the rest of) the season, or he will play pretty much every game. He's a warrior, so it will be one or the other. Draft him accordingly.
- Boychuk was a frequent healthy scratch early on, but he was huge down the stretch and was solid in the postseason. With Wideman gone, his role will increase (as Angus notes in his Prime Cut). He not only has potential in terms of points, but also in penalty minutes.
- No – Seguin is not the fifth-line center. Something has to give here –and it will. Someone will be moved to make room for him and also Marchand. The Bruins can't keep their prospects on the farm until they're 30. But GM Chiarelli is patient (and stingy with his assets – reminds me of a GM I know in my league) and may not make a move until the absolute last minute and only then if he has a clear edge. He's not in a position of power though (all NHL GM's know he has to make a move), which is why it will take as long.
- Recchi will retire after this season. I left that sentence in there from last year. So, yeah, I really have no idea.
- Sturm underwent knee surgery in the spring and will be out until mid-November at the earliest. The Bruins will put him on LTIR (long-term injured reserve), which will ease their pressure to move Savard or Thomas because this would give them a bit of breathing room against the salary cap.
- Colborne played on the wing in development camp and that is where his future lies.
- Wheeler has slowed in the second half of both of his NHL seasons. Still getting used to the longer pro schedule so keep that in mind come January.
- Contract year: Bergeron, Ryder, Sturm, Recchi, Marchand, Chara, Hunwick. Look for Bergeron to have a big year and Marchand to earn a full-time job (next contract) by doing whatever it takes (you won't see it in the numbers though). Chara has nothing to prove, and Ryder is probably beyond hope – his up and down days are having more downs than ups. Sturm could also pull through with a great year.
- Chara's penalty minutes have been declining and they won't be going up anytime soon – McQuaid's role will be the rough stuff and Boychuk's increased ice time will mean PIM for him too.
- Injuries to Thomas – as well as the resulting struggles recovering from them – gave Rask the shot that he needed and he took the ball and ran with it. Now he won't give it back. An elite goalie of the future, he has arrived now. Thomas' big contract will prevent Rask from getting 40 wins this year, but that's the only reason. **Dobber's confidence in Rask being the starter: 90%**
- Plus/minus: The Bruins had three players with very poor plus/minus ratings last season. They jettisoned Dennis Wideman (in the Horton trade) and will roll back the ice time of Hunwick and Thornton. The team as a whole will rebound offensively and their plus/minus to a man will be positive. Of course, Chara will lead the charge.
- Savard is feeling some affects from post-concussion syndrome and is sitting out the start of training camp. When games count, he tends to play through anything, but it's better to play this one cautiously. **UPDATE: an ESPN report stated that Savard could be done for the season, which would likely mean his career. TSN has refuted the report, quoting statements from both the general manager Peter Chiarelli and Savard's agent Larry Kelly. Obviously the concussion is serious, but missing the entire season is something that would not be known until closer to February. However, you can't un-ring a bell – the initial report came out and now Savard's trade value is close to nil. Right or wrong, he is untradeable. Savard owners can only hope for a swift recovery.**
- **The surprise of camp has been Caron. He is a talented future power forward who plays harder than his body can take. That is to say, he gets hurt about as often as Cam Neely did (and some have compared him to Neely). I think he'll stay only for the nine-game trial period, but even if he remains – he is at risk to get hurt. His hard-nosed style combined with his fragile body, will make him an early member of my Band-Aid Boy list.**

Dobber's Tip:

The most productive line for the Bruins last year –

Patrice Bergeron – Mark Recchi – Marco Sturm combined for 44 points

David Krejci – Michael Ryder – Blake Wheeler combined for 42

After that, the next best line is 18 points thanks to all the injuries and upheaval on the roster.

BUFFALO

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Thomas Vanek	73	39	63	40	Derek Roy	80	29	73	44	Tyler Ennis	79	28	69	18
Nathan Gerbe	72	18	36	42	Tim Connolly	71	19	66	30	Jason Pominville	82	21	61	20
Jochen Hecht	75	14	30	36	Paul Gaustad	67	13	30	116	Drew Stafford	74	18	38	38
Mike Grier	64	8	18	26	Rob Niedermayer	74	10	18	52	Patrick Kaleta	59	8	17	98
Cody McCormick	55	3	12	94						Mark Mancari	18	1	5	8

Defense	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Chris Butler	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Ryan Miller	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Tyler Myers	82	10	47	62		77	4	34	28		39	4		
Jordan Leopold	80	12	34	32	Steve Montador	78	4	25	80	Patrick Lalime	5	0		
Shaone Morrisonn	43	3	12	12	Craig Rivet	75	2	12	108	Jhonas Enroth	2	0		
Andrej Sekera	73	4	23	30	Mike Weber	44	1	6	64					

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
Nathan Gerbe	90	Tyler Ennis		99%
Thomas Vanek	88	Mike Weber		60%
Derek Roy	85	Nathan Gerbe		80%
Tyler Ennis	85	Mark Mancari		0% - CUT
Tim Connolly	80	Marc-Andre Gragnani		0% - Injured
Corey Tropp	78	Corey Tropp		0% - CUT
Jason Pominville	78	Luke Adam		0% - CUT
Jacob Lagace	75	Zack Kassian		0% - CUT
Luke Adam	72	Sleeper	Pts	%
Drew Stafford	70	Thomas Vanek	80	25%
Zack Kassian	62	Nathan Gerbe	55	25%
Mark Mancari	55	Jason Pominville	75	15%
Tyler Myers	55	Drew Stafford	55	10%
Jochen Hecht	55			
Mark Pysyk	55			
Andrej Sekera	50			

Angus Prime Cut: Chris Butler Grade: Porterhouse

It appears as if Buffalo is going to stand pat with what they currently have on defense. Myers is going to be a fixture on the top power play unit and the other spot is open for the taking. Butler, Sekera and Leopold should all factor in. Butler saw the second most power play minutes on the team last year (2:56 per game compared to Myers' 2:58) and that trend should continue this season. Look for him to break the 30-point mark.

Dobber's lowdown on: Tim Kennedy – The emergence of Ennis and Gerbe at the very end of the regular season (and playoffs) puts a bit of a damper on this, but Kennedy really came into his own down the stretch. The 5-9 winger lined up on a scoring line and tallied 11 points in the final 21 contests. He'll carry that over an entire season this year and could be a 70-point guy by his fourth campaign. He had excellent chemistry with Gerbe in the AHL and there is a chance that if/when Gerbe becomes an NHL regular they will be given the chance to pick up where they left off. Kennedy's assist would take off accordingly. UPDATE – the Sabres bought out Tim Kennedy August 3. **He is now with the Rangers.**

- Generally speaking, the entire Buffalo roster picked it up offensively in the second half last season. With Ennis making a splash and Gerbe stepping in, the Sabres are excellent candidates for a surprise 2010-11 in which they score a lot more than expected. That makes several of the players decent buy-low candidates in your league.

- Myers went four or more games without a point on six different occasions, including once in the playoffs. You will see streakiness like that throughout his early 20s. As long as he stays healthy, he'll produce in that 45 to 50 range until he reaches his prime. At that point he could be posting closer to 60.
- Gaustad averaged 2:22 of PP ice time per game. Think his absence wasn't felt? Explain it to Connolly. When Gaustad, who is a Band-Aid Boy (i.e. often injured), was out of the lineup, Connolly managed just eight points in 17 games. He had 57 points in 56 games when Gaustad played. Connolly needs room or he is ineffective on the PP.
- This will be Kaleta's fourth NHL season, but his upside is minimal so the big breakout ain't gonna happen.
- Lalime was signed again, and once again Miller will flirt with 70 games. If you think Enroth is ready, just remember that Miller was ready too – yet he didn't become a full-time NHLer until he was 25. Every year you figured they would give Miller a job and every year the Sabres surprised you by sending him down. The organization were extra careful with him and we're seeing that again with Enroth. **Dobber's confidence in Miller being the starter: 100%**
- Contract year: Connolly, Stafford, Grier, Niedermayer, Gerbe, McCormick, Rivet, Montador, Sekera, Butler, Lalime. If Sekera doesn't give us a sign this year, look for him to have a European address next year. Connolly needs another healthy season under his belt to earn that lucrative next contract – millions are at stake. Stafford is playing to remain a relevant top-six option, so the effort will be there. Gerbe still has a lot to prove and he's starting to get the hang of the NHL game. His next contract will be one-way, so if he's not on the team this year, he will be for sure in 2011-12.
- PIM's: Kaleta and Gaustad are the best bets in this category. Newcomer Weber will also put up beefy PIM numbers, but can't back it up with decent offense. Myers is just getting started – he'll grow into being a 100-PIM guy, so watch him take a step towards that this campaign. **UPDATE: If healthy, McCormick is another good one.**
- Plus/minus: Butler learned some hard lessons. After being a plus-11 in just half a season as a rookie in 2008-09, he stumbled to the worst plus/minus on the team last year. Call it a sophomore slump and watch for that number to bounce back into the positive – well into the positive. The team will score a lot more this year, so they'll all get a boost.
- Something has to give: Roy and Ennis are 5-9, Gerbe is 5-6 and Connolly is one of the most fragile players in the game. If it wasn't for Vanek, the 186-pound Pominville would be the strongest player in their top six – and he averages about 20 penalty minutes a season. This all means more scoring in the regular season, but another first round playoff exit. Look for deals to be made to beef up this lineup.
- **Vanek has an undisclosed injury to his "lower body" and has been unable to skate as of October 3. He is expected to play in the season opener, but then again...**

Dobber's Tip:

In the 2009 Prospects Report we gave Calder winner Tyler Myers this outlook:

Upside: Elite defenseman, (10-45-55, 100+ PIM)

Certainty (NHLer; Upside): 90%; 55%

In the 2008 version of the Prospects Report, we had this to say about surprise Calder candidate Kris Versteeg: Normally just an offensive sparkplug, Versteeg found a real edge to his game and played much bigger than his size last year in the AHL. He was nearly a point-per-game for Rockford, and tallied an impressive six points in 13 contests during an NHL call up. The surprising thing, though, was his 174 penalty minutes for the Ice Hogs. He is on the small side, but he would still make a lot of NHL rosters in the fall. Chicago, however, is pretty deep and it may be another year before we see Versteeg full time.

Upside: Steve Sullivan, with Theo Fleury's edge (30-45-75, 110+ PIM)

Certainty (NHLer; Upside): 65%; 50%

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CALGARY

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Alex Tanguay	80	18	57	46	Olli Jokinen	82	26	57	70	Jarome Iginla	82	40	77	50
Niklas Hagman	78	22	42	30	Matt Stajan	74	15	51	22	Rene Bourque	74	26	59	70
Mikael Backlund	77	16	39	28	Daymond Langkow	59	12	30	20	Curtis Glencross	70	13	39	44
Ryan Stone	60	6	20	92	Brendan Morrison	70	12	30	40	David Moss	71	16	28	24
Raitis Ivanans	50	0	1	108	Craig Conroy	58	6	17	16	Ales Kotalik	68	15	30	44
					Brett Sutter	35	2	6	28	Tim Jackman	65	5	12	165
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Ian White	81	15	48	48	Jay Bouwmeester	82	14	40	66	Miikka Kiprusoff	33	3		
Mark Giordano	81	12	40	74	Robyn Regehr	80	2	17	78	Henrik Karlsson	13	3		
Cory Sarich	68	2	12	96	Adam Pardy	60	2	12	50					
Steve Staios	78	2	11	80										

Long-Term Potential		Prospect	%
Jarome Iginla	100	Mikael Backlund	99%
Olli Jokinen	85	Henrik Karlsson	99%
Mikael Backlund	85	Mitch Wahl	0% - CUT
Alex Tanguay	78	Greg Nemisz	0% - CUT
Henrik Bjorklund	75		
Matthew Stajan	72		
Daymond Langkow	72		
Greg Nemisz	72		
Mitch Wahl	70	Sleeper	Pts %
Rene Bourque	65	Alex Tanguay	70 15%
Niklas Hagman	62	Olli Jokinen	70 10%
Curtis Glencross	60	Matthew Stajan	70 10%
David Moss	60		
Ian White	58		
Jay Bouwmeester	55		
T.J. Brodie	52		
Mark Giordano	48		

Angus Prime Cut: Jay Bouwmeester Grade: Porterhouse

Bouwmeester's goal totals in his final three seasons with Florida were 12, 15 and 15. He scored only three last year for the Flames. Expect him to return to the 10-goal, 40-point mark this coming season, as he is much too talented to continue struggling offensively. Bouwmeester isn't a dynamic offensive player but he has a good shot and skates extremely well, and he uses his physical tools effectively to create offense at even strength and on the power play.

Dobber's lowdown on: Alex Tanguay – According to DobberHockey's Frozen Pool section, Tanguay played over 58 percent of his shifts with Vincent Lecavalier last season. He had his chance playing with one of the stars of the league so there is no reason to think he can do anything with Iginla. That being said, he has clicked with Iginla before, and GM Sutter is trying to get fans to take some of his Kool-Aid (that Tanguay, Jokinen and Iginla need each other and together they will mesh). You almost have to take a bit of that Kool-Aid – when the GM says such things, then the coach (his brother) will do everything in his power to shove that square peg into the round hole. I'm talking 20 minutes per game of ice time, four minutes per game of PP time. The numbers will go up for all three, but Iginla is the only one who showed us last year that he still has a bit of the old magic.

- Stajan's numbers dipped in Calgary, despite playing with Iginla. He is best suited on the second or even the third line and click with a second-tier winger such as Bourque. Ironically, Langkow makes the most this year among Calgary centers – then Stajan, then Jokinen. Depth chart is the opposite.
- White's numbers stayed the same in Calgary vs. Toronto, but actually the Flames leaned on him more and more towards the end and he had five points in the final seven games. He even topped 28 minutes of ice time once. Now 26, he's entering his prime and will easily post career numbers. He is underrated (a former sixth-round pick) and undersized (5-10) and constantly has to prove himself. But his "proving" days may finally be over.
- The Flames do not have a fourth-line center. Backlund can play center, as can Stone. But Backlund would be ruined on the fourth line and Stone can't win a draw to save his life. They will sign a center this summer, or Wahl will get a long look.
- The team is trying to bury Kotalik's contract in the KHL. If they fail to do so, perhaps they will bury it in the minors. Failing that, I will update his prediction as if he were to play this year, but for now don't expect any games/points.
UPDATE: It's looking like Kotalik and his contract will remain in the NHL with the team.
- Langkow has a neck injury and is not recovering very well. Stay tuned – consider him a high risk to even play this year.
- Contract year: Tanguay, Glencross, Stone, Staios, Giordano, Pardy, Karlsson. Tanguay won't be playing for a contract – he had that chance last year and has his worst NHL season. He either clicks with the big boys or he doesn't. Karlsson, on the other hand, has reputation to cement. More on him below.
- This will be Glencross' fourth NHL season, but his position on the depth chart and his upside make him a very unlikely breakout candidate. Then again, the "fourth year" theory is all about surprises...
- PIM: Sutter signed Ivanans and Jackman to help keep the Iginla and Bourque out of the box (and tone their aggressive style, thus keeping them healthy). Stone is underrated in this department and if can stay healthy he'll top triple digits.
- Kipper bounced back with a decent season, but was still inconsistent at times. Karlsson has a chance to become the next Jonas Hiller and steal a few more games than any other goalie has been able to steal from Kipper in the last few years. He'll show enough to possibly make Kipper expendable in 2011-12. At least, that's what the Flames are hoping. Watch for fewer starts out of Kiprusoff. **Dobber's confidence in Kiprusoff being the starter: 100%. All season? 90%**
- Plus/minus: Giordano has been a plus player every year of his NHL career, and most of his career at other levels (the exception being a single year in which he was minus-1 in the AHL).
- Conroy's deal, signed in early August, is two-way, so if the Flames can sign another center I'm sure he will be replaced. I get the feeling he is there as insurance in the event that Langkow doesn't return.
- **Injury: Stajan suffered a separated shoulder September 23. Expect him mid-October.**
- **Injury: Kotalik (knee) and Moss (shoulder) are out indefinitely. Assume late October.**

CAROLINA

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Patrick O'Sullivan	74	14	41	34	Eric Staal	81	43	88	56	Erik Cole	57	15	30	70
Tuomo Ruutu	75	25	54	78	Brandon Sutter	78	20	42	48	Chad LaRose	79	16	33	36
Jiri Tlusty	74	12	33	24	Jussi Jokinen	76	27	60	32	Jeff Skinner	79	18	38	38
Sergei Samsonov	45	7	17	14	Zac Dalpe	47	13	23	16	Tom Kostopoulos	79	7	21	104
Drayson Bowman	18	2	7	4	Jonathan Matsumoto	18	2	7	8	Patrick Dwyer	31	2	6	8
Zach Boychuk	48	8	23	14						Jerome Samson	18	3	6	10
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Jamie McBain	80	11	50	22	Joni Pitkanen	71	8	46	68	Cam Ward	36	4		
Anton Babchuk	74	13	41	28	Tim Gleason	66	3	20	74	Justin Peters	9	3		
Joe Corvo	73	12	23	28	Bobby Sanguinetti	44	6	21	14					
Bryan Rodney	37	3	16	10	Jay Harrison	62	3	12	70					

Long-Term Potential	Prospect		%
	Sleeper	Pts	
Eric Staal	105	Jamie McBain	99%
Drayson Bowman	80	Jiri Tlusty	80%
Jiri Tlusty	80	Jeff Skinner	70%
Zach Boychuk	80	Bobby Sanguinetti	45%
Jeff Skinner	80	Zac Dalpe	45%
Tuomo Ruutu	78	Drayson Bowman	40%
Chris Terry	75	Jerome Samson	0% - CUT
Zac Dalpe	75	Zach Boychuk	0% - CUT
Patrick O'Sullivan	75		
Jussi Jokinen	72	Zach Boychuk	25%
Joni Pitkanen	65	Tuomo Ruutu	20%
Jamie McBain	65	Zac Dalpe	20%
Oskar Osala	65	Jiri Tlusty	15%
Riley Nash	65	Jeff Skinner	15%
Bobby Sanguinetti	65		
Sergei Samsonov	62		
Brandon Sutter	58		

Angus Prime Cut: Brandon Sutter. Grade: Filet Mignon

Sutter is in a great long-term position in Carolina. He is insulated behind Eric Staal on the depth chart. He has little competition for the second line spot and the Hurricanes have a bounty of young talent coming up through the ranks on either wing. Sutter's 20 goals were a surprise to many last season. Look for the lanky pivot hit new career highs in 2010-11.

Dobber's lowdown on: Anton Babchuk – A Russian enigma. We're not familiar with those, are we? He had 31 points in the last 46 games that he played in 2008-09, finally getting the hang of the NHL. But then he had a horrible postseason and despite that, he tried to pull a heavy in contract negotiations and failed. So he played last season in the KHL where he, along with Jaromir Jagr, led the Omsk power play. Now he's back and under contract and I think the club will move him. The Canes have enough offensive defensemen and I don't think a player/team can get past a year of this kind of turmoil. On another team he will flourish. May have to wait until the trade deadline though.

- Not a lot of veterans on this team, so when you consider that Samsonov, Ruutu and Cole are big time Band-Aid Boys, the kids will get a surprising amount of ice time and opportunity. If you're going to grab a couple of lesser-touted rookies this season, make them Hurricanes.

- The Corvo signing doesn't cannibalize McBain's PP time. That ship has sailed, McBain has arrived and he and Pitkanen will run things. You have seen Corvo's numbers decline even with lots of PP time and they will drop even further when those PP minutes drop. Which they will.
- Why will Staal bounce back so strongly? He had 65 points in 57 games after returning from his upper body injury in November. That's the Eric Staal we know and love.
- Jokinen had 45 points in his last 45 games, really clicking with Staal.
- Ward is an excellent buy-low candidate. Carolina is very underrated, given their poor record, but the team was actually a powerhouse in the second half finishing 25-13-2. The team is young, but will win more than you think (see Avalanche, Colorado – 2009-10). So Ward will get wins in the high 30's. **Dobber's confidence in Ward being the starter: 100%**
- Contract year: Cole, Samsonov, Jokinen, Larose, Sutter, Tlusty, Dwyer, Pitkanen, Babchuk, Harrison. So many players on this team with some upside could potentially go above and beyond in a contract year. My favorites are Jokinen and Tlusty, if I were to pick two.
- PIM: The lack of toughness in this lineup means higher PIM numbers for Staal, Ruutu and Pitkanen. Kostopoulos is always good for 100.
- Plus/minus: McBain could be a sleeper in this department, going plus-6 for the Canes in just 14 games and going plus-11 in the AHL. Pitkanen's minus-11 will turn back around – he has a pattern of high plus, low minus, high plus each year.
- Both Sutter and Larose were on 45-50 point paces in the second half. They could be two-thirds of a third line that legends arise from. Great chemistry. They saw time with Jokinen down the stretch and he continued to hold his own even with "lesser" linemates than Staal.
- Carolina GM Jim Rutherford, on Jeff Skinner's excellent development camp and his odds of getting a roster spot right now: "If he plays the way we expect him to, he'll probably get one of those spots. ... I would suspect, with his determination and the way he plays the game, he's going to figure out how to make it right in his first year." There is definitely room for Skinner, at the expense of Dwyer. Great dark horse and lots of long-term upside.
- The O'Sullivan signing hurts the odds of Bowman making the team and Dwyer is not longer a lock. However, since O'Sullivan's contract is a two-way agreement, there is an outside chance that he doesn't make the team at all, if he plays the way he did in Edmonton. Risky pick.
- **Samsonov has a sprained neck, opening the door for Skinner to make this team and continue to impress. Matsumoto getting cut implies that Dalpe has a strong shot as well.**
- **Boychuk had a poor camp and Samsonov's neck injury combine to help Bowman's odds of making this team. At least initially. We'll see Boychuk back up in midseason.**

CHICAGO

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Troy Brouwer	78	24	47	84	Jonathan Toews	79	35	73	56	Patrick Kane	82	25	86	36
Patrick Sharp	80	27	64	40	Dave Bolland	74	21	46	50	Marian Hossa	73	27	65	28
Viktor Stalberg	68	18	30	52	Jake Dowell	79	6	17	90	Jack Skille	75	14	30	44
Bryan Bickell	73	9	22	68	Tomas Kopecky	76	12	33	36	Fernando Pisani	68	10	18	20
					Ryan Potulny	55	10	28	32					
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Duncan Keith	81	12	65	50	Brian Campbell	72	5	43	16	Marty Turco	35	3		
Brent Seabrook	80	7	42	60	Nick Boynton	70	6	16	116	Corey Crawford	18	3		
Niklas Hjalmarsson	78	3	21	42	John Scott	74	2	6	132	Cristobal Huet	0	0		
Jordan Hendry	68	3	12	18	Ivan Vishnevskiy	40	1	6	6					
Nick Leddy	9	0	0	4										

Long-Term Potential		Prospect	%
Marian Hossa	105	Jake Dowell	95%
Patrick Kane	100	Bryan Bickell	90%
Jonathan Toews	90	Jack Skille	90%
Igor Makarov	80	Shawn Lalonde	0% - CUT
Jeremy Morin	80	Ivan Vishnevskiy	0% - CUT
Kevin Hayes	80	Kyle Beach	0% - CUT
Kyle Beach	78	Igor Makarov	0% - CUT
Dave Bolland	75	Jeremy Morin	30% (Pirri was CUT)
Sleeper		Pts	%
Patrick Sharp	70	Troy Brouwer	30%
Troy Brouwer	70	Viktor Stalberg	15%
Jack Skille	70	Kyle Beach	10%
Duncan Keith	70	Igor Makarov	10%
Chris Didomenico	68	Ryan Potulny	10%
Brian Campbell	65	Tomas Kopecky	50 10%
Brent Seabrook	55		
Tomas Kopecky	55		

Angus Prime Cut: Viktor Stalberg Grade: Porterhouse

Chicago's left wing position is very unsettled heading in to 2010-11. Brouwer, Stalberg and Kopecky are the favorites to be on the top three lines, but the order is still to be determined. Stalberg projects as a very solid complementary player. He is incredibly fast for his size and he has a very good shot. However, he doesn't think the game at an elite level. With his physical tools, he will open up a lot of space for whatever players he lines up with. Chicago lost a lot of talent this summer, but they are still stacked down the middle and on the right side. Look for all three of the mentioned left wingers to benefit.

Dobber's lowdown on: Troy Brouwer – Although he lost the job in the postseason, Brouwer had the luxury of playing with Kane for much of the season. He had 36 points in his last 63 games, which translates to about 47 points. Still a year or two from his prime, a prolonged stay on that top line could boost his production above the 60-point mark. With the Hawks shedding their expensive forwards like dead skin on a snake, look for Brouwer to get a ton of opportunities on that line.

- Hossa had just 23 points in his last 38 regular season and playoff games. Even I'm starting to lose faith in him getting back to his 100-point ways – and I'm one of the bigger Hossa backers out there.
- If there is a team out there willing to take on Campbell's contract, the Hawks will move him. If that happens, Seabrook will soar. He had seven points in the 12 games that he played when Campbell was out.

- Unless Chicago signs some cheap forwards, Skille, Bickell, Dowell and possibly Beach, Pirri and/or Makarov will make the roster. As a power forward, Beach will take some time getting the big points. Not this year. Makarov signed a two-way contract July 14 and had a great camp last time out (2008).
- Stalberg led the entire league in preseason scoring, but he became a different player after suffering a concussion early in the regular season. He lost some of his fearlessness, which has taken away some of his luster.
- I said here last year that Bolland is a playoff warrior and the next Chris Drury. He had 16 points in 39 regular season games and then tallied 16 in 22 in the playoffs. He's clutch, though his regular seasons will often be marred by injury.
- The team will need to bury Huet's contract in the AHL. Barring a fantastic salary move, his big contract has to go. That opens the door for Crawford to become the backup. Turco has not seen his SP above 0.913 since 2003 – and 0.913 was 17th in the league last season. His skills have eroded. That being said, the Hawks are a great team and even a 0.913 SP will be enough for 35 wins. But if Crawford consistently keeps his SP above that number – and I think he will – he will start with more frequency as the season wears on. In a keeper league, I would be comfortable grabbing Crawford as a third or fourth goaltender. One thing to watch out for – it's a slim possibility – is for Hannu Toivonen to become the backup. His contract is a quarter million less in terms of cap hit and Hawks may need that. But Crawford's contract is one-way, so like I said it's a long shot. **Dobber's confidence that Turco will be the starter: 95% Dobber's confidence that Crawford will be the backup: 90%**
- Contract year: Kopecky, Reasoner, Brouwer, Stalberg. Ohhhh man I like Brouwer for the big contract year. A lot.
- Kane, Toews and Bolland are each entering their fourth NHL campaign. Since Kane and Toews have already had big seasons (though there is certainly room for more), look for Bolland to possibly have his turn.
- PIM: With Eager and Burish gone, more weight falls on the shoulders of Brouwer and newcomer Dowell. I may have actually undercut their PIM in my projection – there is some upside there. Newcomer Scott is also a big PIM guy, but doesn't bring the points. Update: Boynton, with a more palatable contract, will be in the NHL full time this season and is an under-the-radar 100-PIM guy.
- Plus/minus: The games will be a lot closer, thanks to the exodus of so many of the team's key players. As such, the big positive plus/minus cushion enjoyed by so many on this team last year will deflate. Instead of plus-15 to plus 25, you'll see the range of plus-5 to plus-10. Except for Keith, who is immortal in this category.
- August signings: the signings of Pisani, Pirri and Makarov hurt the odds of Beach making the team. The signing of Boynton hurts the odds of Vishnevskiy and/or Lalonde cracking the roster. Camp will be very interesting...
- Huet has signed to play in Switzerland. Remove him from your lists if you were crazy enough to have him there.
- Potulny is on a two-way contract, but because the NHL portion is the league minimum, he should stick. And given the injury proneness of Bolland, Kopecky and some signs of it in Stalberg, as well as the health concerns of Pisani – he could move up the depth chart in a hurry.
- **Makarov, Morin and defenseman Nick Leddy are having strong camps. Still wide open here folks...**
- **Injury: Campbell, knee sprain, late October. Seabrook takes the PP time, so pad his points (I already did, above).**
- **Ryan Potulny was cut and cleared waivers.**
- **Kopecky saw time on the top line and has shown some success there.**

COLORADO

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
T.J. Galiardi	75	15	42	38	Paul Stastny	76	22	75	46	Chris Stewart	76	30	60	85
Peter Mueller	65	25	53	34	Matt Duchene	82	21	62	22	Milan Hejduk	64	22	47	16
David Jones	67	19	41	18	Ryan O'Reilly	80	9	27	28	Brandon Yip	71	18	41	82
Mark Olver	73	14	31	44	Daniel Winnik	74	3	19	58	Kevin Porter	74	9	21	28
Cody McLeod	75	11	21	146	Philippe Dupuis	48	2	12	26					
David Koci	38	0	2	76	Ryan Stoa	40	5	13	18					
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Kyle Quincey	78	5	39	78	John-Michael Liles	73	10	37	30	Craig Anderson	35	6		
Adam Foote	65	1	6	58	Kyle Cumiskey	66	8	27	32	Petr Budaj	7	1		
Ryan Wilson	68	2	18	44	Scott Hannan	82	2	14	44					
Jonas Holos	70	1	19	18	Kevin Shattenkirk	12	1	5	2					

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
Paul Stastny	92	Kevin Porter		75%
Matthew Duchene	90	Ryan Stoa		0% - CUT
Peter Mueller	90	Colby Cohen		0% - CUT
Chris Stewart	75	Kevin Shattenkirk		0% - CUT
Ryan Stoa	75	Joey Hishon		0% - CUT
T.J. Galiardi	72			
Kevin Porter	72			
Milan Hejduk	70			
Sleeper		Pts	% 	
David Jones	68	Peter Mueller	75	30%
Kevin Shattenkirk	68	Matthew Duchene	75	25%
Mark Olver	68	T.J. Galiardi	60	20%
Brandon Yip	65	David Jones	60	10%
Joey Hishon	65	Mark Olver	55	10%
Ryan O'Reilly	62			
John-Michael Liles	60			
Kyle Quincey	52			
Stefan Elliott	50			

Angus Prime Cut: Kyle Cumiskey Grade: Prime Rib

Cumiskey, perhaps the most fluid skater in the entire league, is at a crossroads in his career right now. Will he use his speed and awareness to develop into an elite offensive defenseman, or will he emerge as more of a two-way speedster who doesn't rack up the points (like Bret Hedican)? Colorado has a wealth of offensive defenseman prospects (Shattenkirk being the most notable), so the next season or two will decide what kind of player Cumiskey will become.

Dobber's lowdown on: Peter Mueller – Just when you're writing Mueller off as another potential stud who busted out, he gets moved to Colorado and does everything you hoped when you first drafted him. He immediately clicked on a line with Duchene and Hejduk and he compiled 20 points in 15 games for the Avs, including nine goals. He has excellent hands for a big man and great hockey sense and he's back on track to be a point-per-game player or better – soon. The one drawback is his fragility. He has had two concussions since joining the NHL, with the last one (back in April) looking pretty serious. He is fully recovered now, but between the concussions and his other small injuries over the last two years it bears watching. Do not assume a full season from him this year. **Update: Concussion No.3**

- Although Quincey is more of a stay-at-home type, his production in L.A. was followed up with 15 points in 26 games to start in Colorado. He had just 14 in his next 59 regular season and playoff contests. It really does look like 40 points is out of reach for him and if he fails to hit that mark (I predicted 39), he'll never get there because Shattenkirk and future QB Colby Cohen will take over.
- I strongly doubt Hejduk will play 70 games in a season again, and I also think he'll retire after this campaign.
- If a top six player gets hurt, Yip will be the first to step up. His numbers blossomed when Hejduk went down with an injury.
- O'Reilly is a defensive specialist. Do not expect miracles – he had 14 points in his first 17 games, but just 13 in his next 70. The Avs rely on him for killing penalties and taking draws. They have other players for scoring.
- Contract year: Hejduk, Galiardi, Stoa, Jones, Porter, Koci, Hannan, Foote, Cumiskey, Wilson, Anderson, Budaj. Could this be the year Jones stays healthy? Things sometimes seem to bounce the right way when a contract is ready to be drawn up. Galiardi and Porter could also show their colors.
- Mueller is entering his fourth NHL season. He's one of those fourth-year players who are almost guaranteed to break out. Only an injury will stop him. Jones played 27 games in 2007-08, so he may be one to keep an eye on as well.
- PIM: Quincey's PIM are slowly eking upwards and potentially he could clear 100, especially if he loses his offensive role. McLeod, of course, is their PIM leader. The energetic Yip is also a sleeper in this category. His final year of college saw him garner 118 PIM in just 45 games. **Update: If Cohen makes this team he'll surprise in this category.**
- I noted last year that Anderson was a sleeper and that Budaj wouldn't see the light of day. Little did I know that I would be so accurate. Anderson was a Top 5 goalie in the league, getting into 71 games and stealing a couple of playoff wins. There were a lot of rookie Avs last season, which means a lot of sophomores this time around. If the sophomore jinx catches in the dressing room, Anderson won't see the impressive 38-win mark again. But he'll still get at least 32.
Dobber's confidence that Anderson will be the starter: 100%
- Plus/minus: The team hovered in the low positives, other than Wilson who was an impressive plus-13. When youngsters impress like that right off the bat, they tend to slip a little as sophomores, so look for Wilson to finish around zero. Mueller was a minus-1, but he was plus-4 in 15 games with Colorado.
- **Injury: Mueller suffered another concussion. Out indefinitely. This is his third concussion in his young career and is an injury risk for the season, if and when he returns.**

COLUMBUS

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Kristian Huselius	76	24	62	40	Antoine Vermette	81	26	67	36	Rick Nash	78	40	77	62
Nikita Filatov	73	22	40	58	Derick Brassard	76	18	55	44	Jakub Voracek	82	23	59	38
Ethan Moreau	76	12	26	82	R.J. Umberger	82	26	49	48	Jared Boll	72	6	15	172
Andrew Murray	65	7	12	28	Samuel Pahlsson	72	4	16	34	Derek Dorsett	60	5	16	118
Maksim Mayorov	11	2	2	4	Kyle Wilson	62	8	16	22	Chris Clark	63	5	14	36
					Michael Blunden	14	0	2	6	Chad Kolarik	17	3	6	12
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Fedor Tyutin	81	10	38	68	Rostislav Klesla	60	4	20	66	Steve Mason	33	5		
Mike Commodore	71	4	18	90	Kris Russell	68	5	33	36	Mathieu Garon	12	3		
Anton Stralman	72	7	40	38	Jan Hejda	80	3	18	40					
Marc Methot	68	3	11	62	Grant Clitsome	36	3	11	24					

Long-Term Potential	Prospect		% 99%
	Sleeper	Pts	
Nikita Filatov	Nikita Filatov		
Rick Nash	John Moore		0% - CUT
Jakub Voracek	Tomas Kubalik		0% - CUT
Derick Brassard	Ryan Johansen		0% - CUT
Petr Straka	Matt Calvert		0% - CUT
Kristian Huselius			
Cameron Atkinson			
Ryan Johansen			
Antoine Vermette	Sleeper		
Matt Calvert	Jakub Voracek	75	30%
R.J. Umberger	Kristian Huselius	75	25%
Kris Russell	Derick Brassard	70	20%
Anton Stralman	Nikita Filatov	65	15%
Michael Blunden	Anton Stralman	55	5%
Jared Boll			
Fedor Tyutin			
John Moore			

Angus Prime Cut: Jakub Voracek Grade: Filet Mignon

Simply put, Voracek is a special player. He isn't a speedster but he uses his deceptive speed very well. He isn't a sniper but he has a good shot. He isn't an all-world playmaker but he sees the ice very well. There isn't much that he doesn't excel at. He may not be ready to have his big breakout season yet, but he isn't far from it. Expect him to hit 70-plus points either this year or next.

Dobber's lowdown on: Nikita Filatov – I think this is the first time I do a lowdown about the same player two years in a row, but Filatov has to be the No. 1 player on the Blue Jackets whom fantasy owners want the full scoop. Filatov is a great talent and can produce with minimal ice time and weak linemates. He also strikes us as a little spoiled and very impatient. Ken Hitchcock didn't give him a fair shake, and what young talent enjoys being stifled? Still, to pout and go to the KHL was the move of a player who feels entitled. Will the new coach give him a better opportunity? Yes. Enough of one? Probably. He should be a third liner to start and a second liner by midseason (or if a top sixer gets hurt). He'll dazzle you in spurts and will be prone to cold streaks. My main concern with Filatov is health. He lacks strength and has already been injured a number of times playing with men. These early years it is extremely important for him to get in at least 75 games. If he can do that for this season and next, he'll be a star. If not, then all bets are off. Coach Scott Arniel would be wise to put some muscle on his line (as long as that muscle can play the puck and is not just a meathead).

- The three players who benefited most from the coaching change last year: Vermette (22 in 24 games), Huselius (20 in 21) and Voracek (22 in 24). While Arniel coached the Moose to a rather unimpressive “goals for” number, the word out of Columbus is that he does loosen the reins and these three are the ones who will thrive from that.
- The Jackets are finding that, while Tyutin boasts all-around skill, he is probably best left on the second PP unit. There is still a chance at reaching his upside, but it is likely he tops out closer to 40.
- Filatov pushes Umberger down to third-line center and also eats some of his power-play time. Last year Umberger was fourth on the team at 3:19 of PP time per game. That will drop, so his points should as well.
- I call him the streakiest player in the league, but I may have to change that as Huselius only had one occasion where he was shut out for four consecutive games. If the streakiness truly has stopped, he'll be a star.
- Consider last season a sophomore slump for Brassard. He'll bounce back. Fresh start. Be more concerned with his fragility than his ability to rebound. His faceoffs also sucked – that could be a problem, as far as maintaining his status as a pivot is concerned. Just 41.8 percent at the dot.
- PIM: Dorsett is starting to round into a more complete player. He's cutting down on his PIM and boosting his offense (though with Dorsett I use the term “offense” loosely – he'll never be a 40-point player). Blunden and Moreau are also solid in this category. Remember, Moreau is just a season removed from 133 PIM and 26 points.
- Contract year: Clark, Moreau, Voracek, Murray, Hejda, Stralman, Methot, Garon, Mason. Look for big years out of Voracek and Mason. Especially Mason, who has a lot more to prove. Also, if the Jackets are unable to land another puck moving blueliner, look for Stralman to continue to build on his numbers.
- A fresh start and the sophomore jinx behind him will see to it that Mason gets back to his old self. The team in front of him is a pretty good one and with a new coach who embraces the younger players should have things humming. As long as he doesn't lean on Mason too hard, expect a solid rebound. **Dobber's confidence in Mason being the starter: 100%**
- Plus/minus: Most players on the roster hovered around zero last year. However, with more wins in the year a have (count on it), things should shift upward for most players. Hejda in particular is usually a stud in this category, so his minus-14 was out of character. Brassard will get back above zero, and although Stralman will still be a negative he won't be as bad as last year's minus-17.
- **Injury: Russell sprained his knee early in camp. Out for a month (mid-October).**

DALLAS

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
James Neal  	79	30	60	74	Brad Richards  	76	20	81	18	Lou Eriksson  	77	32	69	24
Brenden Morrow  	68	21	47	81	Mike Ribeiro  	77	24	67	44	Jamie Benn  	81	20	47	56
Steve Ott  	71	21	42	145	Tom Wandell	68	10	28	24	Adam Burish	72	6	15	142
Brian Sutherby	63	4	11	74	Toby Petersen	77	7	15	12	Brandon Segal	37	4	9	48
Krys Barch	65	2	8	118						Fabian Brunnstrom	68	7	22	18
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Stephane Robidas  	80	8	38	68	Matt Niskanen  	81	8	35	48	Kari Lehtonen	26	2		
Trevor Daley  	79	7	28	30	Mark Fistric	72	1	14	74	Andrew Raycroft	9	0		
Karlis Skrastins	78	3	13	26	Nicklas Grossman	76	1	13	34	Richard Bachman	7	1		
Philip Larsen  	36	1	11	8						Brent Krahm	2	0		

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
		Sleeper	Pts	%
Brad Richards	92	Philip Larsen		0% - CUT
Mike Ribeiro	88	Brent Krahm		0% - CUT
Jamie Benn	85	Richard Bachman		0% - CUT
Lou Eriksson	82	Scott Glennie		0% - CUT
James Neal	78	Ondrej Roman		0% - CUT
Scott Glennie	78			
Brenden Morrow	75			
Austin Smith	75			
Sergei Korostin	72			
Ondrej Roman	72	Jamie Benn	65	30%
Tom Wandell	70	Brenden Morrow	70	20%
Fabian Brunnstrom	68	Philip Larsen	40	10%
Steve Ott	65	Fabian Brunnstrom	65	5%
Matt Niskanen	55			
Stephane Robidas	48			
Philip Larsen	48			
Trevor Daley	42			

Angus Prime Cut: Jamie Benn Grade: Porterhouse

It is very rare that a fifth round draft pick makes the NHL only one year after being selected. Benn's development over the past two years has been unbelievable. After a solid rookie season with Dallas, he went down to the AHL and dominated during the postseason for Texas, leading the league in playoff scoring and taking the Stars to the Calder Cup Final. Benn is big, skilled, and smart. Dallas has toyed with the idea of him at center, but for now you should expect him to skate alongside Ribeiro and Morrow and 50-60 points is realistic for 2010-11.

Dobber's lowdown on: Fabian Brunnstrom – Time to write him off. Unless the Stars walk away from his arbitration award and he joins another team, it is clear that this roster is not for him. Minimal ice time, healthy scratches – his development is stunted. He had a hat trick in his first NHL game and 16 goals in 98 games since. He needs to be in the top six, or his talent is wasted. In Dallas, he's not getting into the top six unless there are two injuries there. The minute he's moved to a new team, grab him quick.

- Richards was in on 61 of Eriksson's 71 points (conversely, Eriksson was in on 61 of Richards' 91 points). Eriksson won't tank if Richards goes down, but he'll sure take a hit. Richards won't exactly jump for joy if Eriksson goes down, either.

- Larsen being recalled from Sweden got my attention. You don't see that happen very often, the only time that I can recall was in 2008-09. Dallas did it then, too (Wandell). That tells me he'll play this year and if so, he'll see second PP time.
- When Ribeiro was hurt, Richards slipped to a 71-point pace (13 in 15 games). They're both centermen, so that was just a matter of attracting all the defensive focus. His linemates Benn (seven in 15) and Morrow (five in 11) also slipped a little, naturally. One player to step up was Ott, who will always be the first guy to break into the top six when anyone in there is hurt because he can play center or wing.
- Daley had 12 points in his first 59 games, and then 10 in his last 18. He logs a ton of ice time and secondary PP time.
- PIM: There was a noticeable decline in PIM from defensemen last year. This is coaching, mixed with forwards being brought in to fill his role. Daley's PIM dropped from 73 to 25, Niskanen from 52 to 18, and Robidas slipped from 76 in 72 games to 70 in 82. Meanwhile, Ott's and Barch's went up (per game). That's a shift in philosophy. Now they have Burish, whose presence will cut into Barch's ice time and free up Ott for a more offensive role.
- Contract year: Richards, Sutherby, Segal, Daley, Skrastins, Lukowich, Jeff Woywitka. The only player I like here for a big jump is Daley, but his upside is limited. Still – 30 or 35 could be in the cards.
- Eriksson had the fourth year magic last season. Unfortunately, no Star forwards are entering their fourth season. Niskanen is entering his fourth year, but the rule doesn't hold as nicely for defensemen.
- The confusing mass of goaltenders in the chart above is exactly how I see things rounding into form. Lehtonen is the starter, there is no question of that. But he has averaged about 35 games per season the last three years and four of the last five. So to pencil him in for 65 starts is a waste of good lead. I put him in for his most games in four years, to give the situation the benefit of the doubt. But that still leaves half a season unaccounted for. Raycroft will then be the starter but has shown in the past that he can't hold onto that for any prolonged period of time. Krahn (another Band-Aid Boy) will get his shot with middling results. Enter Bachman. That's my sleeper goalie for the season, though you may not see it happen until January or February. But if given a chance, he will take the ball and run with it. **Dobber's confidence that Lehtonen will be the starting goaltender this year: 100%**
- Plus/minus: I've never seen anything so wild – Richards led the team in scoring with an eye-popping 91 points, and yet he was a minus-12. Niskanen as a team-worst minus-15, and most of the roster was in that minus-2 to minus-5 range. Yet Marc Fistic was a plus-27? Where did that come from? The team will struggle defensively because of goaltending rollercoaster that I submit will happen, so the plus/minus of most players will actually slip a little further.
- Jonathan Cheechoo has been invited to camp. As you can see from the crowded depth chart above, he is not going to make it. **Update: CUT**
- Neal, Niskanen and Lindgren have yet to sign and as we reach mid-September and camp draws near, they are holdout risks. I've always believe that players who miss camp have a higher risk of injury when they do finally sign and join the team late. So be cautious. **Update: Neal and Niskanen have signed, Lindgren went to Europe.**
- **Injury: Eriksson is day-to-day with a hip flexor injury.**

DETROIT

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Henrik Zetterberg  	75	33	79	34	Pavel Datsyuk  	81	31	84	22	Johan Franzen  	70	35	63	50
Jiri Hudler  	81	27	67	32	Valtteri Filppula  	78	21	56	42	Todd Bertuzzi  	76	17	45	78
Daniel Cleary  	72	14	38	42	Mike Modano	67	14	32	28	Tomas Holmstrom  	65	22	41	58
Drew Miller	81	12	28	26	Darren Helm	75	12	27	32	Patrick Eaves	68	11	29	32
Kris Draper	74	6	15	32	Justin Abdelkader	57	4	13	55					
<hr/>														
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Nicklas Lidstrom  	80	11	54	22	Brian Rafalski  	78	10	52	28	Jimmy Howard	40	6		
Niklas Kronwall  	68	8	41	58	Jonathan Ericsson	76	8	26	74	Chris Osgood	5	0		
Jakub Kindl	53	2	18	18	Brad Stuart	76	3	20	34	Joey MacDonald	3	0		
Derek Meech	58	2	11	30	Ruslan Salei	61	2	21	42					

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
		Sleeper	Pts	%
Pavel Datsyuk	102	Jan Mursak		0% - CUT
Henrik Zetterberg	98	Tomas Tatar		0% - CUT
Gustav Nyquist	85	Brendan Smith		0% - CUT
Tomas Tatar	85			
Jiri Hudler	82			
Calle Järnkrok	82			
Johan Franzen	75			
Valtteri Filppula	72			
Jan Mursak	72	Valtteri Filppula	65	30%
Landon Ferraro	72	Jonathan Ericsson	40	10%
Nicklas Lidstrom	68			
Niklas Kronwall	65			
Brian Rafalski	65			
Todd Bertuzzi	62			
Andrew Miller	62			
Justin Abdelkader	60			
Jakub Kindl	60			

Angus Prime Cut: Niklas Kronwall Grade: Porterhouse

Kronwall produced at a 0.64 points-per-game pace in 2008-09 and big things were expected of him in 2009-10. However, he missed significant time with injury and only managed 22 points in 48 games (or a 0.45 points-per-game pace). Detroit lost a ton of offensive depth last summer and their second power play unit decreased dramatically in terms of skill level. Lidstrom and Rafalski see all of the minutes with the top unit and Kronwall simply had less talent to work with on the other unit. With Hudler returning and Johan Franzen hopefully healthy, look for Kronwall to approach the 50-point mark once again.

Dobber's lowdown on: Jiri Hudler – Analysts do not put enough stock in Hudler and what he can do, but the statistical trend is mind-numbingly easy to follow – 25 points, 42 points, 57 points his first three years in the NHL. Trending upwards, with significant jumps each season. Then he went to the KHL last season and finished eighth in league scoring. At 26 he's entering his prime and he's also entering his fourth NHL season. Frankly, my projection is conservative if anything. His presence in the lineup really opens things up for the Red Wings scorers and the ripple effect will be that they will all get back to the numbers that we are used to seeing from them. Just one player makes that much of a difference, yes.

- Lidstrom had 46 points in his last 57 regular season and playoff games. In 2008-09, he had 40 in his last 47 games. He's still going strong, although back-to-back slow starts could indicate that he's in for another one. Because he's 40 years old, that's bound to make you jittery by December, but remember the above stats and hang in there.
- Bertuzzi had just 14 points in his last 30 games. This is the result of Filppula and Franzen returning from injury. With Hudler back in the mix, Bertuzzi's numbers will freefall. His decent playoff numbers (11 points in 12 games) were mainly the result of one five-point game, which really just rode the coattails of an amazing Franzen performance.
- Zetterberg and Datsyuk played 35% of their even-strength shifts on a line together. This is a fact, as per Jason Arbuthnot's Frozen Pool section in DobberHockey. They are often tried on different lines, but Coach Babcock always seems to swing back around to putting them together again. Zetterberg would be the winger, as Datsyuk has been far more proficient at the faceoff dot lately.
- Only an injury stops Howard from notching 40 wins this year. I said four years ago that he only needed to be average to be a top fantasy goaltender. The team itself is so awesome that his numbers will be elite. I was bang on with that one, congrats to Howard owners for winning the lottery. Osgood will barely see the ice. **Dobber's confidence that Howard will be the starter this season: 100%**
- Filppula was due a breakout last year, but instead broke his wrist. He returned by January, but took nearly two months getting his rhythm back. But he finished with 18 points in his last 24 regular season and playoff games. Barring another injury, his breakout will happen this year and he is an excellent dark horse. Hudler's return helps.
- Hudler's fourth NHL season, delayed by a year, happens now.
- If your league counts shorthanded goals, Helm is your man. He had three last year, and three the season before in the AHL. Look for four or five this season.
- Contract year: Draper, Eaves, Miller, Lidstrom, Ericsson, Meech, Osgood, Howard. Jimmy will earn himself a nice contract that will stress tenure more than amount. Ericsson will continue to battle for ice time and is probably looking forward to being a free agent. He would blossom on another team, unless the Wings can sell him on being patient and waiting for Lidstrom and Rafalski to retire.
- PIM: Bertuzzi led the team with 80 last year, but that will drop as his ice time drops (and it will). Ericsson and Abdelkader will get more ice time and their PIM will rise accordingly. But regardless, this is not a team to turn to for your penalty minutes.
- Plus/minus: The top line and the top pairing excelled in this area (again), but all other lines/pairings were horrible. Again, with Hudler around to give them the final piece of a good second line, those nasty negatives will eke over the zero mark.
- Ryasensky's signing did not happen, it was an unsubstantiated rumor so he was removed from the lineup.
- Modano's signing is to be announced August 5. I inserted him into the lineup because I'm certain it will go down. If it does not, he will be removed. Modano will get some power-play time early on, but he is not as effective as he used to be and his role in that sense will gradually dwindle.
- Injury: Kronwall had surgery end of August to repair a tear in the meniscus in his knee. He'll miss camp, but not the season. Regardless, he'll miss time this year because he is often injured.
- The Wings waived Meech in early September and he cleared. That means they can send him to the AHL if they need to. This bodes well for Kindl and his ice time, so I may bump up his projected games played as camp progresses.

EDMONTON

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Magnus Paajarvi-Svensson	78	15	44	20	Sam Gagner	80	19	63	62	Ales Hemsky	73	22	79	34
Taylor Hall	81	22	70	60	Shawn Horcoff	78	20	54	48	Jordan Eberle	78	30	72	38
Dustin Penner	82	28	58	48	Andrew Cogliano	82	19	43	28	Gilbert Brule	67	16	35	60
Zack Stortini	78	6	18	182	Colin Fraser	77	7	23	50	Ryan Jones	70	11	24	40
Jean-Francois Jacques	47	4	12	84						Alexandre Giroux	35	9	18	6
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Ryan Whitney	76	10	47	70	Tom Gilbert	82	10	48	20	Nikolai Khabibulin	15	2		
Ladislav Smid	65	2	16	55	Kurtis Foster	74	9	47	46	Jeff Deslauriers	10	1		
Jim Vandermeer	70	2	14	94	Theo Peckham	60	0	5	107	Devan Dubnyk	12	2		
Sheldon Souray	65	10	34	80	Jason Strudwick	65	0	5	40	Martin Gerber	0	0		

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
Taylor Hall	105	Taylor Hall		99%
Ales Hemsky	92	Jordan Eberle		99%
Sam Gagner	90	Magnus Paajarvi-Svensson		90%
Jordan Eberle	85	Linus Omark		0% - CUT
Magnus Paajarvi-Svensson	85	Anton Lander		0% - not in camp
Linus Omark	82			
Toni Rajala	78			
Dustin Penner	75			
Andrew Cogliano	75	Sleeper	Pts	%
Shawn Horcoff	70	Magnus Paajarvi-Svensson	55	20%
Gilbert Brule	68	Dustin Penner	70	15%
Ryan Jones	65	Shawn Horcoff	70	25%
Tom Gilbert	62	Sam Gagner	75	10%
Ryan Whitney	60	Alexandre Giroux	45	10%
Sheldon Souray	60	Linus Omark	50	5%
Kurtis Foster	52			
Taylor Chorney	48			

Angus Prime Cut: Tom Gilbert Grade: Prime Rib

Edmonton has a lot of young talent in the forward ranks ready to break out. On the back end, the path is (almost) clear for Gilbert to take over as the go-to guy offensively. Souray's days are numbered as an Oiler and Gilbert will be expected to run the first unit with either Whitney or the hard-shooting Foster. Gilbert regressed from 45 points to only 31 last season – expect a return to 45 in 2010-11.

Dobber's lowdown on: Sheldon Souray – With Gilbert, Whitney and the underrated Foster, Souray is no longer needed. However, with an oversized contract and a notorious injury history, the man with the booming shot is untradeable. The Oilers waived him in July, but there were no takers. No takers, when he was free. To move him, the Oil will have to take on hefty salary in return. Regardless of where he plays, he'll get a little more than a point every two games and he'll miss at least 15 games with an injury. That much you can bank on. **Update: Souray was asked not to come to camp. He will be traded or moved somehow. Update Oct. 5: He will be sent to the minors until he is moved.**

- Gilbert slept through the first three-quarters of the season and was one of the most disappointing players in fantasy hockey last season (12 points in 66 games). Most of his owners dropped him and the rest of his owners were 100 percent certain that he would be dropped in the offseason. Then he got 19 points in the last 16 games. That alone gives me confidence that he'll bounce back, but factor in the additions of Hall, Eberle and Hemsky to the lineup and the power play just got twice as good.

- Gagner's linemates just went from a C-minus with virtually zero first-line support to an A-plus with a pretty good first line ahead of him. That's one reason why he'll break out.
- Sixteen of Horcoff's 36 points last year came in the final 22 games. Now he'll be back with his old buddy Hemsky, so he's in line for his best numbers in four years.
- Penner peaked last season and if MPS makes this roster I can assure you that Penner's numbers will slip back to the 50-point range. He had 36 points in the first 32 games and eight in the final six, but just 19 in the middle 44. That's a pretty streaky statistic. One thing that I noticed was how much he thrived against stingy "team" defense systems – he had four-point games against St. Louis (while Andy Murray was still the coach) and Detroit, and he had a five-point game against Columbus (while Ken Hitchcock was still the coach).
- Cogliano had half of his 28 points in the last 16 games. He won't be the first liner that we thought he could be, but the talent is still there to get onto the second line if he can build on that finish. A productive third-liner seems to be in the cards though.
- Contract year: Jones, Stortini, Jacques, MacIntyre, Vandermeer, Smid, Jason Strudwick. All small fries, though Jones has third-line upside.
- Cogliano and Gagner are entering their fourth NHL seasons. Either one could really bust out, but regardless both of them will make big strides this season.
- Khabibulin is still dealing with back issues and legal issues (drunk driving charges). Either factor will limit his games this season, though his huge contract will ensure that when he can play, he will. Deslauriers was the go-to goaltender a year ago, but when Dubnyk finally got the hang of it he had some strong outings, going 4-2-0 in his last six starts. When the dust settles, I think the team will start leaning on the 6-5 Dubnyk in the second half. **Dobber's confidence that Khabibulin will be the starter: 10%** UPDATE: Because the Oilers signed Gerber (early August), I have to assume that they are not confident that Khabibulin will get out of jail time or they are confident they can get out of their contract with him (due to a clause common in these contracts that requires the player to do basic things like...not go to jail). Do not count on Khabibulin to play a single game for now. If Deslauriers stumbles, Gerber will get his opportunity (he is on a two-way contract). But I still believe that in the end Dubnyk will prove to be an underrated goaltender and we'll be singing his praises by March. UPDATE II: Khabibulin was convicted and will face a minimum of 30 days in prison. His long-term injury status will prevent Edmonton from walking away from his contract, but I still wouldn't count on any games from him.
- PIM: With some highly skilled guys to protect now, look for Stortini to pad his PIM total even more. Jacques is also a dark horse in this category, as injuries were the only reason he had fewer than 120 last year.
- Plus/minus: With the team scoring more this season – and they'll score a lot more, trust me – this horrible number will right itself next campaign. Five of their bottom nine players in this category last season were purged in the offseason (Fernando Pisani, Robert Nilsson, Ethan Moreau, Patrick O'Sullivan, Ryan Potulny were a combined minus-107).
- Giroux is an AHL star who signed his first one-way contract. He had 200 points in the last two seasons in the AHL (138 games), including 110 goals. Sometimes teams give a star AHLer a one-way contract to bring in a ringer to bolster their farm team, but if Giroux sticks he could pull what Matt Moulson pulled a year ago.
- **The best skater in camp so far has been – Horcoff. Between that, the return of Hemsky, and his final 22 games (noted above 16 points), he'll bounce back.**

Dobber's Tip:

Pittsburgh was Dobber's pick to jump in 2007, Washington in 2008, Chicago in 2009, Los Angeles in 2010... all correct! Dobber's pick this year? Edmonton.

FLORIDA

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
David Booth	66	27	49	46	Stephen Weiss	79	19	61	36	Michael Frolik	81	23	52	46
Rostislav Olesz	75	14	33	30	Mike Santorelli	65	10	27	24	Cory Stillman	65	20	40	28
Shawn Matthias	80	14	31	20	Steve Reinprecht	79	11	32	20	Christopher Higgins	70	12	25	32
Steve Bernier	77	15	33	52	Marty Reasoner	75	9	20	45	Radek Dvorak	77	14	31	30
Darcy Hordichuk	60	1	4	154						Michal Repik	48	10	21	22
Kennadal McArdle	58	4	13	84						Evgeni Dadonov	14	1	2	4
Byron Bitz	47	3	8	40										
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Dennis Wideman	79	11	41	34	Bryan McCabe	74	13	40	78	Tomas Vokoun	29	10		
Dmitri Kulikov	77	11	34	36	Jason Garrison	70	5	23	50	Scott Clemmensen	12	2		
Mike Weaver	70	0	5	26	Bryan Allen	73	4	17	98	Jacob Markstrom	7	1		
Keaton Ellerby	65	2	10	26										

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
Michael Frolik	92	Shawn Matthias		99%
Stephen Weiss	80	Mike Santorelli		65%
Shawn Matthias	75	Erik Gudbranson		0% - CUT
Rostislav Olesz	72	Michal Repik		0% - CUT
Michal Repik	72	Evgeni Dadonov		0% - CUT
Nick Bjugstad	72	Nick Bjugstad		0% - not in camp
David Booth	70	Quinton Howden		0% - CUT
Evgeni Dadonov	70			
Quinton Howden	70	Sleeper	Pts	%
Cory Stillman	68	Shawn Matthias	55	30%
Bryan McCabe	65	Michael Frolik	70	25%
Michael Santorelli	65	Mike Santorelli	55	15%
Steve Bernier	60	Rostislav Olesz	55	10%
Dmitry Kulikov	58	Nathan Paetsch	40	10%
Christopher Higgins	55			
Dennis Wideman	55			

Angus Prime Cut: Dmitri Kulikov Grade: Porterhouse

Gonchar 2.0 (the similarities are eerie) had a fantastic rookie season as a 19-year-old defenseman on a struggling club. Kulikov skates extremely well and his shot from the point is hard and accurate. The Panthers are once again shaping up to be a team that has difficulties scoring consistently, so don't expect Kulikov to rack up the assists just yet. He'll play on the first unit with either McCabe or Wideman. Kulikov is one of the best (and most underrated) defensemen to own in any keeper league format.

Dobber's lowdown on: Rostislav Olesz – He has three things going for him – salary, age and pedigree. His \$3.1 million puts him third on the team among forwards. Being the seventh overall pick, the team has a lot invested in whether or not he succeeds. And he'll be 25 this year, which is still too soon to completely write him off. Now the bad news. He's a Band-Aid Boy and as such his development has been stunted. He has occasionally shown enough skill to possibly be a 70-point player, but is far too inconsistent. He'll get a look on one of the top two lines, but if he doesn't click (or if he gets hurt), he'll find himself a third- or fourth-liner. Time is ticking on him. Do not draft, but be ready with a waiver-wire pickup if he shows chemistry in camp with Weiss or Matthias.

- In the last eight years – at any level, college or pro – the most games that Booth has played is 73. Last season he suffered a couple of very serious concussions. Word is that he is now fine, but regardless he is very high risk and high reward.
- Frolik is entering his third season. He is a prototype for fourth-year breakout candidates. He came into the NHL relatively early, has a ton of skill and is on a team that will really use him. Wait one more year for the big numbers. Trust me, they'll come.
- Don't kid yourself into thinking that Reinprecht is the second-line center. He had just 15 points in the last 55 games in 2009-10. His points have declined for the second straight season. A solid third-liner though.
- Wideman had a strong initial impact with Boston. He'll have a strong initial impact in Florida. He'll wear out his welcome by year two or three though.
- No, Higgins will not bounce back. Something happened to him and he is not the same player he was three years ago. He may have drunk the same water as Jonathan Cheechoo.
- None of the Panther forwards are entering their fourth NHL seasons.
- Contract year: Stillman, Bernier, Dvorak, Higgins, Frolik, Grabner, Matthias, Bitz, McCabe, Ellerby, Paetsch, Vokoun. The latter will almost certainly be dealt this season (more on that below). Frolik, Grabner and Matthias are young players with high upsides and could really cash in with big seasons.
- Vokoun will be the man until February. Then the blank will hit the fan as far as fantasy goaltenders are concerned in Florida. The Panthers would love to see how both Markstrom and Salak will fare, so both will get several games with the big club. Both youngsters will impress. Clemmensen has proven to be a solid goaltender, but the future is in these kids. No, Salak will never take "golden boy" status from Markstrom, but he could pull a Halak/Price type of situation in a couple of years. **Dobber's confidence that Vokoun will be the starter: 100% UPDATE:** Salak has signed to play in Sweden next year even though he is under contract with Florida. I believe this was with the Panthers' permission.
- PIM: Allen is again the only reasonable PIM asset to own from this team. McCabe is fairly steady at one per game, and Bernier has some upside if he is used strictly as a checker. But he hasn't been a pure power guy in years.
- Plus/minus: No matter how bad this team is, the coach will keep them within shouting distance of zero. Garrison led the team last year with a plus-5 and he is capable of repeating.
- **Santorelli is having such a strong camp that there are whispers of him being Florida's No.2 center this year.**
- **Shocker: Florida placed Grabner on waivers October 3 in an effort to sneak him through to the farm team. There is a chance he is snapped up by a team in need of a pure goal scorer, though he has little experience. There is also a chance he makes it onto their farm team. He carries a high risk/reward of 45 points...or zero. This is probably to make room for Santorelli on the roster. Update: claimed by the Islanders, see that section for projection**

Dobber's Tip:

Need to stay on top of prospects for your league? Every 10th of the month, Dobber gives you his top 185 prospect forwards and 30 defensemen to own in your points-only keeper league – and has for the last four years. As well, every Saturday, Matt Bugg's Bugg Bytes discusses the under-18 players you need to know and Ryan Van Horne breaks down the latest in the over-18 prospects in his Panning for Gold.

LOS ANGELES

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Ryan Smyth	70	24	53	58	Anze Kopitar	82	34	79	26	Justin Williams	65	17	41	50
Alexei Ponikarovsky	79	20	56	56	Jarret Stoll	72	16	49	44	Dustin Brown	81	25	59	60
Scott Parse	75	16	36	48	Michal Handzus	82	18	41	34	Wayne Simmonds	82	15	41	100
Brad Richardson	75	14	31	44	Brayden Schenn	80	14	40	18	Kevin Westgarth	62	1	5	116
Kyle Clifford	76	12	23	126	Andrei Loktionov	11	0	2	2	Oscar Moller	25	2	8	10
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Drew Doughty	82	15	55	52	Jack Johnson	75	10	40	68	Jonathan Quick	37		4	
Robert Scuderi	75	1	15	28	Matt Greene	60	1	11	80	Jonathan Bernier	12	2		
Willie Mitchell	70	3	18	70	Davis Drewiske	65	1	10	20	Erik Ersberg	0	0		
Jake Muzzin	78	4	27	60	Peter Harrold	54	3	8	30					

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
		Sleeper	Pts	%
Anze Kopitar	100	Brayden Schenn		75%
Oscar Moller	78	Richard Clune		0% - CUT
Brayden Schenn	78	Andrei Loktionov		30%
Dustin Brown	75	Vatcheslav Voynov		0% - injured
Justin Williams	75	Alec Martinez		0% - CUT
Ryan Smyth	72	Oscar Moller		0% - CUT
Andrei Loktionov	72	Johan Fransson		0% - CUT
Wayne Simmonds	68	Thomas Hickey		0% - CUT
Jarret Stoll	68			
Scott Parse	68	Brayden Schenn	60	25%
Trevor Lewis	68	Wayne Simmonds	55	25%
Drew Doughty	65	Dustin Brown	70	20%
Jack Johnson	60	Justin Williams	60	20%
Brad Richardson	58	Scott Parse	50	15%
Michal Handzus	55	Brad Richardson	45	10%
Richard Clune	55	Johan Fransson	40	10%
Johan Fransson	52			

Angus Prime Cut: Jack Johnson. **Grade:** Prime Rib.

Johnson more than tripled his previous career high of 11 points last season, finishing 2009-10 with 36. He was one of Los Angeles' best player in round one against the Canucks as well and is a dynamic skater who loves to get involved offensively. Expect healthy offensive totals from Johnson for the next while, as he and Drew Doughty are going to terrorize opposing penalty-killing units with their puck-moving abilities. Johnson could hit 45 points if the Kings are able to maintain or improve on the league's seventh best power play unit from this past season.

Dobber's lowdown on: Johan Fransson – I hate missing promising prospects in the Fantasy Prospects Report, so to compensate for his exclusion I'll review Fransson. Considered a "project", the Kings always knew that he had the talent, which is why they made him part of the Mattias Norstrom trade back in 2007. Now 25, Fransson finally did it. He exploded for 30 points in 54 games in the SEL, which was tied for fourth on the team and it doubled his previous SEL high. The Kings signed him in mid-June (which is why I missed him in the Report – I thought he was off the radar) and he's coming to camp. So two questions have been answered – is the offense there? Yes. Will he come over? Yes. He'll compete with Martinez, Hickey and Voynov for the last defenseman slot and given his maturity he may have the inside track. How he adapts to the North American game could be similar to what we just saw from Anton Stralman. Then again, he is older so you never know. Sleeper. And because he was signed so late and is not very well known, his name may not even be mentioned in the other magazines. Shhhhhh. **Update: he was cut on Monday the 27th, but we'll see him as a call up soon I'm sure.**

- Richardson didn't notch his first point until his 27th game last year. So all 27 of his points came in the final 55 contests, which is why I have him as a sleeper for 45 points.
- It's because of the lack of players of his caliber that I don't have Kopitar at 95 points. However, he really thrived early on last season (30 points in his first 19 games) with Smyth until the latter got injured. When Smyth returned, the magic was gone. If they can pick that up again with Williams on the other wing and everyone stays healthy (big if), then Kopitar should be able to flirt with that lofty number.
- Moller is starting to round into a third-line checker. However, he's still only 21 and has a lot of untapped offensive potential. He'll need to start showing it soon because once he starts getting pigeonholed on a checking line, it will be tough to Matt Stajan his way out of it.
- The hardworking and versatile Parse doesn't get power-play time and never sees time with a Kopitar or a Brown. Despite that, he still managed to produce with minimal ice time. These overachievers who still prevail are always worth keeping an eye on. He had four multi-point games despite averaging just 10 minutes over 54 contests.
- Matt Greene had shoulder surgery (end of July). Out until November.
- Contract year: Handzus, Williams, Richardson, Simmonds, Clune, Doughty, Johnson, Harrold, Ersberg. With mid-tier players having such a tough time signing this summer, and with goalies finding it impossible to sign unless they sign quick and cheap, it's easy to see Handzus and Ersberg out of the league next year. Williams could be too if he doesn't pull off a decent campaign. Richardson signed on for just one year, so he obviously sees the potential for something big that he can parlay into better money next summer.
- No Kings are entering their fourth NHL seasons.
- This is an intimidating team – six Kings were in the Top 79 in total hits last year: Brown, Greene, Doughty, Stoll, Johnson and Ponikarovsky...and Simmonds is on his way up there too. Keep your head up!
- PIM: what a great year for dark horses in penalty minutes on this team. Everyone knows that Simmonds is a multi-category stud by now, but how many know of the promise that Clune and Westgarth bring? Clune could be the next Daniel Carcillo. Energetic and feisty. Westgarth is a hulking 6-5 Raitis Ivanans' replacement. Both those guys will be available late in your roto league draft and if they make the team they'll be great for PIM. I couldn't fit Westgarth in the prospects chart above, but I'd put his odds at 60/40 he makes it. **Update: Clifford offers similar PIM upside to Clune, but he has more offensive upside. Excellent dark horse.**
- Quick is a legit starter and a very good one. However, he lost gas last season. He was overplayed and it caught up to him down the stretch and in the playoffs. Ersberg was too unreliable, which was why the Kings recalled Jonathan Bernier to play when Quick couldn't. Look for Quick to get a few more games off and Bernier to get in some starts. Ersberg is a better goalie than he showed last year, so he shouldn't be completely discounted. In 2011-12, the Kings will have a 1A/1B situation as both Quick and Bernier are quality netminders. Something will give by 2012 and one will be moved (Quick) I'm sure. **Dobber's confidence that Quick will be the starter: 80% Update: Ersberg was cut, Bernier will be the backup and is now a threat to steal the No.1 job from Quick.**
- Plus/minus: Simmonds, Doughty and Scuderi were studs last year. Simmonds led the team with a plus-22 (multi-cat stud). It's a lot to expect him to match that, so look for a small rollback. Parse was a pleasant surprise at plus-13. In general, the team was between minus-5 and plus-20 and I would expect more of the same.
- Injury note: Schenn suffered a minor knee injury in early September and is day-to-day. Missing extended camp time could cost him his spot. **UPDATE: Schenn is back and playing just fine.**
- **Muzzin made the team after a surprise performance, knocking out the more highly-touted Hickey and my own personal favorite Fransson. He has some offensive upside, and modest PIM upside, but probably not for this year.**
- **Parse is day to day (wrist) so Trevor Lewis, Loktionov and Schenn all make the team for now. Lewis will get cut when Parse returns. I don't expect Loktionov to spend the entire season in the NHL this year, but next season he should be a lock.**

MINNESOTA

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
G. Latendresse	74	24	47	40	Mikko Koivu	79	21	73	58	Martin Havlat	75	24	64	26
Andrew Brunette	82	22	59	18	Matt Cullen	75	19	44	30	Pierre-Marc Bouchard	70	16	47	30
Cal Clutterbuck	73	12	24	82	Kyle Brodziak	81	13	34	30	Antti Miettinen	77	16	38	40
Eric Nystrom	78	10	18	70	John Madden	78	9	22	26	Chuck Kobasew	58	15	26	32
James Sheppard	22	3	6	10	Cody Almond	14	2	3	22	Casey Wellman	60	14	28	42
Defense										Goalies			W	SO
Marek Zidlicky	77	10	43	70	Cam Barker	71	8	42	66	Niklas Backstrom	30	2		
Brent Burns	70	10	36	52	Clayton Stoner	70	2	21	95	Josh Harding	0	0		
Nick Schultz	80	2	20	40	Brad Staubitz	65	6	16	165	Jose Theodore	12	1		
Greg Zanon	81	3	15	34						Anton Khudobin	0	0		

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
Martin Havlat	88	Clayton Stoner		95%
Mikko Koivu	80	Casey Wellman		60%
Pierre-Marc Bouchard	80	Nate Prosser	0% - CUT	
Mikael Granlund	77	Jarod Palmer	0% - CUT	
James Sheppard	75	Mikael Granlund	0% - not in camp	
Erik Haula	72			
Guillaume Latendresse	70			
Andrew Brunette	68			
Sleeper		Pts	%	
Matt Cullen	68	Martin Havlat	75	35%
Chuck Kobasew	68	Pierre-Marc Bouchard	65	15%
Casey Wellman	68	Guillaume Latendresse	60	15%
Cameron Barker	67	Chuck Kobasew	55	15%
Cal Clutterbuck	65	Casey Wellman	50	10%
Marek Zidlicky	60			
Antti Miettinen	60			
Jarod Palmer	60			
Brent Burns	55			

Angus Prime Cut: Brent Burns Grade: Sirloin

Burns burst on to the scene back in 2007-08, scoring 15 goals and recording 43 points. Since that season, however, he has battled significant injury issues. Last season, he scored only three times in 40 games. Minnesota will probably opt to go with Zidlicky and Barker playing the points on their top power play unit, leaving Burns to pick up whatever minutes rare left over. Don't expect a return to 15 goals or 40 points any time soon.

Dobber's lowdown on: Pierre-Marc Bouchard – Nine months after signing a five-year contract, Bouchard was knocked out of the lineup with a concussion. It was the end of the 2008-09 season. He returned last fall and was knocked out again – this time for an entire season. He has done some light work this summer and is back skating. He says he feels "90 percent" and hopes to be ready for training camp. That's a lot of ifs and feels and hopes. Still, I'll take him at his word and figure that he is close and pencil him for 70 games, but conservatively put his points-per-game at about where it was in 2008-09 (a down year for him). He has a point-per-game upside but is also a hit away from something career threatening. His role and status with the team is highly regarded so his top six spot is secure whenever he wants it.

- In the first half of 2007-08, Koivu posted a points-per-game of 0.84 before getting injured and slowing in the second half as a result. In 2008-09 his points-per-game was 0.85 and last year it was 0.89. Very consistent although moving upward ever so slightly. So my 0.92 forecast should be as accurate as anything you see in any guide.
- Zidlicky is another one – last three years points-per-game: 0.55, 0.55, 0.54. He's much older than Koivu, so it's an easy call for me to confidently say that his points will just repeat.
- Brunette has played at least 80 games in nine of the last 10 seasons (the other season was 'only' 77).
- Latendresse flew once he arrived in Minnesota and became a big first-line forward much like Dustin Penner blossomed in Edmonton. He ended up with a 0.67 points-per-game average with the Wild and when you consider he started by posting just seven points in 17 games that 0.67 should be even higher. That being said, when the thrill of a new team wore off and the opposition started to key on him, he managed just seven in his last 16. Don't expect miracles. He's also a Band-Aid Boy, which is another reason for caution. Treat him as a sleeper and not a sure thing.
- Sheppard regressed badly last year and heading into it you didn't think it there was room for him to regress any more than he had. However, the club had a chance to walk away in the summer, but they chose to qualify him. I think he still has a chance to salvage some value and here is why. He's still only 22 and the team wants him to succeed badly. This was exemplified by the fact that the coach gave him an average of about 16 minutes of ice time for the first nine games last season. The coach pushed and he faltered. After that, he was a frequent healthy scratch and his ice time gradually slipped down to nine minutes. Again this year he'll get the ice time early. He needs to convert early if he wants to keep getting it – and that's the only way he can turn things around. UPDATE: The Madden signing probably shifts Sheppard to the wing. Now he'll be competing with Nystrom and/or Wellman for ice time, or hoping that Kobasew/Bouchard gets hurt again. His odds just got slimmer.
- Clutterbuck led the league in hits for the second straight season (318 in just 74 games last year). His style puts him at risk for injury. Yet strangely enough he stayed out of the box last season. Maybe he's more of a poor man's Dustin Brown instead of a potential agitator. He may not be the future 150 PIM man we had him pegged as.
- The arrival of Cullen, the return of Bouchard and the emergence of Latendresse spell the end of any productivity from Miettinen or Kobasew. If Wellman sticks and thrives, you can put the latter sentence in bold and underline it.
- Contract year: Kobasew, Brunette, Miettinen, Wellman, Sheppard, Prosser, Harding. The latter will finally be an unrestricted free agent. If he can stay healthy the team will move him this season. Last chance for Kobasew and Sheppard to prove that they can meet expectations.
- This is Sheppard's fourth NHL season. The magical fourth year, a contract year, and the threat of being written off as a bust. Can he prevail? He needs to show something.
- PIM: Staibitz is on the rise in this category. Potentially Top 10 in the league as he gets more games in and more ice time. Stoner will also be a 100-PIM guy as he develops. As mentioned above, you may not want to overrate Clutterbuck too much for these.
- Harding will be moved if the team can find takers (which will happen if he stays healthy). Backstrom will tons of action as always, but the Wild are still weak, so the W's won't be anything special. Khudobin will be the backup when Harding goes. **Dobber's confidence that Backstrom will be the starter: 100% Update: Harding tore his ACL/MCL and is out for the season. If he didn't have bad luck, he'd have no luck at all. Look for the Wild to acquire a backup.**
UPDATE: They signed Jose Theodore to a \$1.1 million contract (one year).
- Plus/minus: Every full timer on this team was a negative. Even leader Cam Barker (plus-5) was minus-2 after arriving in Minnesota (see – I told you this was more of a team stat!). More of the same – no change this year, though one hopes that Sheppard turns things around (including his ugly minus-14).
- Staibitz played on the wing last season in San Jose. I just don't see any room up front in Minnesota. He is a natural defenseman and I think he'll get a look there.
- Injury: Sheppard was in an accident involving an ATV. The irony would be funny, if it wasn't such a devastating blow to his hockey career. This was a make-or-break year, and now he will miss most of it.

MONTREAL

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Benoit Pouliot	70	14	42	38	Scott Gomez	77	15	61	52	Brian Gionta	80	30	60	38
Michael Cammalleri	79	34	72	40	Tomas Plekanec	81	23	61	48	Andrei Kostitsyn	74	21	52	54
Lars Eller	78	12	34	70	Dustin Boyd	76	13	35	22	Travis Moen	80	6	21	74
Tom Pyatt	79	6	15	22	Maxim Lapierre	77	10	22	78	Mathieu Darche	71	7	22	18
Max Pacioretty	15	2	6	10	Jeff Halpern	72	8	19	41	Ryan White	57	1	11	68
					David Desharnais	14	1	3	0					
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Andrei Markov	70	9	55	36	P.K. Subban	78	14	51	46	Carey Price	32		4	
Jaroslav Spacek	73	6	27	46	Roman Hamrlik	76	6	27	58	Alex Auld	11		1	
Josh Gorges	82	4	20	40	Hal Gill	70	2	11	70					
Ryan O'Byrne	65	1	9	80	Alexandre Picard	38	4	12	14					

Long-Term Potential		Prospect	%
Mike Cammalleri	88	P.K. Subban	100%
Alexander Avtsin	85	Lars Eller	70%
Andrei Kostitsyn	80	Max Pacioretty	0% - CUT
Scott Gomez	78	David Desharnais	0% - CUT
Lars Eller	78	Alexander Avtsin	0% - CUT
Max Pacioretty	78	Ben Maxwell	5%
David Desharnais	78		
Tomas Plekanec	75	Sleeper	
Brian Gionta	75	Sleeper	Pts %
Louis Leblanc	75	Lars Eller	55 20%
Benoit Pouliot	72	Andrei Kostitsyn	70 15%
Ben Maxwell	72	Benoit Pouliot	60 15%
Andrei Markov	68	Dustin Boyd	50 10%
Aaron Palushaj	68		
Dustin Boyd	65		
P.K. Subban	65		
Maxim Lapierre	60		

Angus Prime Cut: Benoit Pouliot Grade: Rump

Pouliot came to Montreal and quickly found a home on a line with Gomez and Gionta, scoring goals on a consistent basis for the first month. However, his production completely dried up, as he scored only one goal in Montreal's final 32 games (regular season and into the postseason). He has great size and an impressive skill set, but he doesn't compete hard every shift and his reputation as a lazy player is not undeserved.

Dobber's lowdown on: P.K. Subban – You could see Jacques Martin trying to break him in slowly. He tried not to use him at all, actually. Rushing a prize prospect? Out of the question. But when the Habs were beset by injuries in the playoffs, Martin was forced to dress Subban. His first game saw just 10 minutes of ice time, but he managed an assist and provided a spark. The second game was 10:50. Subban scored in his third playoff game and was given over 19 minutes of ice time as the Habs desperately tried to eke out wins against the defending Cup Champion Penguins. By his fourth playoff game, Subban was logging over 23 minutes. Do you see? Martin tried not to use him, but the bottom line was – he was their best healthy defenseman and one of the team's better players. Now the coach knows that there is no longer a need to ease this stud into the NHL. He's ready to handle everything – and he will.

- Plekanec had just 21 points in his last 40 regular season and playoff games. He also had 39 points sandwiched in between a 70- and 69-point season. Who knows which Plekanec we'll see this season, especially now that he has a big contract in his back pocket. Play it safe and treat him as a low-60s guy.
- Pouliot had 22 points in his first 29 games as a Hab, but just four in his next 28.
- Avtsin signed a contract in mid-July and will be in training camp. He should be a good player in several years, but his upside is very mysterious – he could be the second coming immediately, or a long-term project. We'll get a clear picture by the end of September.
- Kostitsyn is entering his fourth full NHL season. If he's going to build on his 53-point effort from 2007-08, it will be now. One intangible negative impact could be the trading of his brother to Nashville.
- Contract year: Kostitsyn, Pouliot, Lapierre, Boyd, Darche, Pyatt, Markov, Hamrlik, Gill, Gorges, O'Byrne, Auld. Kostitsyn and Pouliot have the most to gain/lose from a big season. That's two pluses for A.K. now...
- PIM: This team is going to stay out of the box. O'Byrne won't see enough ice time to reach his potential in this category, but he has the most upside for PIM. Eller has underrated penalty-minute potential.
- The goaltending controversy is now gone, other than the fact that Price needs to make fans forget about Jaroslav Halak. Nothing does that better than racking up W's. He had an impressive first half in 2008-09 before an ankle injury derailed things and an early return hurt his reputation/results. Last year Price won his first two games (in impressive fashion), then Halak got into a game and Price was never the same. Normally able to handle enormous amounts of pressure, I think Price was occasionally psyched out by the quality of the goaltender behind him. With a great start and a healthy season, Price will get back into the good books of fans. **Dobber's confidence that Price will be the starter: 100%**
- Plus/minus: The Habs hovered around zero, mostly between plus-10 and minus-10 last season. With Paul Mara and Marc-Andre Bergeron gone (two of the worst culprits), the team should recover in this area. But a lot of that will ride on Price keeping pucks out of the net. Subban is potentially a plus-15 player as a rookie.
- Injury note: Andrei Markov had knee surgery in May and was expected to be out until November. However, he is recovering quickly and at last word a return for the season opener is a possibility. I'll tweak his games/points down further if this status changes for the worse. Alexandre Picard was signed as depth in case there are problems.
- The Habs traded prospect goaltender Cedrick Desjardins to the Lightning on August 16 for Kari Ramo. Ramo is signed to play in the KHL this year, but the Habs must see a future with Price/Ramo as their tandem.
- **The team is auditioning different players on the top line in camp (with Gionta and Gomez). So far Eller, Pouliot and Palushaj have had looks. I'm sure Pacioretty will get one as well. Worth keeping an eye on.**

Dobber's Tip:

Don't forget the tip in the 2008 guide regarding the drafting of goalies. Essentially, you keep two separate lists – one for players and one for goaltenders. Divide the goaltenders into three tiers. Tier I includes the 5-7 goalies you feel are elite. Tier II includes the next 8-12 goalies. Tier III includes the next 12-20. Do not draft a goalie until it gets to the point where you feel a Tier I goalie will not slip to you on your next pick. Then pick one. Make sure you have a Tier I goalie. After that, do not pick a goalie until you think all the Tier II goalies will be gone by your next pick. Then pick one. To put goalies on one rigid list with players would be a mistake. Use the Tier System.

NASHVILLE

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Steve Sullivan	75	19	49	40	Cal O'Reilly	78	7	41	12	Patric Hornqvist	79	23	45	48
Colin Wilson	77	13	35	22	Matthew Lombardi	75	19	55	42	Martin Erat	75	19	53	48
J.P. Dumont	78	19	46	20	David Legwand	75	18	41	30	Joel Ward	75	15	37	38
Jerred Smithson	80	7	15	50	Marcel Goc	65	7	21	24	Jordin Tootoo	68	9	21	132
Matt Halischuk	15	0	3	2	Nick Spaling	32	3	10	12	Sergei Kostitsyn	65	16	35	60
Defense						Goalies						W	SO	
Shea Weber	78	21	52	58	Ryan Suter	82	8	47	54	Pekka Rinne	40	7		
Cody Franson	75	10	38	32	Kevin Klein	70	1	10	30	Mark Dekanich	0	0	CUT	
Francis Bouillon	70	3	9	50	Shane O'Brien	70	3	11	130	Anders Lindback	6	1		
Jonathan Blum	23	1	7	12	Roman Josi	12	1	3	2					

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
Alexander Radulov	85	Colin Wilson		99%
Austin Watson	85	Cal O'Reilly		95%
Sergei Kostitsyn	80	Nick Spaling		0% - CUT
Martin Erat	75	Jonas Andersson		55%
Jean-Pierre Dumont	75	Jonathan Blum		50%
Cal O'Reilly	75	Roman Josi		0% - CUT
Matt Halischuk	75	Matt Halischuk		0% - CUT
Steve Sullivan	72			
Patric Hornqvist	70	Sleeper	Pts	%
Matthew Lombardi	70	Patric Hornqvist	65	30%
Colin Wilson	70	Jean-Pierre Dumont	70	20%
Nick Spaling	68	Jonas Andersson	45	15%
David Legwand	65	Matthew Lombardi	65	10%
Shea Weber	65	Roman Josi	40	10%
Jonas Andersson	65	Sergei Kostitsyn	55	10%
Jonathan Blum	65			

Angus Prime Cut: Patric Hornqvist Grade: Rump

How impressive was Hornqvist's 30-goal campaign in 2009-10? His previous career high at any level was 23 back in the SEL in 2006-07. He scored 10 power play goals and suffered through a few dry spells throughout the season as well. The Predators also shipped out Arnott for Lombardi. Some may see that as an upgrade, but for the near future I don't. Expect a slight step back from Hornqvist in 2009-10.

Dobber's lowdown on: Cal O'Reilly – Finally on a one-way contract, O'Reilly would have to really blow his training camp to not become a full timer. An assist machine with nothing left to prove in the AHL, Ryan's older brother has shown flashes of nice production at this level. He had a three point game in 2009-10 and he had a four-game points streak in March of 2009. Chances haven't been handed to him, yet he still finds a way. Expect just enough production to get into most games this season and then a big step forward in 2011-12.

Dobber's lowdown on: Sergei Kostitsyn - I saw an OHL game just over three years ago in Oshawa and was excited to watch Sam Gagner and Patrick Kane against John Tavares. I left the 6-5 game (went to a shootout) thinking that this kid Sergei Kostitsyn was the most impressive player there. Then he made the Montreal roster about two years sooner than expected and had 27 points in 52 games. So by age 21 he was well ahead of the curve and actually looking better than Andrei in terms of potential. But halfway through his sophomore year the big Russian mob/Montreal media thing hit and both he and his brother hit a wall. Kostitsyn played himself right down to Hamilton. SK went into camp with this attitude that the spot is his and he didn't have to play hard and that got him sent down. The new environment will help. The talent is there. But he has a lot of

baggage. Under Trotz, the way they switch up their scoring lines, most forwards will be in that 40-50 point range and SK will be one of them. But on a different team with a coach who gives the freedom he could be really special. If he leads Nashville in scoring with 55-60 points I will be very surprised - but I'll probably be the least surprised out of anyone on the planet outside of his mother. **UPDATE: Horrible camp so far. Update (Sept. 29): He has improved, even scoring a goal.**

- This team has always scored by committee, but occasionally they have seasons where a several players get hot and top 65 or 70 points. A handful of regulars have the ability to step up and do that very thing, but your mindset this summer and heading into your draft should be this – no Preds will top 60 points.
- Andersson's contract is one-way so if he gets sent down the team would still pay him \$675,000. This is a frugal team, so I don't anticipate them doing that. **UPDATE: Traded to Vancouver.**
- Legwand had just 10 points in his last 36 regular season games...yet explodes in the playoffs for seven in six. He's always been like that. His streaks are lengthy; he's not the five hot and five cold type. More like 30 hot and 30 cold.
- Erat missed eight games last season. When he was out of the lineup, Hornqvist and Sullivan each had seven points in eight games, Joel Ward and JP Dumont each had five in six. Small sample size, but the other wingers seem to use the added ice time more than Erat himself does. His points-per-game has declined for three consecutive seasons.
- Radulov will play the final year of his KHL contract. I think he'll be back next season, but nothing is assured and Ufa will be desperate to hang onto him. They'll back up the Brinks truck to his door – and if he leads the KHL in scoring again, the KHL as a league will help fill that Brinks truck.
- Hornqvist played a couple of playoff games with a broken hand. Great sign of resilience.
- Contract year: Sullivan, Ward, Spaling, Goc, Smithson, Andersson, Jamie Lundmark, Wade Belak, O'Reilly, Kostitsyn, Weber. A bad year for Sullivan would mean retirement. We're seeing a lot of 35- or 40-point players go without contracts this summer and last – and end up with training camp invites that turn into nothing. So Sullivan needs to show that he is more than that. Kostitsyn needs to prove he belongs or it's off to the KHL for him next year I'm sure.
- No Preds are entering their fourth NHL season.
- With Dan Ellis out of the picture, Rinne's value surges. He'll set career highs in wins. As for Dekanich, he'll do well too. The team plays a system and any adequate goalie will thrive under this system. It's what made the careers of Chris Mason and Dan Ellis – and with a Rinne injury it could do the same thing for Dekanich. **Dobber's confidence in Rinne being the No.1 goalie: 100% Update: Dekanich lost the backup job to Lindback, who had such a strong camp that he may eat into Rinne's win total if he continues with this play.**
- PIM: Don't look to Wade Belak anymore. His role is slipping and he'll see very few games. Last season the top PIM player was Belak with only 58 – but Tootoo missed a lot of time and he also played hurt, which affected the rough stuff. He'll get back above 100 this year. **Update: O'Brien will take on a bigger enforcing role on this team than he did in Vancouver.**
- Plus/minus: I don't expect Hornqvist to repeat his team-leading plus-18. He was insulated last year as Trotz tried to bring him along slowly. That won't happen now. Franson (plus-15) was also insulated. That number will drop. Look to players like Wilson and Spaling to surprise with their plus/minus. And Weber/Suter should improve their number.
- **Injury: Roman Josi broke his wrist – end of October.**
- **Injury: Kostitsyn is day to day with a broken toe. Mid-October**

NEW JERSEY

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Zach Parise	82	42	92	30	Travis Zajac	81	24	70	28	Ilya Kovalchuk	81	49	88	50
Patrik Elias	74	27	63	36	Jason Arnott	62	21	46	30	Jamie Langenbrunner	81	22	49	50
Dainius Zubrus	68	17	40	48	Brian Rolston	80	17	35	34	David Clarkson	79	19	48	172
Pierre-Luc Letourneau	57	1	8	135	Rod Pelley	68	3	12	54	Vladimir Zharkov	65	10	26	20
Mattias Tedenby	35	6	13	6	Jacob Josefson	46	8	25	12					
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Colin White	72	2	15	40	Andy Greene	74	8	43	26	Martin Brodeur		39	5	
Mark Fraser	72	3	12	68	Henrik Tallinder	73	3	17	38	Johan Hedberg		10	1	
Anton Volchenkov	67	2	16	64	Anssi Salmela	40	3	14	22					
Bryce Salvador	77	3	13	64	Alexander Urbom	78	1	15	106					
					Matthew Corrente	34	1	7	66					

Long-Term Potential	Prospect	%
Ilya Kovalchuk	100	Vladimir Zharkov
Zach Parise	98	Mattias Tedenby
Patrik Elias	85	Jacob Josefson
Mattias Tedenby	85	David McIntyre
Travis Zajac	78	Matthew Corrente
Alexander Vasyunov	78	Alexander Vasyunov
Vladimir Zharkov	75	
Jacob Josefson	75	
	Sleeper	Pts %
Jason Arnott	70	Dainius Zubrus
Jamie Langenbrunner	68	Mattias Tedenby
David McIntyre	68	Jacob Josefson
Brian Rolston	65	Jason Arnott
David Clarkson	65	David McIntyre
Dainius Zubrus	62	
Tyler Eckford	48	
Andrew Greene	48	
Anssi Salmela	48	

Angus Prime Cut: *Andy Greene Grade: Filet Mignon*

With Paul Martin out of the picture, Greene appears to be in the clear as New Jersey's best offensive defenseman. Greene doesn't have a huge shot but he sees the ice well and makes strong passes both transitionally and in the offensive zone. He'll approach 40 points playing on the first unit with a pretty talented group. He is the only traditional puck-moving defenseman on the Devils roster, so he won't see much competition for power play time.

Dobber's lowdown on: Vladimir Zharkov – It seems as though he's been a prospect forever, but he is still only 22. When he was drafted, we at DobberHockey felt he had the most raw offensive talent of anyone out of the first round. Would he come over? Would his defense be up to standard? He did come over, and proceeded to hone his game to the point where analysts considered him a defensive specialist. Talk about the pendulum swinging the other way! But he hasn't forgotten his offense, as his 21 points in 23 AHL games last year will attest. He was called up as a temporary injury replacement and played so well that New Jersey couldn't send him down again. These are the types of players to keep an eye on. Two injuries to the Devils' top six will need to happen to give Zharkov a shot there, so the likely scenario is 30 to 45 points for the next two or three years

before the numbers really pop. **Update: although he was cut, word out of New Jersey is that he may be back for the opener.**

- I decided to handle the Ilya Kovalchuk contract issue as if he is not yet a member of the Devils. As such, the projections are with him out of the lineup. However, the sleeper chart is assuming the possibility that he will join the team, which is why I have Zubrus as the top sleeper. UPDATE: Kovalchuk's contract has been approved.
- Zubrus had more than half of his points (14 of 27) in the last 20 games of the season. Kovalchuk's influence!
- Who did Kovalchuk impact negatively on the roster? Langenbrunner. Just six points in his final 21 regular season and playoff games. If Kovalchuk joins, you may see him as a 45-point player. If not, his 60-plus should be safe.
- Elias had 17 points in his last 27 games, including playoffs. That's 51-point pace.
- All five seasons now, Parise's production has dipped in the second half. The last two seasons it dipped by six and seven percent respectively. Very small, but something to keep in mind.
- If Salmela can get into all the games, he is the only other puck-moving option on the blue line. It's a big if, but it would mean 30 points.
- Contract year: Kovalchuk (just kidding – you won't see him in this spot until 2024). Arnott, Parise, Langenbrunner, Zharkov, Greene, Salmela, Fraser, Hedberg. I really like what Zharkov and Greene can potentially do, and to earn a bigger contract perhaps they'll surprise.
- Clarkson is entering his fourth NHL season. If healthy, he'll show indications that he is a future 50-point, 150 PIM player.
- PIM: Clarkson and that guy with the long name and a couple of hyphens (so long, that I have been leaving out the second part of his last name). Those two are head and shoulders above the rest of this team in PIM potential. Now that Fraser has a one-way contract he may let loose – his potential is 120 PIM or more.
- The 38-year-old Brodeur gave us another 40-win season and he'll be close to doing it again this year. I think 45 wins is unreasonable to assume again, but he'll hover around the 40 mark. The slow decline may begin as early as next year though. Hedberg will get the usual Maytag repairman starts. **Dobber's confidence that Brodeur will be the starter: 100%**
- Plus/minus: Zajac and Parise are each plus-54 the last two years, which leads the team. If Kovalchuk signs with the Devils legally, his plus/minus will easily be a career high (think plus-25 or more). The team jettisoned four of their five weakest plus/minus players from last year, so what's left is a group of guys who should all be above zero.
- As mentioned in last year's guide, no player has ever had an 85-point season under Jacques Lemaire in his coaching career. That still holds true, as Parise only had 82 last year. Granted, Kovalchuk had 85, but most of those were with another team. This is why I'm fully confident that Parise will get back to well above that threshold under new coach John McLean.
- **Injury: Salmela is still recovering from knee surgery and will not play before November. December is likely.**
- **Zubrus has been waived. The team needs the cap space after the Kovalchuk signing and they also want to sign camp tryout Adam Mair. Update: he cleared waivers but is still with the team as of October 8 (and Mair is still not signed). Consider him a risky pick until this is resolved.**

Dobber's Tip:

Lowest Cap Hit per point last year:

1. Matt Moulson, \$11,979
2. Maxim Afinogenov \$13,115
3. Chris Stewart \$13, 281
4. Frans Nielsen \$13, 816
5. Tomas Fleischmann \$14, 216
6. Patric Hornqvist \$14, 267
7. Kurtis Foster \$14, 286
8. James Neal \$14, 939
9. Mason Raymond \$16, 667

Interesting that eight of the nine above were in contract years. Only Nielsen was signed for 2010-11

LONG ISLAND

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Matt Moulson	81	27	52	26	John Tavares	81	36	74	52	Kyle Okposo	52	16	44	38
Michael Grabner	68	22	42	18	Frans Nielsen	75	13	42	18	Nino Niederreiter	78	12	27	44
Josh Bailey	74	15	39	24	Rob Schremp	64	15	45	18	Blake Comeau	75	21	45	48
P.A. Parenteau	76	16	38	60	Doug Weight	57	7	29	22	Trent Hunter	65	10	29	24
Jesse Joensuu	16	1	4	4	Zenon Konopka	75	3	6	225	Jon Sim	17	3	5	2

Defense	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Goals	W	SO							
Mark Streit	30	5	21	18	James Wisniewski	68	8	39	72	Rick DiPietro	24	3		
Bruno Gervais	70	4	21	36	Jack Hillen	72	6	40	34	Dwayne Roloson	18	1		
Milan Jurcina	76	3	17	60	Andrew MacDonald	75	3	18	40					
Mark Eaton	75	2	7	30	Radek Martinek	50	2	9	24					

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
John Tavares	115	Nino Niederreiter		80%
Kirill Kabanov	100	Calvin de Haan		50%
Kyle Okposo	82	Travis Hamonic		0% - CUT
Nino Niederreiter	82	Kirill Kabanov		0% - CUT
Michael Grabner	78	Jesse Joensuu		0% - CUT
Kirill Petrov	78	Kirill Petrov		0% - not in camp
Josh Bailey	75			
Jesse Joensuu	75			
Rob Schremp	72	Sleeper	Pts	%
Matt Moulson	67	Matt Moulson	65	25%
Mark Streit	65	Blake Comeau	55	25%
Blake Comeau	62	Josh Bailey	60	15%
P-A Parenteau	60	Nino Niederreiter	50	15%
Frans Nielsen	55	James Wisniewski	50	10%
Calvin de Haan	55	Michael Grabner	50	10%
James Wisniewski	50			
Travis Hamonic	48			

Angus Prime Cut: Pierre-Alexandre Parenteau Grade: Prime Rib

Parenteau has been one of the most productive AHL scorers over the past three seasons (204 points in his last 184 games), but he hasn't been given a real shot at the NHL level. After Matt Moulson rose out of relative obscurity to score 30 last season, the Islanders are hoping lightning strikes twice with Parenteau. Their depth chart up front is nothing to write home about – expect Parenteau to be given the best shot he has ever received at making an NHL team in a scoring role.

Dobber's lowdown on: Matt Moulson - I think Moulson is the real deal because not only did he score in each of his last three games, but he also averaged 20 minutes of ice time in his last seven contests. This indicates that although his production went down in the second half, the coach still made him a go-to guy. He'll produce in the 50-60 range with some upside if he can get back on the Tavares line.

Dobber's lowdown on: James Wisniewski – Great upside for a defenseman, but injuries have conspired (and will continue to conspire) to prevent him from hitting it. His consistency also plays a role – he had 10 points in his first 10 games last campaign

so don't be swayed by an early season hot streak. Now entering his prime, a healthy campaign would go a long way towards career numbers. The move to the Island opens the door.

- Given the fact that there is no St. Louis to play with, it is difficult to believe that Tavares can explode in Year 2 the way Steven Stamkos did. But his 18 points in the final 13 games indicates that a big step forward is on the way.
- Schremp had 20 points in 25 games before a knee injury ended his season. He was finding his groove, so it looks promising that he will become a successful NHLer.
- Comeau had 21 points in 21 games before breaking his foot with three games left. He is a candidate to play with Tavares and that would obviously mean that he could continue at close to that torrid pace. Watch his camp.
- Joensuu did not look out of place during his two cups of coffee. But as a power forward, the payday for fantasy owners is still a good three or four years away, even if he makes the team this year.
- The Isles may have found themselves another Moulson in Parenteau. A late-blooming (he's 27) career AHLer, Parenteau has had impressive NHL stints, producing well given minimal ice time (like Moulson). The team gave Moulson a chance, they'll do the same for Parenteau. He'll be a 40-point player injected into the lineup, giving the team three solid scoring lines.
- Petrov is highly skilled, but highly injury prone. Boom or bust for this year.
- Hunter's slow decline in production will be escalated by the influx of talented wingers the Islanders are adding each year.
- Contract year: Bailey, Okposo, Schremp, Comeau, Parenteau, Konopka, Trevor Gillies, Martinek, Jurcina, Gervais, Hillen, Roloson. Cap-wise, this team is in great shape, keeping contract lengths down and amounts low. This should be Roloson's last year, especially if DiPietro remains healthy. Look for a big year out of Hillen and as mentioned above, Schremp and Parenteau.
- PIM: The Isles have this year's possible PIM king in Konopka. If Joensuu makes the team, he's a dark horse for one per game.
- It all boils down to DiPietro's health. His knees are in a bad way. If he can play, then he will. The Isles did not go out and sign a third proven goalie like they did last year, which indicates to me that DP is healthier than he was last year. He has played just 13 NHL games in the last two years. **Dobber's confidence in DiPietro being the starter: 100%. Dobber's confidence in DiPietro being healthy for even 50 games: 10%**
- Plus/minus: Tavares and Okposo were brutal in this category last year, but that will improve with experience. And as their numbers improve, the rest of the team will fall into line. Look for a range of minus-5 to plus-5 with MacDonald, Streit and Bailey leading the way.
- Andy Hilbert has signed a two-way deal, but I do not think he will see time with the big club.
- Petrov was in development camp and is willing to play in the AHL for two years if necessary. He will make sure that he is free and clear of the KHL on good terms, and as of now his intent is to be in North America in the fall. Puck Daddy's Dmitri Chesnokov has reported that Petrov's KHL team expects him to play for them this year. Update – he will almost certainly not be in camp.
- **Injury: Mark Streit suffered a terrible shoulder injury. Early reports say one to six months. I knocked off two dozen games from his projection, but be aware that I could very well remove another 30 games by next update. Hillen will benefit the most from the added ice time. Update: looks like he's out for six months.**
- **Injury: Okposo requires shoulder surgery and he will be out until December. His absence increases the odds of Niederreiter making it and Comeau reaching his sleeper number (chart above).**
- **Kabanov was late for practice twice. He has been dogged by attitude problems in the past and this is not a good start to his NHL career.**
- **The Isles have signed Mike Mottau to a contract. He should play 75 games or more, so when Streit returns, the Isles will have to make a move. I can't fit him on my chart, but do not anticipate strong numbers (including plus/minus)**
- **Schremp will be out with a lower back strain until the end of October**

NEW YORK

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Alexander Frolov	79	29	64	34	Derek Stepan	76	17	51	12	Marian Gaborik	75	38	79	44
Vaclav Prospal	48	10	29	22	Artem Anisimov	82	15	36	44	Ruslan Fedotenko	75	15	36	48
Brandon Dubinsky	75	20	45	72	Chris Drury	70	14	35	34	Ryan Callahan	78	23	42	55
Sean Avery	70	15	39	148	Erik Christensen	66	10	28	38	Brandon Prust	65	4	13	143
Brian Boyle	74	5	9	78	Tim Kennedy	76	14	40	56	Derek Boogaard	55	1	5	132
Evgeni Grachev	6	2	2	0	Todd White	18	2	8	6	Mats Z.-Aasen	18	4	9	12
Defense										Goalies			W	SO
Michael Del Zotto	81	12	46	48	Marc Staal	82	10	29	70	Henrik Lundqvist	36		5	
Daniel Girardi	82	7	29	50	Michal Rozsival	79	5	26	68	Martin Biron	10		1	
Matt Gilroy	74	6	26	28	Steve Eminger	68	6	17	24					
Michael Sauer	74	0	7	78	Ryan McDonagh	18	0	3	10					

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
Marian Gaborik	95	Derek Stepan		85%
Chris Kreider	88	Mats Zuccarello Aasen		0% - CUT
Evgeny Grachev	85	Pavel Valenteenko		0% - CUT
Derek Stepan	80	Evgeny Grachev		0% - CUT
Tim Kennedy	78	Ryan McDonagh		0% - CUT
Artem Anisimov	75			
David Kveton	75			
Vaclav Prospal	72			
Sleeper		Pts	% %	
Ethan Werek	72	Ryan Callahan	60	20%
Ryan Callahan	68	Artem Anisimov	55	20%
Brandon Dubinsky	68	Derek Stepan	55	20%
Chris Drury	65	Brandon Dubinsky	65	15%
Michael Del Zotto	65	Tim Kennedy	50	10%
Brian Boyle	60	Erik Christensen	60	5%
Erik Christensen	60			
Sean Avery	58			

Angus Prime Cut: Mats Zuccarello-Aasen Grade: Prime Rib

The Rangers (and a handful of other NHL clubs) were extremely impressed with the play of this pint-sized Norwegian during the 2010 Olympics. I caught a Norway game in person and MZA looked phenomenal. He played with grit and was more than willing to battle in the corners and in front of the net against the likes of Zdeno Chara. New York struggled to score last year and Zuccarello-Aasen is a dynamic offensive talent. Is he the next Martin St. Louis? Or is he another Simon Gamache or Corey Locke? The Rangers pursued him hard and he will have a great shot to earn a roster spot out of camp.

Dobber's lowdown on: Erik Christensen – The enigmatic Christensen finished last campaign on the first line with Gaborik. He had 16 points in the last 21 games and averaged 17 minute a game down the stretch. But we've seen these streaks before out of Christensen (remember in Pittsburgh with Crosby?). But sometimes inconsistency is a symptom of youth and with Erik turning 27 close to Christmas time, he's entering his prime. He'll get some opportunities on the top line this season, so he could be great waiver-wire fodder at different points of the year. But thanks to the Frolov signing, those opportunities won't happen near as frequently. I don't think that signing hurts anyone more than Christensen. **Update: He will start the season on the top line, but unless he finds his consistency I doubt he'll hang onto it – I think it's Stepan's job eventually.**

- There is a chance that Redden gets shipped to the minors to get the contract off the books. Last year they kept him, trying to save face and hoping for the best. There is no saving face anymore. Something happened to turn Redden from a top defenseman to a Jonathan Cheechoo-type failure. **UPDATE: Redden has indeed been shipped to the minors**
- Prospal's legendary on season/off season trend is still holding. Now 35, his "on" season is no more than 60 points whereas his "off" year could be as low as 35. The year ahead is scheduled to be "off", so I don't recommend drafting him at all. He had 11 points in his last 20 games in 2009-10 – almost as if he was warming up for his big nosedive.
- Hot starters last year – Gaborik had 49 points in 35 games to start, 37 in 41 to finish. Del Zotto had 12 in his first 12, 25 in his next 68. I think there's something to this and after a hot start this year both should be sold at a high price in late November.
- Anisimov had seven points in the final 10 games as his offensive responsibilities increased. He'll eventually get the second-line job this year.
- Contract year: Callahan, Prospal, Dubinsky, Donald Brashear, Anisimov, Boyle, Gilroy, Eminger. I like Callahan and Dubinsky here for getting the big paycheck. Also see below on those two.
- Both Callahan and Dubinsky are entering their fourth NHL campaigns. It wouldn't surprise me if one of the two had a one-in-a-million season where all the stars align.
- PIM: Avery's PIM took a big drop last season and they'll go down a little further. Coach Tortorella is teaching him how to be an agitator without crossing the line. So his points will improve, but his PIM will drop a little more. They have Prust and Boogaard now for the rough stuff.
- With Biron in the fold, Lundqvist has a solid backup who can eat up some games for him. That won't hurt Lundy's numbers at all, and it will probably help. **Dobber's confidence of Lundqvist being the starter: 100%**
- Plus/minus: After 24 games, Del Zotto was at zero. After 26 games he was a minus-6. That was the turning point, and he went on to finish at minus-20. He's a little wet behind the ears, and that stuff will fix itself with time and experience. Expect him closer to zero this campaign. Staal is turning into a multi-category stud. Within four years I predict he'll have a season in which he gets 40-plus points, a plus-25 rating and 70-plus PIM. Christensen was a plus-14 after he became a Ranger and is one to watch in this category.
- If M.Z.A., who is on a two-way (but bonus-laden) contract, impresses in camp the team would probably make a move to create room for him on the roster (either a trade, or the waiving and subsequent demotion of an NHLer). The Tim Kennedy signing hurts his odds, however. He may follow a similar path as Ville Leino – some cups of coffee and then full-time duty next year.
- There is a good chance that the Rangers will bury Redden and his contract in the minors. In fact, bank on it.
- **Injury: Drury broke his finger and will be out until mid-October. This should extend Stepan's stay.**
- **Stepan is having a huge camp and has been tried frequently on the top line between Gaborik and Frolov. While I don't think that plum job will stick this year, I do think he'll make the team. And he'll get thrown on that top line every once in awhile – enough to make him a decent dark horse selection.**
- **Dubinsky has been moved to left wing to accommodate Stepan.**
- **Injury: Prospal's knee is bothering him and he will miss the start of the season. The knee problem stems from last campaign, so it is obviously a lingering issue. If he plays 60 games and you own him, count yourself lucky because I don't trust that he will do that. Update Oct. 5: rumor is that he could be out for the season.**
- **Both Kennedy and White were waived (and they cleared waivers) on Oct. 5. They may still remain with the club (or they may be claimed). But I think White could very well get sent down eventually.**

OTTAWA

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Peter Regin 	78	18	43	32	Jason Spezza 	77	30	81	52	Alexei Kovalev 	76	25	51	60
Milan Michalek 	70	25	46	40	Mike Fisher 	78	19	48	60	Daniel Alfredsson 	74	22	68	22
Nick Foligno 	75	16	36	60	Chris Kelly	81	14	32	38	Chris Neil	66	6	13	160
Jarkko Ruutu	80	9	21	124	Jesse Winchester	65	4	18	30	Roman Wick	31	2	7	2
Zack Smith	40	3	10	62						Ryan Shannon	22	4	7	6
										Bobby Butler	38	7	15	6

Defense	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Goalsies	W	SO							
Erik Karlsson 	79	9	52	32	Sergei Gonchar 	68	12	46	54	Brian Elliott	21	3		
Filip Kuba 	52	3	25	24	Chris Campoli 	72	6	25	35	Pascal Leclaire	22	4		
Chris Phillips	82	7	24	62	Matt Carkner	76	1	13	165					
Brian Lee	60	2	10	18	Patrick Wiercioch	12	0	1	2					

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
Jason Spezza	105	Roman Wick		0% - CUT
Daniel Alfredsson	88	Bobby Butler		0% - CUT
Alex Kovalev	75	Brian Lee		70%
Milan Michalek	75	Patrick Wiercioch		0% - CUT
Kaspars Daugavins	72	Kaspars Daugavins		0% - CUT
Bobby Butler	72	Jared Cowen		0% - CUT
Mike Fisher	70			
Peter Regin	70			
Ilja Zubov	70	Sleeper	Pts	%
Sergei Gonchar	68	Mike Fisher	60	30%
Erik Karlsson	68	Peter Regin	60	20%
Roman Wick	68	Erik Karlsson	60	15%
Nick Foligno	65	Roman Wick	45	10%
Ryan Shannon	62			
Jesse Winchester	55			
Patrick Wiercioch	55			
David Rundblad	55			

Angus Prime Cut: Peter Regin Grade: Filet Mignon

I am not willing to make this official just yet, but Regin may very well by my Prime Cut sleeper pick (above all others) for the 2010-11 season. He will start the season on the top unit with Spezza and Alfredsson. He skates hard, reads the play well, and is deadly accurate with his shot. His confidence will be high after finishing last season playing so well (he was arguably Ottawa's best forward down the stretch and in first round of the playoffs).

The lowdown on: Milan Michalek – Nearly seven years ago he tore a ligament in his right knee that caused him to miss nearly two seasons. He was a risky prospect before his NHL career even got rolling. In April he tore it in his left knee – always cause for caution. He should be fine for training camp (at last word, but will update if there is a change). Aside from the injury concern, if you delve into his stats in his first year as a Senator, the goals were there but the points were not. If he can go out and score 25 goals, but few assists then the concern is linemates. If they don't convert, he doesn't get the A. He didn't click with Spezza and every few games he had Jonathan Cheechoo on his line (who couldn't hit the broad side of a barn). If the lines break down as above it will help some, but he can't be the best goal scorer on his line or it will be more Cy Young seasons (22-12 last year).

- Karlsson is the real deal and you can trust the numbers I put out for him. He was Ottawa's best player in the postseason and the last time he saw under 20 minutes was 14 games ago when he played 19:12. In those 13 games he had 16 points. The addition of Gonchar doesn't hurt, it helps. They'll make an awesome left/right PP combo.
- Spezza should hurt his knee more often (hope I didn't jinx him). He had 19 points in 30 games before the injury, and 38 points in 30 games after.
- Fisher had 39 points in the first 49 games before his numbers corrected themselves. It wasn't the first time he went on a surge that lasted 40-plus games. We've seen enough now to safely assume that an 80-game surge like that is not forthcoming.
- I'm afraid to call Kovalev "washed up". I did that once before when, as a 34-year-old he managed just 47 points and was a minus-19. He followed that up with 84 points and plus-18. Now here he is again, 37, and coming off a 49-point campaign (minus-8). I'm tempering expectations a lot, but not 100 percent ready to write him off. I will say his ceiling is much lower (see the upside chart) than what it was a year ago.
- Contract year: Kovalev, Ruutu, Shannon, Smith, Phillips, Leclaire, Elliott. I think the two goaltenders will have the battle of their lives this year. Elliott doesn't want to be pigeonholed as a permanent backup and will want No.1 money next contract. But Leclaire knows that if he loses the No.1 job he absolutely won't get even half the money that he makes now. Just look at Marty Turco and Nikolai Khabibulin. NHL teams will only pay proven winners the big money these days.
- Foligno is entering his fourth NHL season.
- "The Band-Aid Boy Leclaire will absolutely get hurt this season; the question is will it be for 16 games or 60? I predict closer to 35." I wrote that last year. Leclaire ended up missing 25 games due to injury and he lost the No.1 job to Elliott. However, he won it back come playoff time. So we're back to square one – he'll miss anywhere from 16 to 60 games due to injury and probably closer to 35. Elliott will have lots of chances to steal the No.1 job again. **Dobber's confidence that Leclaire will be the starter: 70%**
- PIM: The usual suspects here – Carkner, Ruutu, Neil. Although I think Carkner's PIM will roll back now that he has a) not as much to prove and b) less ice time thanks to the arrival of Gonchar and the emergence of Karlsson.
- Plus/minus: Regin led the team last year with plus-10 and I only see reasons for improvement on that number. Phillips has always been reliable in this cat, but then he's always been paired up with Anton Volchenkov so there may be a decline. If Michalek can find the right linemates, his horrible minus-12 will improve – but I wouldn't count on that.
- **Injury: Kuba suffered a broken leg on the first day of camp. Out 4-6 weeks and opens the door for Lee.**

Dobber's Tip:

If you have a couple of Band-Aid Boys already on your team, you should not draft another one. Minimize your risk and limit the injury-prone players that you own. For a list of Dobber's Band-Aid Boys, go to DobberHockey.com and click "Other Features". There you will find a link to the list.

PHILADELPHIA

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Nikolai Zherdev	82	27	70	48	Mike Richards	80	33	79	72	Jeff Carter	78	43	80	58
Scott Hartnell	81	29	59	144	Danny Briere	75	29	61	64	Ville Leino	78	19	53	34
James van Riemsdyk	77	21	49	36	Claude Giroux	81	21	58	40	Daniel Carcillo	75	13	24	202
Jody Shelley	62	1	7	122	Blair Betts	70	6	19	16	Andreas Nodl	20	2	5	6
Darroll Powe	62	8	17	68						Ian Laperriere	47	2	9	70
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Chris Pronger	76	9	47	78	Kimmo Timonen	80	6	41	46	Michael Leighton	19	2		
Matt Carle	76	7	37	26	Braydon Coburn	80	8	29	78	Brian Boucher	14	2		
Andrej Meszaros	80	7	26	52	Sean O'Donnell	79	1	10	66	Sergei Bobrovsky	17	2		
Matt Walker	65	1	10	86	Oskars Bartulis	27	1	6	20					

Long-Term Potential		Prospect	%
Jeff Carter	92	Sergei Bobrovsky	100%
Claude Giroux	90	Andreas Nodl	20%
Daniel Briere	90	Jonas Backlund	0% - CUT
Mike Richards	88	Stefan Legein	0% - CUT
James van Riemsdyk	85	Patrick Maroon	0% - CUT
Nikolai Zherdev	85	Erik Gustafsson	0% - CUT
Ville Leino	72		
Patrick Maroon	72		
Scott Hartnell		Sleeper	Pts %
Andreas Nodl	68	Claude Giroux	70 30%
Chris Pronger	65	Ville Leino	70 30%
Matthew Carle	58	Daniel Briere	75 25%
Stefan Legein	58		
Erik Gustafsson	58		
Braydon Coburn	55		
Daniel Carcillo	55		
Kimmo Timonen	52		

Angus Prime Cut: Nikolai Zherdev Grade: Prime Rib

It is unclear where this self-proclaimed two-way winger (no, really – Zherdev said that a year in Russia has worked wonders for his defensive game) will fit in on Philadelphia's depth chart. As everyone knows, Zherdev has immense offensive abilities. On a team with fantastic depth up the middle, he will always have talent to play with. Look for a 60-plus point season from the enigmatic Russian.

Dobber's lowdown on: Ville Leino – After an impressive North American debut in 2008-09, Leino couldn't get going last fall in Detroit. He was given substantial ice time and solid linemates before playing his way down the order and eventually into the press box. He couldn't crack the Flyers either and his fantasy value was sub-zero by the end of March. However, his 21 points in 17 games suddenly had fantasy owners (including myself) firing off emails in an effort to acquire him. He tied an NHL record for most playoff points by a rookie. People point to John Druce and say that Leino could be just the latest version of him, but if that's the worst you'll get then that will be just fine. You see Druce followed up his surprise postseason with 58 points the following year. He didn't disappear until after that. So while I admit that Leino could also fade away, he should give you at least 45 points first. And if he's not the next Druce, then all the better. As a side-note, Leino underwent hip surgery in June and will be off crutches by mid-August. He'll be fine for training camp.

- This is probably for the better in the long run, but van Riemsdyk's production progress will be slow due to minimal ice time and almost no power-play time. The team is just too deep. But he'll be a star, we've already seen the signs – he had 18 points in his first 16 NHL games before the lack of ice time finally caught up to him and reined him in.
- Briere led the NHL in playoff points with 30. If he or Leino tops my projection by 50 percent, then the other will as well. They're a package deal, so a breakout from one will mean a breakout from the other.
- We'll get to learn a lot about Gustafsson this year. He's the two-time CCHA Best Offensive Defenseman whom the Flyers signed in March. He joined the AHL Phantoms and proceeded to notch seven points in five games. Fantasy owners have to pay attention to that. However, at best he's No.9 on the depth chart and as such his NHL hopes are a couple of years away. But a kick-ass AHL campaign could force the team to clear some room for him in 2011-12. Wouldn't be the first time (right, Leino?).
- For the third straight season, Richards' production decreased in the second half. He had 35 in the first half, 27 in the second. You can probably attribute three of those eight points difference to Carter being out for eight games. But you can't blame the Olympics, as he returned from the Games and posted four points in his first game back. No, he genuinely slows down around mid-January. Look for a 44/35 split this year first half/second half.
- Zherdev is also a notorious fast starter. Do not be dazzled by him being a Top 10 scorer at the 30-game mark. If it happens, he will still slow.
- Carcillo is entering his fourth NHL season. He is a potential 40/200 player (points/PIM) and if we ever see that, it should be this year.
- Contract year: Carter, Zherdev, Carcillo, Giroux, Leino, Powe, Betts, Riley Cote, O'Donnell, Boucher. While Leino and Giroux also have a lot to gain by posting big numbers, I think we can all agree that the man who needs it most is Zherdev. If he learned what he says he learned over in Russia, than he'll get the ice time and linemates needed to succeed and earn that big contract that he felt he deserved a year ago.
- PIM: Carcillo, Laperriere, Shelley and Hartnell are all good ones to turn to for PIM. Shelley's presence will help Richards and Hartnell tone it down a little. Walker's arrival could result in a small decline for Pronger.
- Leighton is my top candidate to be this year's Craig Anderson. If healthy, he could get 40 wins. This team is solid from top forward to bottom defenseman, plus they have a couple of people in the minors who can sub in when needed. Leighton was wise to sign with them on the cheap, as now he will have two years of phenomenal numbers with which to bargain with next contract. However, if the Flyers go out and sign Marty Turco, as has been rumored here and there, than Leighton would go from stud to dud. **Dobber's confidence that Leighton will be the starter: 100% Update: Leighton suffered a back strain in the offseason and aggravated in preseason action. He could miss the first month. Stay tuned. If the Flyers end up signing a goalie to replace him, he may never win this plum job back. High risk.**
- Plus/minus: Carle thrived thanks to pairing with Pronger. Assuming that holds, he will thrive again. Meszaros should get back to being a plus/minus stud now that he's well out of any blueline spotlight and has a great team around him. Leino was a plus-2 for the Flyers in the regular season and a plus-10 in the playoffs. If the magic with Briere is back, look for him to be a Top 4 guy on the team in this category.
- Injury update: Pronger is still recovering from knee surgery and will probably miss training camp. He hopes to be ready for the first game, but I rolled him back a few games to be safe.
- Injury: Laperriere is suffering from severe post-concussion symptoms. He'll be out for awhile. As a result, camp tryout Bill Guerin could very well earn a contract. I penciled him into the roster for now, but currently wouldn't bet on it just yet. Update: Flyers released Guerin.**
- Michael Leighton is out for a month with a back injury. The team will ride Boucher in the meantime. UPDATE: Not only did Bobrovsky start the first game, but he also played very well. Excellent dark horse. Leighton underwent surgery on a bulging disk in his back and will be sidelined until the end of November.**

Dobber's Tip:

Regarding the Draft List, I thought - why put in players at the bottom who I predict will get 17 or 18 points? I think in a draft at that point you would be better served picking a guy who will either get zero points (as I predict) or have an outside shot of really flourishing. Or else I put in PIM assets. Either way, they make the list more valuable to you than 17-point players

PHOENIX

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Ray Whitney	79	19	54	30	Wojtek Wolski	79	21	63	28	Shane Doan	82	29	61	58
Scottie Upshall	72	24	52	94	Martin Hanzal	76	15	42	82	Lee Stempniak	78	24	51	38
Petr Prucha	60	10	26	10	Eric Belanger	77	14	43	30	Radim Vrbata	78	24	44	26
Taylor Pyatt	73	11	24	48	Vernon Fiddler	75	9	26	32	Lauri Korpikoski	73	8	17	20
Paul Bissonette	38	2	7	102	Kyle Turris	79	7	28	18	Viktor Tikhonov	27	2	10	10
Andrew Ebbett	11	1	5	2						Brett MacLean	18	4	7	2
										Mikkel Boedker	6	1	2	0
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Ed Jovanovski	67	11	33	70	Keith Yandle	77	11	49	54	Ilya Bryzgalov	39		7	
Sami Lepisto	74	3	22	64	Oliver Ekman-Larsson	79	9	38	58	Jason LaBarbera	9		1	
Derek Morris	80	6	29	58	Adrian Aucoin	77	7	19	48					
Maxim Goncharov	47	3	18	22	Dave Schlemko	55	3	15	22					

Long-Term Potential		Prospect	% %	
Kyle Turris	92	Oliver Ekman-Larsson	95%	
Brett MacLean	82	Maxim Goncharov	0% - CUT	
Shane Doan	78	Kyle Turris	75%	
Wojtek Wolski	78	Viktor Tikhonov	0% - CUT	
Mikkel Boedker	78	Brett MacLean	0% - CUT	
Ray Whitney	75	Mikkel Boedker	0% - CUT	
Martin Hanzal	75			
Viktor Tikhonov	70			
Sleeper		Pts	%	
Lee Stempniak	68	Radim Vrbata	60	25%
Radim Vrbata	68	Kyle Turris	55	15%
Andrew Ebbett	68	Martin Hanzal	60	25%
Scottie Upshall	65	Wojtek Wolski	75	15%
Oliver Ekman-Larsson	62	Andrew Ebbett	55	5%
Ed Jovanovski	60			
Keith Yandle	60			
Maxim Goncharov	55			
Brandon Gormley	55			

Angus Prime Cut: Keith Yandle Grade: Filet Mignon

Yandle is one of my favorite young players to own in all fantasy hockey formats. He is a dynamic offensive threat and he understands the game defensively, too. Prospect Oliver Ekman-Larsson will one day compete with him for power play time, but that won't happen for a little while. Expect Yandle to take another big step forward with a 50-point season in 2010-11, even with the losses that Phoenix suffered up front. His long-term outlook is just as good with the likes of Turris, MacLean, and Boedker continuing to develop.

The lowdown on: Andrew Ebbett – the 'Yotes will try Wolski and center to start and they'll do everything they can to help him succeed there. But the bottom line is, he is more effective as a winger and Coach Tippett will eventually realize this. That's where Ebbett will get his chance. With the right linemates he is an effective setup man with decent vision. He had 28 points in 39 games over a three-month span with Anaheim in 2009, so he's hinted at production. That being said, his contract is a two-way deal and he absolutely should not be drafted. He should only be acquired off the waiver wire, but if you see something from him early, act quickly.

- In the last eight seasons, Jovanovski has played 80 games or more three times and 67 games or fewer five times. I'm afraid it will either be one or the other – a long-term injury, or full health. No 75-game compromise.

- Vrbata played 69 percent of his shifts with Prucha, yet he had 43 points to Prucha's 22. He's far and away the more talented player, so just imagine if Prucha had skill. Instead of flubbing passes, they would go in. Instead of losing the puck with that extra move, a pass would be made to Vrbata's stick. Just because the two are Czech does not mean automatic linemates. If Vrbata can get one of Upshall or Whitney on his line, then watch the numbers jump past 50.
- One of MacLean or Tikhonov will take Prucha out of the lineup. Maybe not to start, but it will happen this year.
- The Stempniak signing makes it almost certain that Prucha will be a press box regular. It also hurts Vrbata's ice time.
- Aucoin had just 19 points in his last 69 regular season and playoff games. His role will start to slide and his points will follow as he winds down his career.
- Hanzal had the most hits on the team last season and was second behind Fiddler in face-offs taken and face-offs won. He has been everything that a third-line center should be. Now entering his fourth year and very little in way of true centermen ahead of him, he could surprise. He just needs a role on a scoring line.
- PIM: Bissonette will have trouble staying in the lineup, but he'll get close to three PIM per game that he plays. Upshall is developing into a power forward and so is Hanzal. At 6-5, 218 he more than doubled his previous PIM high and topped 100 last season.
- Contract year: Phoenix is keeping the books nice and loose as they are still trying to sell the team. As such, only seven regulars are signed beyond next year and only two are signed beyond that. Doan, Wolski, Whitney, Pyatt, Bissonette, Morris, Aucoin are signed through 2011-12. Vrbata and Upshall are probably the best players playing for a contract.
- Bryzgalov was a Top 5 fantasy goaltender last year. He'll remain a Top 8 option, though may take a tiny drop in some stat categories. Expect the same ratio of starts as last year between he and LaBarbera. **Dobber's confidence that Bryzgalov will be the starter: 100%**
- Plus/minus: Don't trust Wolski's number. He was plus-10, minus-13 and plus-21 the last three seasons, which is all over the map. Do not let plus/minus influence your drafting of him. I hesitate to call Yandle the next Duncan Keith, but his plus-16 last year combined with his steady trajectory upwards has him on the same fantasy path that Keith was on. All in all, this is a great team for the plus/minus statistic as most will be positive.
- The Eric Belanger signing kills any shot that Ebbett has of making this team and Kyle Turris has gone from a lock to very questionable. If he makes the team this year it will be because he earned it. Big time. There is also an increased chance that Wolski will be moved back to the wing. If that happens, then Hanzal could be the first-line center. Something to watch out for.

Dobber's Tip:

Every year this guide and the draft list are updated once or twice in August, once or twice in early September and then pretty much every second or third day when training camp begins – right into October! Be sure to check your downloads prior to heading to your draft

PITTSBURGH

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Chris Kunitz	72	11	47	50	Sidney Crosby	80	47	113	74	Eric Tangradi	67	16	34	32
Evgeni Malkin	79	46	107	88	Jordan Staal	70	22	51	48	Max Talbot	70	12	25	58
Arron Asham	75	12	29	130	Mike Comrie	68	15	41	44	Matt Cooke	77	14	30	104
Pascal Dupuis	75	10	21	18	Marc Letestu	77	6	18	26	Tyler Kennedy	66	15	28	34
Mike Rupp	55	6	12	86	Craig Adams	78	1	10	60	Eric Godard	25	0	0	58
Brett Sterling	11	4	6	8	Dustin Jeffrey	20	4	8	4					
Defense	GP	G	Pts	PIM		GP	G	Pts	PIM	Goalies	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Paul Martin	74	6	50	34	Alex Goligoski	75	12	49	28	Marc-Andre Fleury	38	3		
Kris Letang	75	11	41	52	Zbynek Michalek	77	6	32	32	Brent Johnson	7	0		
Brooks Orpik	75	3	25	70	Ben Lovejoy	74	3	18	82	John Curry	3	0		
Deryk Engelland	36	0	3	65										

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
Sidney Crosby		160	Eric Tangradi	85%
Evgeni Malkin		160	Dustin Jeffrey	0% - CUT
Beau Bennett		85	Brett Sterling	0% - CUT
Jordan Staal		80	Keven Veilleux	0% - CUT
Eric Tangradi		80	Casey Pierro-Zabot	0% - INJURED
Nick Petersen		75		
Dustin Jeffrey		72		
Brett Sterling		72		
Alex Goligoski		Sleeper	Pts	%
Casey Pierro-Zabot	70	Jordan Staal	65	25%
Kristopher Letang	68	Paul Martin	60	20%
Keven Veilleux	68	Dustin Jeffrey	55	1%
Mike Comrie	68	Brett Sterling	65	1%
Chris Kunitz	65	Chris Kunitz	60	10%
Paul Martin	65			
Maxime Talbot	58			
Tyler Kennedy	58			

Angus Prime Cut: Jordan Staal Grade: Porterhouse

Pittsburgh appears to be committed to bumping Staal up to the second line left wing spot. His fantasy value will increase dramatically, as Malkin is a considerable upgrade on either Kennedy or Cooke. Staal has a great wrist shot and he protects the puck really well; he has just been placed in a role that hasn't allowed him to consistently produce at the offensive end of the rink. That will change if he sees regular top six minutes with one of the league's most dangerous talents in 2010-11.

The lowdown on: Battle for No.2 PP QB – The battle will be who gets to play with Martin on the power play, Letang or Goligoski. The answer is Goligoski to start. He has show an improved points-per-game average over his two seasons and he is more one dimensional than Letang is. That means that if they can't use him to run a power play, what can they use him for? No, he'll get first dibs and if he starts slowly than Letang will replace him the rest of the way. Also don't discount Option #3: neither get the job and Malkin will play back there. That scenario absolutely will happen here and there throughout the season.

The lowdown on: Paul Martin – His best season in the last four years is 33 points and the Forecaster has him at 37 for 2010-11. So why am I so confident in his 50 this year? I'm looking at the trends. He had 25 points in the final 39 games of 2008-09 and was supposed to break out last year. But he broke his arm – badly. When he returned he posted nine points in 13 games to end

the season. Were it not for that broken arm I have full confidence that he would have set career highs in that 41- to 46-point range. At 29 it's the prime of his career and now he's on Pittsburgh. It wouldn't shock me to see that I'm the only analyst to see him get 50 this year, but that's more of a case of courage than lack of smarts. The other guys are just afraid to put it on the line. Only another injury will hold him back to 37, otherwise he's money for 45-plus. Mark it.

- Do not underrate Malkin. There is an explanation for his poor season. He played injured for most of the season. He missed time with shoulder and foot injuries and in each case he came back far too quickly. Now healthy, he could very well do what he did in 2009 playoffs – post 1.5 points per game. Yes, I would take him over Henrik Sedin in a heartbeat.
- An interesting battle on the wing as always. There is talk of Malkin moving to the wing to play with Staal and that would be the smart way to do things. Malkin can't win a draw to save his life. Meanwhile, there will be at least one prospect making this team on the wing, possibly two. I have Jeffrey and Tangradi there. The latter is highly-touted and will get a top six job. However, he has shown a little fragility in his young career. Jeffrey is an over-achiever, which often bodes well in fantasy circles. If Tangradi gets hurt, he'll swoop in and take the top six job. If not, sit on him for a year because he could get the job next year.
- Brett Sterling is on a two-way deal and the GM has said that he will get a shot on a big line. When signed for a similar reason a year ago, Chris Connor faltered and didn't make the team. However, the GM has gone on record saying that Sterling has a better skill set for the job. He's a long shot, but if he makes this team it won't be to kill penalties.
- Both Kennedy and Dupuis are falling out of favor with the coach in terms of scoring line potential. They have been used there by default, but their time is passing. New blood is on the way. Not even an impressive postseason from Dupuis will save his decline.
- Kennedy, incidentally, is in his fourth year. But I stand by the above statement. He's also a Band-Aid Boy, which has stunted any offensive development. It's also Letang's fourth NHL season.
- Contract year: Dupuis, Talbot, Rupp, Godard, Kennedy, Adams. I don't see any of these guys stepping up for the big bucks. Not production-wise, anyway.
- PIM: Malkin's PIM shot up last year because he was playing hurt. So that led to more giveaways and occasionally falling a step behind. That leads to stick work – a little hook here and there to help him get back into the play. Now healthy, I expect the PIM number to fall back to his usual range. Rupp and Cooke are the ones to watch here. Also Engelland, if he gets into enough games, will give you a huge boost in this category.
- Last year Fleury tied a career high for games played, but he still got hurt. He broke his finger in January. Every year he gets hurt, you can set your watch to it. That makes Johnson, Curry and even Brad Thiessen a dark horse. Any lengthy injury will give one of those three a whole lot of W's. Johnson can hold the fort for three or four consecutive games, but he can't be a starter for weeks on end. That's where Curry or Thiessen will get their shot. **Dobber's confidence that Fleury will be the starter: 100%**
- Plus/minus: The Pens will be mostly positive in this category. Again you can blame Malkin's minus-6 on his injuries. Staal and Crosby could very well top plus-30 this year with the improved defense corps.
- Injury: Staal's injury is not healing as quickly as hoped, although the foot is structurally fine so when it does heal it will be back to normal. However, expect him to miss much of training camp. UPDATE: The foot has an infection which they treated. Recovery time will wipe out most of his October (10-12 games).
- **Sterling was having such a strong camp that he was rewarded with a preseason game on Crosby's line. He scored a goal and added an assist. Needless to say, he's earned another look there. Last year, poolies were excited about the acquisition of Chris Bourque – and he did nothing. So tone down your expectations and consider Sterling – a former favorite of mine from a couple of years ago – a dark horse with potential only. UPDATE: experiment is over, as he was cut Sept. 29. I expect him to get a recall, but nothing spectacular. Maybe just a handful of games, as needed.**

SAN JOSE

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Patrick Marleau	79	37	76	28	Joe Thornton	81	28	87	56	Dany Heatley	82	42	81	68
Ryane Clowe	75	21	56	118	Joe Pavelski	79	30	64	42	Devin Setoguchi	73	24	49	24
Jamie McGinn	75	10	20	46	Logan Couture	68	14	32	12	Torrey Mitchell	60	5	16	38
Steven Zalewski	37	2	7	6	Scott Nichol	75	5	18	70	Jamal Mayers	74	8	14	96
Frazer McLaren	30	0	3	60	Tommy Wingels	66	6	21	38	Benn Ferriero	40	3	10	18
										Cam MacIntyre	44	6	13	32
Defense										Goalies	W	SO		
Dan Boyle	77	14	57	52	Marc-Edouard Vlasic	81	8	39	48	Antero Niittymaki	23	2		
Jason Demers	77	6	35	44	Douglas Murray	77	3	22	72	Antti Niemi	25	3		
Kent Huskins	78	3	19	50	Derek Joslin	58	2	11	22	Alex Stalock	2	0		
Niclas Wallin	70	1	7	42	Mike Moore	47	0	8	70	Thomas Greiss	0	0		

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
Joe Thornton	115	Logan Couture		99%
Dany Heatley	110	Jason Demers		95%
Patrick Marleau	88	Jamie McGinn		85%
Logan Couture	80	Derek Joslin		0% - injured
Joe Pavelski	78	Benn Ferriero		0% - CUT
Devin Setoguchi	78	Steven Zalewski		0% - CUT
Charlie Coyle	70	Cam MacIntyre		0% - CUT
Ryane Clowe	70			
Steven Zalewski	68	Sleeper	Pts	%
Dan Boyle	68	Logan Couture	60	30%
Jamie McGinn	68	Devin Setoguchi	70	15%
Tommy Wingels	68	Ryane Clowe	70	15%
Cam MacIntyre	65	Cam MacIntyre	45	5%
Benn Ferriero	62			
Marc-Edouard Vlasic	55			
Jason Demers	52			
Torrey Mitchell	50			

Angus Prime Cut: Jamie McGinn. Grade: Porterhouse

San Jose will rely heavily on a trio of young forwards to supply scoring depth this coming season – with Couture, and Mitchell. McGinn is only an injury away from moving up into the top six and playing with either Thornton or Pavelski. He is a solid player at both ends of the ice and he has been a consistent offensive producer both in the OHL and the AHL. He'll never be more than a complimentary player in the NHL, but San Jose needs a few of those. He probably won't surpass 15 goals or 40 points on the third line, but if he finds a way to slide up a line or two, his numbers would increase.

Dobber's lowdown on: Logan Couture – The Sharks don't have a deep pool of potential top six players like most teams. That's always been the case. But the few that they do have they always get the most of them. Pavelski, Setoguchi and Clowe were each brought in successfully and even Steve Bernier had some success as a Shark. Couture will be their next triumph. If you want to know how he'll do this season and for the next few campaigns, simply look at Pavelski's career. The point totals will start in the same area and build at the same pace year over year. Couture is, however, a little fragile so he does carry a small amount of risk.

- If the Sharks don't add a couple of free agents later in the summer, then perhaps they see something special in MacIntyre, whom they signed in April. He's a big power forward who was never drafted, but has developed into a real talent. Had he not been injured last season he may turned into the most coveted free agent college prospect in America. Worth watching in camp and if he shows promise I'll be adding his projection to the above chart.

- Heatley had just 29 points in his last 37 regular season and playoff games. He made a huge splash early when he formed one-third of a line with Thornton and Marleau. The line quickly became legendary and remained together for Team Canada in the Olympics. In the end, he finished with a disappointing 82 points in 82 games, but I'm not so sure you should be looking for more than that from him.
- As great as the big line was to start, Thornton is not clicking with Heatley the way Jason Spezza did. Forty-four games in, when Thornton had 58 points, Heatley sat with just 47. That's when the line was clicking on all cylinders, and yet the gap was so large between the two. Spezza and Heatley were never that far apart. So "he plays with Thornton" is not as prestigious a statement as you might believe. I wouldn't be shocked to see him moved off that line. Naturally, that would pad Pavelski's point total by five or 10.
- For the second straight season, most of the bigger guns on San Jose declined in the second half. For the second straight season, Pavelski was not one of them – he increased in the second half by nearly 10 percent. It's like the opposition shuts down Big Joe by January and then Little Joe picks up the slack.
- I think I'll make this an annual bullet in the San Jose section, and just change one or two words/names in the following: "Make it five straight years now. Bernier, Pavelski, Setoguchi, McGinn and Couture all played a partial rookie season for the Sharks with fairly good results. The former four followed it up with varying degrees of success in their first full campaign. Now it will be Couture's turn to stick for a full year. So who will be this year's "partial year" player? My pick - MacIntyre."
- Contract year: Thornton, McGinn, Nichol, Wallin, Huskins, Demers, Leach, Greiss. The latter is a Niittymaki injury away from earning himself a starter's contract next season. Thornton doesn't step up for the Stanley Cup, so it's doubtful he steps up for a contract (that will probably be a big one regardless of how he does). That leaves Demers as the most intriguing player on this list.
- Niemi and Niittymaki will split starts and the team will go with the hot hand. Often this will be Niemi, but don't count out Niittymaki when he gets in the zone. Bottom line is, neither goalie is a great fantasy option because neither will run away with the starting job. Don't be shocked if each start 40 to 45 games and end up with 45 to 50 games played each. **Dobber's confidence that Niemi will be the starter: 51%**
- PIM: The team is, as of press time, not going with an enforcer. Clowe was a revelation in penalty minutes last season, nearly doubling his career high. He could potentially go as high as 150. We don't know a lot about MacIntyre, but considering he weighs 225 pounds and had 101 PIM in 89 college games he has some potential with this stat. If Frazer McLaren sticks, he'll lead this team in this category.
- Thanks to an injury-shortened 2007-08 campaign, you can count this one upcoming as Clowe's fourth in the NHL. He's got a rare combination of size and skill and could absolutely reach his upside in 2010-11.
- Plus/minus: As always, the Sharks' players fell between plus-5 and plus-15 last year. I don't see that changing, and I do see Vlasic really stepping forward in that category even more than the plus-21 that he just posted.

ST. LOUIS

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Andy McDonald	75	23	65	26	David Backes	80	30	55	124	T.J. Oshie	75	22	55	68
Alexander Steen	75	28	60	32	Patrik Berglund	74	20	45	20	Brad Boyes	82	31	57	30
David Perron	81	21	53	68	Vladimir Sobotka	68	9	27	32	Matt D'Agostini	65	7	17	42
Brad Winchester	60	6	13	84	Jay McClement	82	11	31	28	B.J. Crombeen	78	8	15	147
					T.J. Hensick	24	3	12	8	Cam Janssen	48	0	3	172
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Erik Johnson	75	13	49	84	Barrett Jackman	73	2	21	74	Jaroslav Halak	40	7		
Eric Brewer	62	5	15	56	Carlo Colaiacovo	65	8	40	62	Ty Conklin	9	2		
Alex Pietrangelo	71	4	30	32	Roman Polak	77	5	23	64					
Ian Cole	57	5	21	26										

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
Vladimir Tarasenko		90	Alex Pietrangelo	75%
Patrik Berglund		85	T.J. Hensick	0% - CUT
T.J. Oshie		82	Vladimir Tarasenko	0% - not in camp
Andy McDonald		80	Ian Cole	0% - CUT
Jori Lehtera		80		
Simon Hjalmarsson		80		
Brad Boyes		78		
Brett Sonne		78		
Alexander Steen	75	Sleeper	Pts	%
David Perron	75	Alexander Steen	70	30%
T.J. Hensick	75	Patrik Berglund	65	15%
David Backes	70	Brad Boyes	70	10%
Vladimir Sobotka	70	T.J. Hensick	55	0%
Erik Johnson	68			
Alex Pietrangelo	55			
Carlo Colaiacovo	55			

Angus Prime Cut: Andy McDonald Grade: Porterhouse

The Blues have plenty of scoring depth, but McDonald is still the best bet to play the top line this season. He has battled the injury bug since coming over from Anaheim a few years ago, but he has at least one 70-point season left in him and that could very well come in 2010-11. He creates a lot of open ice with his speed and St. Louis has lots of size and skill on the wings to complement him well.

Dobber's lowdown on: Alex Steen – He's the perfect sleeper for you because his production is as assured as production can get in the fantasy world, yet his point totals from last season were modest. He had 43 points in the last 49 games but just 47 points in total. He led the entire club in scoring in the second half and by the end he was on the top PP unit and getting loads of ice time. Now 26, he's reached his prime and the Blues have seen what he can do. They know they have an asset and they'll implement accordingly.

- Last chance for Hensick. Three years from now we could be referring to him as "that small, talented star in St. Louis", or we could be referring to him as "who?" The easy money, low-risk prediction is to choose the latter.

- It's hard to imagine Boyes, Berglund and Perron not increasing their point totals by an average of 10-15 each (according to my predictions the average is 13.3). They had unbelievably poor statistical seasons and those often correct themselves. If and when that happens, then the domino effect will be that all of the Blues with any fantasy value at all will see their numbers get padded a bit. Especially McDonald and Johnson, who are PP fixtures.
- Both Oshie and Backes improved their points in the second half by about 20 percent. For Backes, that's the second straight season he's done that. So he's already establishing a clear pattern as a slow starter and you should be kicking tires for him in November or December.
- Boyes had just 11 points in his last 37 games. The ice time was still there and he was third on the team in PP time. Perhaps he grows bored on a team after a couple of years. His numbers declined in Boston before his trade to St. Louis and now we're seeing it again. He's a 70-point player on another team, but his contract is very tough to move.
- Contract year: Backes, Oshie, Berglund, Crombeen, Sobotka, Winchester, Janssen, D'Agostini, Brewer, Polak, Tyson Strachan, Conklin. The ones with the talent and the most to prove are Oshie, Berglund and Sobotka. I still doubt Sobotka will get the ice time needed to put up shocking numbers, so that leaves the other two as top candidates for a big contract year.
- PIM: Backes gives you a great combination of points and PIM. Crombeen weighs heavier on the latter and lighter on the former. Janssen is strictly one category. Johnson has a little more to give in all stat categories, including this one. Skachkov is a dark horse, assuming he makes the team.
- You want fourth-year magic? How about Perron? Great candidate. To a lesser extent, Sobotka is also entering his fourth season, but the odds are against it. Too buried.
- Despite Conklin earning 10 shutouts in his last 66 games, he may actually see fewer starts this year than he did last year. That's because Halak is the most important goalie the Blues have had since Curtis Joseph. And if a playoff spot means that Halak needs to start 75 games, then he will start 75 games. **Dobber's confidence that Halak will be the starter: 100%**
- Plus/minus: Halak stabilizing the net along with the improved offense that I expect, most Blues should be in the positive this year.
- **Injury: Sobotka is still recovering from shoulder surgery. Season opener looks doubtful.**
- **Injury: McDonald is day-to-day with a hip flexor.**
- **Reports out of St. Louis indicate that Cole has been outplaying Pietrangelo. Cole was cut anyway.**

TAMPA BAY

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Martin St. Louis	82	29	85	16	Steven Stamkos	82	47	88	36	Steve Downie	75	24	51	194
Simon Gagne	68	30	65	44	Vincent Lecavalier	82	38	85	62	Teddy Purcell	75	18	45	20
Sean Bergenheim	65	16	33	66	Dominic Moore	78	13	40	74	Ryan Malone	70	20	41	82
Mattias Ritola	73	10	21	38	Nate Thompson	71	2	12	46	Dana Tyrell	65	3	17	10
Johan Harju	15	1	5	4	Marc Pouliot	30	3	12	10	Blair Jones	18	0	2	6
Defense											Goalies	W	SO	
Mattias Ohlund	70	2	11	68	Victor Hedman	78	8	37	90	Mike Smith	21	2		
Pavel Kubina	76	8	38	70	Matt Smaby	63	0	7	56	Dan Ellis	15	1		
Randy Jones	58	5	21	40	Brett Clark	70	3	17	20					
Mathieu Roy	27	0	7	48	Mike Lundin	72	4	18	38					

Long-Term Potential	Prospect			%
Vincent Lecavalier	110	Johan Harju		0% - CUT
Steven Stamkos	105	Dana Tyrell		60%
Martin St. Louis	98	Brett Connolly		0% - CUT
Brett Connolly	88	Niklas Persson		0% - CUT
Simon Gagne	78	Carter Ashton		0% - CUT
Richard Panik	75			
Edward Purcell	75			
Dana Tyrell	72			
Carter Ashton	72	Sleeper	Pts	%
Steve Downie	70	Steve Downie	65	35%
Ryan Malone	70	Ryan Malone	65	20%
Mattias Ritola	65	Simon Gagne	75	15%
Martins Karsums	65	Edward Purcell	65	15%
Victor Hedman	62	Brett Connolly	60	0% - CUT
Paul Szczechura	62	Mattias Ritola	45	10%
Johan Harju	62			
Pavel Kubina	48			

Angus Prime Cut: Matt Lashoff Grade: Prime Rib

With a one-way contract in his back pocket, Lashoff will have to have a disastrous training camp to not make Tampa's roster for 2010-11. He has been an elite offensive point producer in the AHL, but hasn't been given a consistent role at the NHL level yet. At even strength, he won't be more than a bottom pairing defenseman, but look for him to play consistent minutes on one of the Lightning's power play units. **UPDATE: Now with Toronto**

Dobber's lowdown on: Simon Gagne – If you thought Alex Tanguay had a ton of chances to get things rolling on a line with Lecavalier (over 52% of his shifts with him), you ain't seen nothin'. Gagne will be thrown out there shift after shift with Vinny until it works. He has more talent than Tanguay, so it should work. He'll post one of the two or three highest points-per-game averages in his career. That said, how many games does that mean? The million dollar question. He is a concussion risk (from 2008), and he also manages to find a new body part to injure every year. For a games-played projection, I took the number between last season and the year before that. But it could be anywhere from zero to 80.

- Purcell had mixed success playing with Lecavalier. He is useless on a checking line, so he will either get a 15-game trial on that line, fail, and then get waived...or he'll succeed well enough to play most of the season on that line. Black or white, there is no grey – 75 games or 15 games. Analysts who pick something in between are too afraid of being wrong. His nine points in 19 games is good enough for more of a look on that line, but not good enough to guarantee the spot. Playing for coach Guy Boucher should help.
- Persson led his KHL squad (Nizhnekamsk Neftekhimik – say that three times fast. I didn't fall on my keyboard, that's the actual team) in scoring last season. His contract is a two-way deal, but it has an out clause allowing him to go back to Europe if he's cut. High risk/reasonable reward here. If the team signs too many more forwards in August/September, I'll be knocking his projection down to zero.
- Downie had just 13 points in 34 games to start last season and he ended with just seven in 17. But the 26 points in 28 games in between caught my attention. It is imperative that he lands on a scoring line and I think he will. Otherwise, his stats will be similar to Daniel Carcillo's.
- Do you still consider Lecavalier a 90/100-point player? I do. A bum shoulder crippled his numbers in 2008-09, and a healing wrist hurt him last year. I want to see a clean slate on the injury front before judging him for certain. We'll get that this year, so his numbers will tell us once and for all whether or not he has lost his elite touch.
- A small decline for Stamkos to compensate for more ice time given to a stronger second line in conjunction with a lot more attention from the opposition. It won't be as drastic a drop as Eric Staal after he had his breakout, but there will be one.
- Contract year: Gagne, Stamkos, Purcell, Thompson, Jones, Pouliot, Lundin, Lashoff, Smaby, Smith. Gagne won't be able to match his current contract, but if he doesn't want to cling to relevance like an Alex Tanguay, he needs to produce more than he did last year. Purcell's NHL hopes are riding on this season. Smith should be fully aware that backups or fringe starters are a dime a dozen – and have a tough time getting a contract in this league. He needs to seize the moment.
- PIM: Hedman's PIM number should steadily rise, and Malone's should see a jump as he gets relegated out of the top six. Downie, of course, is a roto-league stud. If Roy makes this team, he should hit 100 PIM.
- Smith was 3-7-1 after returning from his neck injury and he allowed four or more goals six times in that span. Last year's numbers overall can be blamed on the impact of that injury. Ellis a good goaltender, but he and Smith have battled for a job before (in Dallas) and Smith won. These two will have a great battle throughout the season, but in the end I think Smith will have a few more starts. An injury would change things, of course. That is a very real possibility for Smith, who has been hurt for two straight seasons now. **Dobber's confidence in Smith being the starter: 51%**
- Plus/minus: There were a lot of players well into the negative last season. Even though this is a rebuilding team, the presence of Ellis combined with a healthy Smith should see to it that most players are close to zero.
- Tampa's signing of Jones indicates that Paul Ranger will not get through his personal issues and join the team any time soon. UPDATE: Ranger will not be in camp.
- Injury: here we go again. Smith left practice September 20 with a finger injury, possibly broken. Update: slight fracture. Shouldn't miss more than a week of the season at most.**

TORONTO

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Kris Versteeg	81	25	62	68	Tyler Bozak	74	13	60	18	Phil Kessel	73	36	68	24
Clarke MacArthur	80	22	52	44	Mikhail Grabovski	69	22	46	58	Nikolai Kulemin	77	20	51	22
Fredrik Sjostrom	58	5	8	18	John Mitchell	70	12	30	38	Colby Armstrong	80	18	37	78
Christian Hanson	43	6	15	40	Tim Brent	40	8	18	12	Colton Orr	77	1	2	208
Jerry D'Amigo	9	1	3	2	Brayden Irwin	24	2	6	30	Mike Brown	63	3	5	140
Luca Caputi	55	11	25	38	Nazem Kadri	9	1	4	6					
Defense											Goalies	W	SO	
Tomas Kaberle	82	8	54	22	Dion Phaneuf	81	17	51	98	Jonas Gustavsson	23	2		
Carl Gunnarsson	75	5	37	26	Francois Beauchemin	78	8	28	48	J-S Giguere	17	1		
Luke Schenn	80	6	25	78	Brett Lebda	73	4	15	36	Jussi Rynnas	2	0		
Mike Komisarek	65	3	12	106	Jeff Finger	40	4	12	20	James Reimer	1	0		

Long-Term Potential	Prospect	%	
Phil Kessel	92 Nazem Kadri	0% - CUT	
Nazem Kadri	80 Luca Caputi	0% - CUT	
Greg McKegg	80 Christian Hanson	0% - CUT	
Tyler Bozak	75 Brady Irwin	0% - CUT	
Kris Versteeg	75 Matt Lashoff	50% - injured (minor)	
Mikhail Stefanovich	75 Jerry D'Amigo	0% - CUT	
Nikolai Kulemin	72 Mikhail Stefanovich	0% - CUT	
Jerry D'Amigo	70		
Tomas Kaberle	Sleeper	Pts	%
Mikhail Grabovski	70 Nikolai Kulemin	70	25%
Luca Caputi	70 Tyler Bozak	70	20%
Clarke MacArthur	70 Nazem Kadri	55	15%
Dion Phaneuf	68 Mikhail Grabovski	60	10%
Brady Irwin	62 Brady Irwin	40	10%
Colby Armstrong	58		
Christian Hanson	58		
Matt Lashoff	45		

Angus Prime Cut: Carl Gunnarsson Grade: Porterhouse

Already blessed with an absolutely awesome hockey name, Gunnarsson showed last season that he is a solid defenseman as well. He was arguably the biggest (positive) surprise for Toronto and was logging top four minutes on a consistent basis by the end of the season. Fifteen points in 43 games on a poor club as a rookie defenseman is a very respectable number. Look for him to hit 30-plus points and play a regular power play shift.

Dobber's lowdown on: Nikolai Kulemin – If Kulemin has a twin brother then that would explain a lot. Because the player in October was not the same player in February. He drove to the net frequently, playing a much more aggressive game – and his shots were actually going in. His ice time inched upward accordingly. He had 12 points in the first half and 24 in the second, making my 51-point projection a very realistic one. Just when I was about to write him off, he showed signs that he could indeed be a complimentary 70-point winger.

- Versteeg was sixth on the Blackhawks in scoring, yet 11th on the Blackhawks in ice time. Boy, will that ever change in Toronto. He'll get Top 5 ice time there and the points will rise accordingly.

- Kaberle had 38 of his 49 points in the first half. Give him three 80-point players to pass to on the power play and he's a 65-point guy easily. How does that happen? A trade. He has a no-trade clause after August 15. UPDATE: He was not moved by the deadline and thus will have to approve any trade going forward. Look for something in February.
- He only played 59 games yet Grabovski still managed to go three games without a point on five different occasions. Another one of those frustratingly streaky players. When he goes six or seven games with big points, shop him around before the slump hits.
- Hanson only played 31 games, yet the Leafs won 17 of their 30 when he was in the lineup. That's an extra reason why I have him making this team because bottom line – he seems to be a winning presence.
- I wonder if Irwin will be the next Dustin Penner in four years? You can't tell me that it didn't cross Brian Burke's mind when he signed him. Decent hands, 6-5, undrafted out of college...
- Contract year: Bozak, Caputi, Sjostrom, Mitchell, Brown, Kaberle, Schenn, Gunnarsson, Giguere. Kaberle will be traded, and look for Bozak and Gunnarsson to put themselves in a great negotiating position next summer.
- Gustavsson will be the starter and if healthy he'll start 55 games to Giguere's 35. That being said, don't expect him to be healthy. He has already shown himself to be quite fragile. That opens the door for the other two goalies to get in some starts.
Dobber's confidence that Gustavsson will be the starter: 80%
- Plus/minus: Say what you want about Schenn and his poor season, but in the final 24 games he was a plus-3 on a team full of minuses. Look for he and Gunnarsson to lead the way in this stat. Most players will hover around minus-5 to zero.
- If Grabovski played one more game in 2007-08, he'd qualify for my fourth year breakout statement. He's close enough to warrant a mention though.
- D'Amigo has announced that he is leaving college and trying out for the Leafs. He is probably a year or two away though. Still, he had a solid development camp and has NHL speed and a great work ethic. So don't count him out.
- The Leafs signed Matt Lashoff in late August, indicating that a move is in the cards for one of their nine defensemen on one-way contracts. Until that move happens, I expect either Lashoff or Finger to be in the minors. Lashoff has decent upside, but is currently behind Phaneuf, Kaberle, Gunnarsson and Beauchemin on the power-play depth chart. So unless one of those four get moved, do not expect anything from Lashoff. Stay tuned...
- The signing of MacArthur hurts Caputi the most. Caputi had a top six spot locked and now he's locked out of the top six. Just like that. He is useless on a checking line, so expect some extensive AHL time now. Only an injury or a roster move will change this.
- **Kadri is having a poor camp. Hanson and Caputi are having strong camps.**

VANCOUVER

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Daniel Sedin	82	37	101	40	Henrik Sedin	82	22	102	50	Alex Burrows	66	20	47	102
Mason Raymond	78	20	52	54	Ryan Kesler	81	26	78	88	Mikael Samuelsson	73	27	56	54
Raffi Torres	65	14	31	70	Manny Malhotra	74	12	37	32	Cody Hodgson	58	13	31	30
Tanner Glass	70	3	9	140	Rick Rypien	65	5	14	112	Jannik Hansen	60	10	25	28
Jeff Tambellini	12	3	4	4	Alexandre Bolduc	7	0	0	4	Jordan Schroeder	15	3	7	2
										Sergei Shirokov	18	4	7	4
Defense														
										Goalies	W	SO		
Keith Ballard	82	8	36	80	Dan Hamhuis	79	5	35	60	Roberto Luongo	39	4		
Christian Ehrhoff	79	12	48	50	Alexander Edler	77	9	46	50	Cory Schneider	13	2		
Kevin Bieksa	65	8	33	106	Andrew Alberts	75	3	14	92	Tyler Weiman	2	0		
Nathan Paetsch 	70	3	20	48	Sami Salo	25	1	9	8					

Long-Term Potential		Prospect		%
Henrik Sedin	112	Cory Schneider		100%
Daniel Sedin	112	Cody Hodgson		85%
Jordan Schroeder	88	Sergei Shirokov		0% - CUT
Cody Hodgson	85	Jeff Tambellini		0% - CUT
Ryan Kesler	80	Jordan Schroeder		0% - CUT
Sergei Shirokov	78			
Mason Raymond	68			
Alexandre Burrows	68			
Jeff Tambellini	68	Sleeper	Pts	%
Mikael Samuelsson	65	Mason Raymond	65	30%
Jannik Hansen	55	Mikael Samuelsson	65	15%
Kevin Bieksa	55	Jordan Schroeder	55	5%
Alexander Edler	52	Cody Hodgson	60	10%
Christian Ehrhoff	50	Jeff Tambellini	50	5%
Manny Malhotra	50			
Keith Ballard	50			
Dan Hamhuis	45			

Angus Prime Cut: Christian Ehrhoff Grade: Porterhouse

Ehrhoff played 3:00 per game on the power play for the Canucks last season, and 2:06 per game on the penalty kill. With the signing of Hamhuis and the trade for Ballard, he will see less minutes shorthanded, which will free up more of an opportunity to produce. Ehrhoff typically plays in even strength situations with the Sedin twins, and his dynamic skating ability opens up a lot of ice in the neutral zone. Look for him to improve off of last season's career numbers and approach the 50 point mark.

The lowdown on: Alex Burrows – Last season, Burrows spent approximately 70 percent of his even-strength shifts on the top line with the twins (or with Daniel's substitute and Henrik when Daniel was hurt). His point total reached as high as possible – all the stars aligned and everything that needed to happen for him to reach his ceiling happened. But with Samuelsson performing so well on that line in the postseason, Burrows' hold on it is tenuous. Since he sees very little power-play time, there is a possibility of a huge drop off. Burrows is still a 45-point player on the third line and his PIM will pop up nicely if he's placed there. But that's the range of possibilities that you are looking at with him right now. My projection above is based on about 40 percent on that top line and the rest on the third line. Update: Burrows' shoulder surgery is slow in healing and he's looking at a November return.

- A lot of people in your league will be dazzled by Samuelsson's 15 points in 12 playoff games and will overrate what he'll do. But we've seen him have hot streaks before (he's notorious for his 65-point pace at the halfway point before dropping off). Eleven of those 15 points came in the first six playoff games – and he ended last season pointless in five. Given the chemistry with the Sedins, he'll see more time there this year and set a career high. But that "career high" will only be a handful of points higher than the 53 he earned last year.
- Malhotra led the entire NHL in faceoff winning percentage last year (minimum 500 faceoffs taken). He won an eye-popping 415 out of 664 draws. In 2008-09 he finished sixth (58.0 percent).
- Injury note: Salo is out (Achilles tendon) for the first four months of the season.
- Bieksa will be dealt. Ballard and Hamhuis will run the second power play.
- Steve Bernier had a crazy amount of power-play time for someone so unproductive (2:13 per game). With him off to Florida now, Raymond will get a big chunk of that PP time.
- PIM: Burrows and Hordichuk are stalwarts in this category. As mentioned, look for a small bump in Burrows' number. Rypien proved that he can stay healthy and stick for most of a season, so he could potentially really pop in the PIM category. Bieksa will get his number back up there on a new team, but he needs to stay healthy. **UPDATE: Hordichuk was traded to Florida on Oct. 7, making Glass much more appealing.**
- Contract year: Hansen, Hordichuk, Glass, Rypien, Joel Perrault, Bieksa, Salo, Ehrhoff, O'Brien, Alberts. None of these names jump out at me for a big contract year, though Bieksa could show great timing with a rebound season now.
- Hodgson was the OHL and CHL player of the year in 2009. His back injury kept him off the ice for the majority of last campaign. He worries me. He refused to train with Vancouver's people and wanted to use his own. He didn't go to development camp because he wanted to continue working out on his own in Toronto and strengthen his back. It may be nothing, but I'm not seeing the eagerness to please in him that I see in so many future stars. The Canucks gave him their blessing – but what if they didn't? He'd stay in Toronto anyway, I'd say. Hodgson also didn't report to their AHL team when his junior team was eliminated, claiming that he tweaked his back. That's another red flag – either the team is just saying that because they don't want the controversy or his back is still a problem. Either way, it's not good news for fantasy owners. I don't feel comfortable with him in this organization at all – he's declined (legitimately or otherwise) far too many of their invitations/suggestions.
- Luongo is the starting goalie and Schneider is the backup. If Luongo is healthy and plays anywhere near what he's capable of, Schneider could be moved and Weiman will be the backup. If Luongo gets hurt or is merely average, then Schneider will push for more starts. Either way, the Canucks are in good hands. **Dobber's confidence that Luongo will be the starter: 100%**
- Plus/minus: Christian Ehrhoff – if you want Exhibit A as to why I don't predict plus/minus for each player in this Guide, he is it. After being a terrible minus-12 on a strong defensive team like San Jose, Ehrhoff comes to Vancouver and posts a plus-36, which was sixth in the entire league. It's throwing darts. All you can do is look at the team and make your best guess from a team standpoint. The Canucks have great goaltending and offense – so most of them will be in the positive. Anyone in their Top 5 will again be plus-20 or better.
- **Tambellini is having a solid camp, as is camp invite Morrison. I think Morrison may get a contract, but for now I'll withhold a projection. Regardless, he won't get 35 points I can tell you that much. UPDATE: Morrison was released, signed with Calgary. Tambellini was waived.**

WASHINGTON

Left Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Center	GP	G	Pts	PIM	Right Wing	GP	G	Pts	PIM
Alexander Ovechkin	79	64	125	78	Nicklas Backstrom	82	32	103	54	Mike Knuble	70	25	46	66
Alexander Semin	74	41	91	74	Tomas Fleischmann	76	24	60	24	Brooks Laich	79	28	60	34
Jason Chimera	68	12	30	82	Marcus Johansson	79	9	29	18	Eric Fehr	70	24	45	36
Dave Steckel	77	7	20	28	Boyd Gordon	65	6	14	12	Matt Bradley	77	8	18	58
DJ King	44	1	3	102	Mathieu Perreault	62	11	36	14					
Defense										Goalies		W	SO	
Mike Green	75	30	82	60	John Carlson	78	5	43	22	Semyon Varlamov	37	3		
Jeff Schultz	72	4	26	44	Karl Alzner	77	2	22	38	Michal Neuvirth	16	2		
Tom Poti	70	5	22	48	Tyler Sloan	35	1	6	28	Braden Holtby	2	0		
John Erskine	55	1	7	62	Patrick McNeill	50	0	8	20					

Long-Term Potential	Prospect	%		
Alexander Ovechkin	160	John Carlson	100%	
Nicklas Backstrom	115	Mathieu Perreault	0% - CUT	
Alexander Semin	95	Marcus Johansson	65%	
Evgeny Kuznetsov	90	Francois Bouchard	0% - CUT	
Mike Green	85	Anton Gustafsson	0% - CUT	
Mathieu Perreault	78	Dmitri Kugryshev	0% - CUT	
Tomas Fleischmann	75			
Dmitri Kugryshev	75			
Francois Bouchard	72	Sleeper	Pts	%
Brooks Laich	70	Mathieu Perreault	60	5%
John Carlson	70	Tomas Fleischmann	70	15%
Anton Gustafsson	70	John Carlson	60	15%
Eric Fehr	68	Eric Fehr	65	10%
Marcus Johansson	65	Marcus Johansson	45	5%
Michael Knuble	62			
Jason Chimera	48			
Tom Poti	40			

Angus Prime Cut: Mathieu Perreault Grade: Prime Rib

Washington's decision not to sign a proven second line center during free agency this summer was a curious one, especially for a team expected to contend for the Stanley Cup. Perreault and prospect Johansson are the two players expected to battle for the spot in training camp. Perreault looked great in limited action with the Capitals last season – he is undersized, but plays with a ton of energy with and without the puck. Johansson probably has more long-term upside, but Washington is looking to win now. Perreault could hit 50 points if he sticks on the second line with Laich and Semin.

The lowdown on: John Carlson – He's an elite defenseman who has the ability to – almost – put up the same points that we've seen from Mike Green. But he brings to the table all of the intangibles that Green does not. He's a clutch player (scored the OT gold medal winner at the 2009 WJC), he is positionally sound, strong defensively and he kills penalties. Do not worry about the fact that he, like Green, is a right-handed shot and as such won't get the PP time. In the salary cap world, the Caps will trade Green within two or three years and clear the way for Carlson. He is that good.

- I wouldn't worry about the fact that eight forwards are fighting for top six time (or rather – five forward are fighting for three spots in the top six). Between Knuble, Fleischmann, Semin and Fehr they will miss 40 to 50 games with injuries. There will be a lot of line juggling and everyone will get their scoring line opportunity.
- Backstrom has never missed a game in his three-year career which may mislead you into thinking he is safe in terms of injury risks. But he actually suffers from migraines. They have always been a problem for him and they have caused him to miss more than a couple of practices over the last year – and caused him to leave a game halfway.
- Fleischmann had just 10 points in his last 23 games. He gets off to hot starts and make you believe he's a 75-point player as Christmas approaches, but that will taper off.
- While Fleischmann slows, Laich picks it up. Make it three seasons in a row where he has surged in the second half. Things would have been even better had he not suffered a fractured cheekbone. He had just six points in 13 regular season and playoff games after that injury, obviously returning early for the clutch games. But prior to the injury he had 25 points in 25 games spanning January through March. A definite "buy" in December. Absolutely.
- Fehr was 28th in the league in points per minute (minimum 20 games). If a long-term injury strikes a winger, his point projection will go up by 15 or more. He had 27 points in 35 games during a span from mid-November through the end of January.
- Contract year: Semin, Knuble, Fleischmann, Laich, Bradley, Gordon, Poti, Alzner, Erskine, Varlamov, Neuvirth. The Caps have a tough decision to make – Semin, Fleischmann, Knuble and Laich will all be unrestricted next summer. So either keep them together and make one huge run for the Cup and let them walk away for nothing, or trade them. Look for Fleischmann to possibly have a huge year and really lean on their pocketbooks next summer the way Tomas Plekanec did with Montreal.
- This will be Fehr's fourth NHL seasons (if I bend my rules just a little bit, which I will). This is also Backstrom's fourth year, but can a player who has already topped 100 points really break out?
- Varlamov will start the majority of the games. Neuvirth is fantastic but the team has their wagons hitched to Varlamov. That being said, Varlamov is a Band-Aid Boy and an injury is almost certain. Depending on when that injury strikes, Neuvirth could give you anywhere from 12 to 30 wins. Holtby could also get his foot in the door – and he's a solid prospect as well.

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Dobber's confidence that Varlamov will be the starter: 90%

PIM: The Caps may have brought in D.J. King, but he gets hurt just from tightening his skates. I'll be shocked if gets in 50 games. Chimera planted on a real checking line will get more PIM than usual. If the Caps can get an agitator or pugilist other than King, then Ovechkin's PIM will drop.

Plus/minus: Last year the Caps were the bomb in this category (the Top 4 in the NHL, and eight of the Top 16) and they will be again this year. You can't go wrong with Washington guys – and draft Perreault assuming at least plus-12.

Eric Belanger has reportedly agreed to a contract with the team, but the contract is not yet official. Apparently the team is waiting to move a player (possibly Fleischmann) first. He will be added to the chart when the contract is announced. Update: The Caps reneged on the verbal agreement and Belanger signed with the Coyotes.

UNRESTRICTED FREE AGENTS

By Darryl Dobbs

Here are some quick thoughts on a few of the notable free agents still out there. If you would like any UFA's added to the below, email me at dobber@dobberhockey.com

Maxim Afinogenov – When his dollar demands dip, he'll sign somewhere and become a 50- to 60-point player, depending on the situation there. If he has to bring his demands to far downward he'll just sign in the KHL. UPDATE: Signed a five-year deal to play in the KHL.

Evgeny Artyukhin – A 6-5, 250-pound player who could get 35 points and 180 PIM...but the effort isn't there. Teams are catching onto this and he's probably KHL bound.

Marc-Andre Bergeron – Like last year, he could sign with a team in need of a puck mover just after the season starts. The PP specialist could still get 40 points in the right franchise.

Bill Guerin – Rumors persist that the Bruins and Penguins are interested in signing him. He'll be 40 in November and his production slipped to 45 points last year in the best possible scenario for him in the world. At best, he'll match that again in Pittsburgh. In Boston you can forget about 40. UPDATE: Penguins are not signing him. UPDATE II: Accepted a tryout with the Flyers

Paul Kariya – Kariya is the most intriguing UFA on the market. Soon to be 36, I think he can still top 60 points if he signs with the right team. The wrong team would see 40 points and then retirement. UPDATE: Kariya is suffering from post-concussion syndrome and will not play in the 2010-11 season.

Slava Kozlov – Rumored to have already agreed on a KHL contract, Kozlov is holding off making it official in case some NHL GM gets drunk enough to actually want to sign him. There's always a perfect situation for players, and more often than not that ideal spot would be in Pittsburgh. Add Kozlov to that long list. [Update: Signed in KHL](#)

Robert Lang – He'll be 40 in the fall. He'll be lucky if he can get that many points in a season again.

Owen Nolan – In the pre-cap NHL he would find a job. Now 38, he won't be as desirable. Most roster spots have been spoken for and there are other UFA's ahead of him in line. I'm thinking retirement.

Miroslav Satan – My money is on retirement or Europe. [Update: Signed in Slovakia](#)

Marek Svatos – The word is that two KHL teams are interested in him.

Petr Sykora – Injury issues, and he hasn't been effective these last few years. Retirement is likely, though some New Jersey fans would love to see him reunite with Jason Arnott and Patrik Elias. Don't put any credence in that.

Kyle Wellwood – He produces in spurts and as such is a decent fit on the third line, but competition for those spots is fierce. UPDATE: Accepted tryout invite with Phoenix. [Update: Released, and signed in KHL](#)

Jason Williams – He may sign a two-way deal as a power-play specialist, but that usually means 30 points at best.

Training Camp Invites

These players did not get themselves a contract and with salary-cap room pretty tight for most teams by mid-July, the best they can hope for is a camp invite and then earn a rather low salary. Here are the notable invites:

Ty Arnason (FLA) - **RELEASED**
Wade Brookbank (CHI) - **RELEASED**
Jonathan Cheechoo (DAL) - **RELEASED**
Aaron Downey (DET) - **RELEASED**
Anders Eriksson (NYI) - RELEASED
Garnet Exelby (NYR) - **RELEASED**
Ruslan Fedotenko (NYR) - **Signed**
Dan Fritsche (CBJ) – **RELEASED, signed in Swiss**
Bill Guerin (PHI) - **RELEASED**
Shane Hnidy (PHO) – **injured, shoulder**
Krys Kolanos (NYI) - RELEASED
Manny Legace (NYI) - RELEASED
Andreas Lilja (SJ) - **RELEASED**
Enver Lisin (ATL) – **RELEASED, signed in KHL**
Adam Mair (NJ) – **should sign**
Dean McAmmond (NYI) - RELEASED
Brian McGrattan (BOS) – **should sign**
Kyle McLaren (ATL) - **RELEASED**
Brendan Morrison (VAN) – **RELEASED, but apparently getting offers**
Marcus Nilsson (NJ) - **RELEASED**
Lawrence Nycholat (WAS) - **DEMOTED**
Mark Parrish (BUF) - **RELEASED**
Eric Perrin (TB) - **RELEASED**
Alexei Semenov (NYR) - **RELEASED**
Peter Schaefer (VAN) - **signed**
Nick Tarnasky (CHI) - **RELEASED**
Kelsey Tessier (NYR) - **RELEASED**
Stephane Veilleux (ANA) - **RELEASED**
Kyle Wellwood (PHO) – **RELEASED, signed in KHL**



ANGUS UNLEASHED

By Jeff Angus

I am constantly receiving e-mails, tweets, and messages on the DobberHockey forums asking for trade advice. It is always good to get a second (and third) opinion, as there are many biases that can cloud your ability to accurately evaluate a potential transaction. The knowledgeable community at DobberHockey will more often than not be able to guide you in the right direction.

The Four Golden Rules for Trading in Fantasy Hockey

The same player can have a very different fantasy hockey value depending on rules and scoring categories specific to each league. A very simple example is to analyze a 70-point center. Most leagues differentiate between centers and wingers, and in general the center ice position is deeper in terms of talent than either wing. If a league doesn't differentiate between the forward positions, a 70-point center and a 70-point winger hold exactly the same value. In most leagues where forwards are categorized by left wing, center, and right wing, a 70-point center is roughly worth a 62 or 63-point winger (again, just an example). Player valuation only gets more complicated when leagues include more scoring categories, specific keeper rules, and salary caps.

However, there are four rules with regards to trading that are applicable in almost every single type of league. It doesn't matter if you count hits, blocked shots, giveaways, takeaways, or shootout goals in addition to the more typical stats. I am always able to apply at least one of the following rules to every single trade I evaluate for DobberHockey readers and members.

Writing for this guide (and the site) brings me nothing but joy, but it has also seriously hampered my ability to trade in my own pools. All of my competitors know about and read the site on a daily basis and I am very open with my thoughts on players, teams, sleepers, overrated players and so on (*Dobber's Note: I second this*). When I propose a trade, my trading partner is usually quick to a) reject the trade, and b) post it on the forums and ask for opinions.

Anyway, that's enough complaining for now. Simply put, if you want to become more successful in your hockey league(s), read these rules, apply them, reread them and reapply them. I have won many pools and helped others do the same by following them.

1. Always evaluate a trade with a maximum scope of three years

This rule can also be applied to drafting and building a team. Fantasy hockey is meant to be fun. Winning is always fun. Therefore, fantasy hockey is always fun when you are winning. (How's that for logic?) You aren't a real GM trying to slowly and meticulously work toward the Stanley Cup in five years. Fantasy hockey is fluid and no rebuild should take longer than three years.

I want you to do something for me. Sit down and analyze your fantasy hockey team right now. Can you see this team winning your league title within three years? If you think it can, you have nothing to worry about (for now). If you don't, it is time to shake things up. Move one of your 50 prospects for a (gasp) player who may be 30 or 31 years old. Add some proven veterans. I'm not saying that you should never rebuild or focus on adding youth to your team. A well-timed rebuild is essential in many league formats. However, from now on when you are evaluating a trade, ask yourself the following question: Will this trade make my team better within the next three years?

2. Quality almost always trumps quantity and the side getting the best player in a trade almost always comes out on top

I was originally going to split this into two rules, but the ideas are so closely related I decided to just make it one. I'll stick with another simple example to help illustrate my point. Say you have two 60-point centers, and you decide to move them for an 80-point center. Analyzing the trade on its own, you come out on the losing end by 40 points. However, those 40 points will be incredibly easy to make up. There are most likely dozens of 40-point players available in your league, either for free (waiver wire) or cheap (trade route). I bet there are quite a few 50-point players available as well and adding one would have you coming out up 10 points after the trade.

The example is incredibly simple and not applicable to most situations, but it illustrates the point I want to make. Always try and make lopsided trades (in terms of number of players being exchanged), especially in leagues where you have limited keeper positions. Two-for-one and three-for-one trades are favorites of mine. In my experience, it is much easier to downgrade from an 80-point player to a few 60-point players than to go the other way around.

The only situation where I would advocate downgrading for depth would be where you find a competing team with extra keepers looking for a small upgrade (so your downgrade is minimal), or if you are incredibly deep at one position and thin at another. The best player statement rings true in real hockey more than it does in fantasy hockey, but it is still applicable to most pools. Look at a

few of the more recent blockbusters in the NHL: Joe Thornton to San Jose, Dany Heatley to San Jose (extenuating circumstances, mind you), Chris Pronger to Anaheim, Marian Hossa to Pittsburgh, the list goes on and on. Boston is stuck with Marco Sturm, and Brad Stuart is long gone. Ottawa has Milan Michalek's one good knee and Jonathan Cheechoo's buyout to show for losing a perennial 40-50-goal scorer.

Most thought Pittsburgh overpaid significantly for Hossa at the deadline in 2008. Atlanta lost Colby Armstrong to free agency, Angelo Esposito has already had two significant knee operations, Erik Christensen is long gone and the draft pick (Daultan Leveille) scored only six goals at the NCAA level last season. Anaheim received a king's ransom for Pronger last summer – at least that is what many people thought. Joffrey Lupul is an overpaid and underwhelming winger who has yet to put it all together at the NHL level. Luca Sbisa is a great prospect and the two first round picks have value. However, Pronger was the key cog on the team that won the Eastern Conference, and he isn't slowing down any time soon.

I could go on and on with more blockbusters, but if you look through the trading history both in the NHL and in your fantasy league, I'd wager that the team getting the best player wins the trade over 80 percent of the time. This rule isn't as black or white as the first one, but next time you find yourself about to pull the trigger on a trade, ask yourself the following questions: Am I getting the best player in this trade? Am I sacrificing a quality player for unneeded depth?

3. Proven players have significantly more value than unproven players

One should never, never, never, ever underrate the value of NHL experience. A player that has proven he can produce at the NHL level immediately has a leg up on ANY prospect. Am I telling you to go and trade Taylor Hall for Kristian Huselius? Not in a million years (unless you are trading Hall to me). What I am saying is to not get caught up by hype. Getting intoxicated with the dreaded "p" word (potential) is one of the most dangerous pitfalls in fantasy hockey. It doesn't take any prisoners and leaves a path of destruction almost as big as Hugh Jessiman.

I tend to avoid trading proven talent for a prospect unless:

- a) The prospect is really, really good (someone like Jordan Eberle)
- b) I don't need the player I am trading away
- c) I am rebuilding (see rule one for more help here)

The old saying of "a bird in hand is better than two in the bush" applies perfectly to this rule. Give me the proven 60-70 point player over the potential 80-90 point player every single day of the week. Once in a while a sure-fire prospect comes along, and this rule can be bent a bit. Sidney Crosby, Taylor Hall, Alex Ovechkin, John Tavares, these kinds of prospects are about as bullet-proof as it gets. However, for the bulk of the young, unproven talent out there, there is a certain degree of inherent risk in each one. Next time you are mulling over a potential trade offer, ask yourself: What kind of risk am I taking with this prospect?

4. Young players (don't) always improve

This rule ties in with one of the biggest logical fallacies I see when it comes to player evaluation. For some reason, many people assume that young players are always going to improve. A 22-year-old just had a career season? Well he will do better as a 23-year-old. Why? Is he going to pack on muscle and increase speed and agility in the summer? Maybe. Is he going to find some magical potion that will improve his ability to produce? Maybe. However, it is far from the guarantee that many treat it as.

For the most part, players improve as they approach their late 20's and decline as they enter their mid-30's. This general rule of development and decline is unfortunately taken and applied to every single athlete by many people. Look at Atlanta's Bryan Little, for example. He tallied 31 goals in 79 games in 2008-09. Headed into the 2009-10 season, he was expected to score at least 30 again. At worst, perhaps a slight decline to 25. His goal total won't fall by more than five or six, people said. Why? Because he is so young! So much potential! If he can score over 30 at the age of 22, imagine how good he will be at 23! Well, Little finished 2009-10 with 13 goals in the same number of games.

For every Little, there is also a Steven Stamkos, who improves leaps and bounds from one season to the next. No one expected Stamkos to score 51 goals in 2009-10. Would you be shocked if he falls back to 35 in 2010-11? I know I would be. With young players, we all tend to err on the side of optimism. I know if someone put a gun to my head and asked me to project Stamkos' goal total for 2010-11, I'd say 50 or above. Again, he may not be the best example as his talent was easy to see even at a young age.

Take a player like Chris Stewart. No one expected him to score 28 goals last season (and more than a few people didn't think he had the upside to score that many in any season). However, now that he has proven himself to be a 28-goal scorer, would you be shocked if he scored only 20 in 2010-11? How about 35? Which would surprise you more? Next time you go to weigh your options with a trade involving a young player or two, ask yourself: **Are there any concrete reasons as to why this player will continue to improve, aside from age?**



This is the best damn fantasy guide out there. The next step is to take the information from this guide and interpret how it applies specifically to your league setup. That can be extremely complicated and time consuming, but our friends over at www.hockeypoolgeek.com have done it for you.

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ADDRESSING THE BIGGEST SHOCKERS

By Darryl Dobbs

I thought it would be a good idea to begin a tradition here. A Fantasy Guide tradition in which ever September I take the biggest criticism/most common questions that I get asked and dissect them here. I'll provide my reasoning and thought process, and that will allow you, the reader, to decide if you agree/disagree and use this more educated decision on draft day to your advantage.

1. Taylor Hall and Jordan Eberle – Really?

I am hands down the most optimistic prognosticator when it comes to the Oilers and assigning these two projections of 70 and 72 points respectively is by far the highest you will find. In the next 10 years, not one single fantasy guide will project a rookie to reach 72 points. Not one. Will a rookie get to 75 points? Yes, it will probably happen four to seven times in that span. So why can't a single fantasy guide go out on a limb and project it for somebody? Find a rookie in the right situation, determine if he is ready, and make the call. Myself, I will probably project seven or eight rookies in the next 10 years who will reach 72 points. That means I'll miss the mark four or five times, but get right with the rest. When I'm wrong, I won't be wrong by much. I had John Tavares at 69 last season and he wound up with 54. The downside to you was 15 points. That's not a backbreaker in fantasy leagues. If you draft Eberle assuming 72 and he gets 60, the hurt isn't so bad. But if he reaches what I project, the benefits to you would be huge.

But let's look at the reasoning. Is Eberle better than Tavares? I don't think so. Then why do I project him six points higher than I projected for J.T.? Because of Hall. If Hall was on the Oilers and there was no such thing as 'Eberle', then I would project him at around 60 points. If Eberle was around and no Hall, then I would project him at around 62 to 65 points. With the two of them together lending skill to a lineup that was bereft of it only a few months ago, you can pad each of their numbers by a few points. Furthermore, Ales Hemsky was not on the team last year. Sure, he played a few games but he missed most of the season. Hemsky is their best player (for now). Add Hemsky into the mix and you can pad the stats of Hall and Eberle a little more. Sam Gagner is also entering his fourth year, often a breakout year.

I can't assume these events and not back them up in the numbers. If Gagner doesn't break out, perhaps you dock Hall and Eberle three or four points. If Hemsky misses 25 games with another injury, perhaps another four or five come off. If both of those things happen, then maybe 10 or 12 points come off the end result. What if Hall struggles as a rookie? Then Eberle's numbers will slip a bit as well, even if he is adapting well to the NHL. If Eberle struggles, then Hall slips. All of these intangibles could hinder their numbers, but if I'm 60 percent certain of each factor being favorable, then the numbers need to be where I have them. It's black or white, I won't go grey. Tavares had Moulson. Kane had Toews. Hall has Eberle. Two of the above pairings will give you a 70-point player – can you see which one doesn't?

2. So many defensemen...projected so high?

This is a great question, as I have 43 defensemen projected to get 41 points or more. Last season, 24 rearguards reached that mark and 25 the year before. However, I think the trend is shifting and I think this number will reach 30 this year. Mike Green and Duncan Keith combined for 145 points in 2009-10, topping the 137 points by the 1-2 of 2008-09 (Green and Andrei Markov). Washington winning the President's Trophy and Chicago winning the Cup speaks volumes to the success that an elite puck-moving defensemen brings to a team. Coaches tend to imitate and the style is starting to shift to more emphasis on the back end on the power play. The emergence of Drew Doughty only adds to this.

I am also seeing more stud blueliners entering the league this year than any other year in recent memory. P.K. Subban, Jamie McBain, Oliver Ekman-Larson, John Carlson and Erik Karlsson will all make a quick impact and all have the talent to one day top 60 points. So I will boldly state that 30 defensemen will reach the 41-point mark in the upcoming campaign. So why did I project 43?

Every year there is bound to be a handful of rearguards who miss five to 25 games due to injury. I try to project for injuries to an extent, but I can't see it all. I have Andy Greene getting 43 points in 74 games...but if he plays 70 games he'll dip below that 41-point threshold. It's just that simple. By this time next year, you can look at my list and see that I was right on 25 of these guys hitting 41 points, missed five other guys who got there and I didn't see it, another 10 fall short just from injury, and a handful more miss because of a Tom Gilbert-like slump. I think if other magazines only project 25 to reach 41 points, then they are not pointing out to you some great opportunities. Paul Martin and McBain come to mind as common rearguards the other guys shoot low on.



DOBBER'S 2010-11 CALDER TROPHY PICKS

By Darryl Dobbs

Last year I bombed big time. Not only did I have Tyler Myers not playing a full season for Buffalo, I didn't have him on my list of 35. Nor did I have Jimmy Howard. Duchene was eighth on the chart, but he was on everyone's chart. Perhaps if I expand the chart to 50, I can nail it this time. Myers opened my eyes to the possibility that young defensemen can make the team and actually post big numbers (since obviously Dion Phaneuf didn't hammer the point home a few years ago). Howard opened my eyes to the fact that an injury can open the door wide for a backup goaltender. So you'll see that reflected below. I take last year's "defeat" personally – I won't fail you again.

RANK	ROOKIE	POS.	TEAM	DOBBER SAYS...
1	Jordan Eberle	C/RW	Edmonton	Has already flourished playing against men
2	Taylor Hall	LW	Edmonton	The top 18-year-old in the world on a team that will play him in the top six immediately
3	P.K. Subban	D	Montreal	Montreal's best skater in the playoffs in April/May
4	Tyler Ennis	C	Buffalo	Coach Ruff leaned on him more and more when they needed postseason goals
5	Tyler Seguin	C	Boston	The other elite 18-year-old would be No.2 on this list were he not buried in Boston
6	John Carlson	D	Washington	He'll be Washington's best all-around defenseman as early as this year. Clutch.
7	Jamie McBain	D	Carolina	Not only were his brief NHL numbers big, but he had 29 pts in final 29 AHL games
8	Logan Couture	C	San Jose	The Sharks will lean on him more and more for secondary offense.
9	Oliver Ekman-Larson	D	Phoenix	If anyone has a shot at becoming the next Lidstrom, it's him.
10	Jeff Skinner	RW	Carolina	Awesome development camp + GM vote of confidence = dark horse.
11	Eric Tangradi	W	Pittsburgh	A red carpet has been rolled to Crosby's wing. Only injuries/poor camp can stop him.
12	Derek Stepan	C	New York	Playing between Gaborik and Frolov, and looks great in camp.
13	Cody Hodgson	C	Vancouver	The talent makes him a Top 5 favorite. The bad back knocks him out of the Top 10
14	Magnus Paajarvi	LW	Edmonton	If he makes the team, you can slide him into the Top 10 or 15 on this list
15	Jonathan Bernier	G	Los Angeles	He's so talented that he'll force the Kings to let him play this year
16	Mikael Backlund	C/W	Calgary	He needs to get on a scoring line or he'll have little chance of 45 points/Calder consideration
17	Cam Fowler	D	Anaheim	If he makes the team, he could be the No.2 power-play QB for the Ducks. Mara and Sutton signings hurt chances.
18	Michael Grabner	RW	Long Island	Florida needs goals and Grabner is great at scoring them. Perhaps the best on this list.
19	Brayden Schenn	C	Los Angeles	The second-line C job in LA is wide open. It could be Schenn's by Christmas. Knee injury hurts chances at roster spot.
20	Corey Crawford	G	Chicago	If Huet is buried in the minors, and the starter gets hurt or stumbles, Crawford will surprise
21	Michal Neuvirth	G	Washington	A Varlamov injury away from win after win after win
22	Alex Burmistrov	C	Atlanta	A little frail, but highly skilled. He made the club for at least a trial
23	Kevin Shattenkirk	D	Colorado	Sacco never seemed happy with his PP QB. Enter Shattenkirk. - CUT
24	Jordan Schroeder	C/W	Vancouver	Small, but very skilled. If he makes the team he'll be a Calder favorite - CUT
25	Mathieu Perreault	C	Washington	Currently penciled in as the No.2 center, he constantly overachieves – CUT

RANK	ROOKIE	POS.	TEAM	DOBBER SAYS...
26	Kyle Beach	LW	Chicago	Should wait another year, but cap issues could get him on the team right now. - CUT
27	Drayson Bowman	LW	Carolina	Skilled and with a lot of upside, but still getting used to the pro game
28	Cory Schneider	G	Vancouver	See Neuvirth, except replace the word "Varlamov" with the word "Luongo"
29	Joe Colborne	LW	Boston	Elite combination of size and skill, but the Bruins have too much depth right now. - CUT
30	Justin Peters	G	Carolina	Same situation as Neuvirth and Schneider - an injury to Ward will help his cause
31	Nino Niederreiter	RW	Long Island	Excellent upside, excellent competitor, but needs to make the team first
32	Maxim Goncharov	D	Phoenix	His upside is similar to a lesser Gonchar, but the 'Yotes may be too deep right now.
33	Jordan Caron	W	Boston	Made the team out of camp. Rare mix of skill and grit, but is quite injury prone. Worth keeping an eye on
34	Devan Dubnyk	G	Edmonton	It doesn't look good for Khabibulin, and Dubnyk could very well outplay Deslauriers
35	Henrik Karlsson	G	Calgary	Any big numbers need Kipper to get hurt first
36	Sergei Shirokov	W	Vancouver	If he makes the team it will be at Schroeder's expense. One-dimensional: offense – CUT
37	Nazem Kadri	C	Toronto	As soon as he can take the No.2 job from Grabovski, he'll take off – CUT
38	Lars Eller	C/W	Montreal	Likely bound for the third line this year, but if he moves up he'll post solid numbers
39	Jhonas Enroth	G	Buffalo	If Miller gets hurt, the Sabres won't turn to Lalime - they'll turn to Enroth - CUT
40	Jacob Markstrom	G	Florida	Unless the Panthers trade Vokoun early, Markstrom is probably high on this list...next year - CUT
41	Jonathan Blum	D	Nashville	Won't be a factor offensively unless Weber and/or Suter get hurt – CUT
42	Ryan Stoa	W	Colorado	Really made strides in his first pro season, but needs injuries to move up the depth chart – CUT
43	Casey Wellman	W	Minnesota	Undrafted college star impressed during cup of coffee late last year.
44	Brett Connolly	RW	Tampa Bay	If he makes the team, then he'll get the ice time. Long shot this year. – CUT
45	Thomas Kubalik	RW	Columbus	Strong camp and really clicking with Huselius and Vermette – CUT
46	Mattias Tedenby	LW	New Jersey	Skilled speedster needs to find a way into their top six. Unlikely. Next year. – CUT
47	Dustin Jeffrey	C/W	Pittsburgh	If Tangradi gets hurt, he's Top 10. If not, he slides out of the Top 20. Simple as that. – CUT
48	Igor Makarov	W	Chicago	Salary cap will see to it that talented winger gets a long look in camp – CUT
49	Evgeni Grachev	LW	New York	The signing of Frolov knocked him down about 20 spots on this list. - CUT
50	Brett MacLean	RW	Phoenix	He should make the team, but Tippett may bring him in slow. Great development so far - CUT

2010 PRESEASON SCORING LEADERS (Oct. 01)

Rk	Player	Ps	Tm	GP	PP	Tot	Rk	Player	Ps	Tm	GP	PP	Tot
1	ROY, DEREK	C	BUF	5	3	10	7	BELESKEY, MATT	L	ANA	6	1	4
1	KESSEL, PHIL	R	TOR	6	6	10	7	VISNOVSKY, LUBOMIR	D	ANA	5	4	4
2	GETZLAF, RYAN	C	ANA	5	6	9	7	FROLOV, ALEXANDER	L	NYR	2	2	4
2	PARISE, ZACH	L	N.J	4	1	9	7	KESLER, RYAN	C	VAN	4	1	4
2	STAFFORD, DREW	R	BUF	4	2	9	7	KABERLE, TOMAS	D	TOR	6	4	4
3	CAMPOLI, CHRIS	D	OTT	5	3	8	7	BACKES, DAVID	R	STL	4	2	4
3	STEEN, ALEXANDER	C	STL	5	3	8	7	JOHANSSON, MARCUS	C	WSH	5	1	4
3	SPEZZA, JASON	C	OTT	4	3	8	7	GIORDANO, MARK	D	CGY	3	3	4
3	VERSTEEG, KRIS	R	TOR	5	6	8	7	OSHIE, T.J.	C	STL	5	1	4
4	BOYES, BRAD	R	STL	5	3	7	7	STAMKOS, STEVEN	C	T.B	3	2	4
4	HUSELIUS, KRISTIAN	L	CBJ	4	3	7	7	KELLY, CHRIS	C	OTT	4	1	4
4	FEDOTENKO, RUSLAN	L	NYR	5	2	7	7	NISKANEN, MATT	D	DAL	4	3	4
4	RAFALSKI, BRIAN	D	DET	4	2	7	7	CAMMALLERI, MIKE	L	MTL	3	1	4
4	KOVALCHUK, ILYA	L	N.J	5	0	7	7	FILPPULA, VALTTERI	C	DET	5	1	4
5	TANGUAY, ALEX	L	CGY	4	2	6	7	GREEN, MIKE	D	WSH	3	1	4
5	KULEMIN, NIKOLAI	L	TOR	7	2	6	7	GREEN, JOSH	C	ANA	3	1	4
5	ST. LOUIS, MARTIN	R	T.B	3	3	6	7	KOPECKY, TOMAS	R	CHI	5	4	4
5	CARTER, JEFF	C	PHI	4	1	6	7	DATSYUK, PAVEL	C	DET	4	1	4
5	VERMETTE, ANTOINE	C	CBJ	4	1	6	7	WINCHESTER, JESSE	C	OTT	5	0	4
5	GRABOVSKI, MIKHAIL	C	TOR	7	1	6	7	MORROW, BRENDEN	L	DAL	3	1	4
5	PHANEUF, DION	D	TOR	6	5	6	7	KEITH, DUNCAN	D	CHI	3	3	4
5	GOLIGOSKI, ALEX	D	PIT	4	3	6	7	WHITE, TODD	C	NYR	4	0	4
5	MALKIN, EVGENI	C	PIT	4	0	6	7	POMINVILLE, JASON	R	BUF	3	2	4
5	FOLIGNO, NICK	L	OTT	6	2	6	7	PLANTE, ALEX	D	EDM	2	1	4
5	PERRON, DAVID	L	STL	4	4	6	7	MARLEAU, PATRICK	L	S.J	3	0	4
5	LETESTU, MARK	C	PIT	5	1	6	7	STRALMAN, ANTON	D	CBJ	4	2	4
5	PAVELSKI, JOE	C	S.J	4	2	6	7	FILATOV, NIKITA	L	CBJ	5	1	4
5	ZETTERBERG, HENRIK	L	DET	4	2	6	7	BRODIE, TJ	D	CGY	5	3	4
5	HEATLEY, DANY	R	S.J	4	2	6	7	DOAN, SHANE	R	PHX	3	3	4
6	MACARTHUR, CLARKE	L	TOR	5	2	5	7	BARTKOWSKI, MATT	D	BOS	4	1	4
6	HAGMAN, NIKLAS	L	CGY	4	1	5	7	KOPITAR, ANZE	C	L.A	2	2	4
6	GIROUX, CLAUDE	R	PHI	6	1	5	7	WILSON, KYLE	C	CBJ	5	0	4
6	PERRY, COREY	R	ANA	5	4	5	7	SEDDIN, HENRIK	C	VAN	4	4	4
6	KUNITZ, CHRIS	L	PIT	4	2	5	7	LIDSTROM, NICKLAS	D	DET	4	1	4
6	CROMBEEN, BRANDON	R	STL	5	1	5	7	TORRES, RAFFI	L	VAN	5	1	4
6	IGINLA, JAROME	R	CGY	4	1	5	7	MYERS, TYLER	D	BUF	3	2	4
6	MICHALEK, MILAN	L	OTT	4	1	5	7	BACKSTROM, NICKLAS	C	WSH	3	1	4
6	DEL ZOTTO, MICHAEL	D	NYR	4	4	5	7	SEDDIN, DANIEL	L	VAN	4	4	4
6	WILLIAMS, JUSTIN	R	L.A	4	0	5	7	MIETTINEN, ANTTI	R	MIN	5	1	4
6	ZHERDEV, NIKOLAI	R	PHI	5	0	5	7	FEHR, ERIC	R	WSH	5	2	4
6	OVECHKIN, ALEXANDER	L	WSH	3	1	5	7	SEABROOK, BRENT	D	CHI	4	1	4
6	SMITH, ZACK	C	OTT	5	1	5	7	GORGES, JOSH	D	MTL	3	2	4
6	SEMIN, ALEXANDER	L	WSH	4	2	5	7	BOZAK, TYLER	C	TOR	6	1	4
6	HOSSA, MARIAN	R	CHI	3	1	5	7	NEIL, CHRISTOPHER	R	OTT	4	2	4
6	LECAVALIER, VINCENT	C	T.B	3	3	5	7	BACKLUND, MIKAEL	C	CGY	5	0	4
6	COMRIE, MIKE	C	PIT	4	1	5	7	KOTALIK, ALES	R	CGY	3	2	4
6	STEPAN, DEREK	C	NYR	5	1	5	7	GABORIK, MARIAN	R	NYR	4	3	4
6	JOHNSON, JACK	D	L.A	3	2	5	7	LITTLE, BRYAN	R	ATL	5	2	4
6	ZAJAC, TRAVIS	C	N.J	5	2	5	7	PAAJARVI, MAGNUS	L	EDM	3	2	4
6	PLEKANEC, TOMAS	C	MTL	3	1	5	8	URBOM, ALEXANDER	D	N.J	5	0	3

Stats from Jason Arbuthnot's "Frozen Pool" (DobberHockey.com/frozenpool) Get preseason stats/lines there anytime during the preseason

UPCOMING IN THIS FANTASY GUIDE

Here are some things that will be added over the summer...

By Darryl Dobbs

1. Updated rosters and predictions (of course!)
2. All the latest cuts...
3. Email me at dobber@dobberhockey.com with your suggestion. Please put "Suggestion:" to start your subject line, so I see it right away. Or add your thoughts in the Forum.



THE DOBOTOMY

By Darryl Dobbs

In an analysis of all the teams and how they fared offensively last season, the changes they have made this summer, as well as the predictions made in the this pool guide, I have once again put together a team-by-team projection of goals for in the coming season.

NHL Projected Goals For By Team

After being down by one percent in 2008-09, the totals goals scored in the NHL were down once again, this time by just over two percent. As we wait for the superstars to really open things up (Alex Ovechkin, Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin have only scratched the surface), I will again predict a rebound of one to three percent. More puck-moving defensemen will enter the league full-time this year than in recent memory. Restrictions on goalie padding are getting tighter, offensive teams are succeeding (Flyers and Blackhawks in the Cup Final), and experienced veteran defensemen are being replaced by cheaper, slightly weaker youngsters – those are just a few of the trends that just scream “more goals!”

Washington –the best, but no big up or down movement. Ovy’s increase will be counted by small decreases such as with Knuble.

Detroit – second biggest jump thanks to return of Hudler. It will spark scoring lines

Philadelphia – the emergence of Leino, as well as a healthy Carter and Briere will see a 31-goal jump.

Pittsburgh – strides made by Crosby/Malkin offset but lack of wingers/Gonchar. Call it a wash.

Boston – biggest jump thanks to healthy star centers. Sometimes that’s all a team needs.

Vancouver – slight decline as the twins come back to Earth...just a little bit.

Carolina – Staal is ready for a big season and the ‘Canes were scoring like gangbusters in the second half last year.

Tampa Bay – Lecavalier’s resurgence will make all the difference here.

St. Louis – I’ve stated lots of times on the site, this team is poised to rebound. Too many talented players slumped last year.

Chicago – it was a big fire sale, but in the end their goals for will only drop by 25.

Buffalo – they’ll see a small improvement thanks to the arrival of Ennis

San Jose – the team’s scoring declined in the second half last year as the opposition figured out the top line.

Edmonton – my pick for most improved team in 2010-11, and it will be because of their offense.

Minnesota – a full season from Latendresse and Barker, plus the return of Bouchard, will add at least 20 goals.

New York – small increase thanks to Frolov, MZA.

Phoenix – Tippett teams tend to add 10 or 20 more goals each season under him as the youth gains experience.

Atlanta – they score a couple more goals, but their improvement is less than other team that shoot past them.

Columbus – Voracek is taking flight and Filatov arrives, makes for a nice little jump.

Anaheim – Same team essentially.

Long Island – at least 20 more goals just from Tavares and who he plays with.

Calgary – I may be buying into Sutter's theory too much that Jokinen and Tanguay together will help Iginla.

Florida – Frolik will really step up, and Grabner is an underrated addition. These guys will score enough to replace Horton.

Los Angeles – they don't decline very much at all, but a good 10 teams have bolstered their offense and passed them.

Colorado – if Mueller stays healthy you can add 20 goals to this number. That's what he'll create at the very least.

New Jersey – they gain four goals, but lose six spots. Adding Kovalchuk will shoot them into the Top 15 easy.

Toronto – small improvement, but on the right track.

Nashville – same ol' same ol', but a dozen teams have passed them.

Ottawa – flat to last year. But in the year ahead you need to improve, not stay flat. Gonchar helps, but needs to stay healthy.

Montreal – three more goals than last year, but that's pretty much flat – see my note for Ottawa.

Dallas – relying a lot on Richards, who was hurt a lot before last year.

PROJ. RK	TEAM	GF (PROJ.)	GF (LY)	LY RK	INC/DEC	PROJ. RK	TEAM	GF (PROJ.)	GF (LY)	LY RK	INC/DEC
1	Washington	315	318	1	-3	16	Phoenix	241	225	15	16
2	Detroit	268	229	14	39	17	Atlanta	239	234	12	5
3	Philadelphia	267	236	10	31	18	Columbus	239	216	25	23
4	Pittsburgh	258	257	5	1	19	Anaheim	238	238	8	0
5	Boston	257	206	29	51	20	Long Island	238	222	21	16
6	Vancouver	254	272	2	-18	21	Calgary	233	204	30	29
7	Carolina	253	230	13	23	22	Florida	232	208	28	24
8	Tampa Bay	252	217	24	35	23	Los Angeles	230	241	7	-11
9	St. Louis	251	225	18	26	24	Colorado	227	244	6	-17
10	Chicago	246	271	3	-25	25	New Jersey	226	222	19	4
11	Buffalo	243	235	11	8	26	Toronto	226	214	26	12
12	San Jose	243	264	4	-21	27	Nashville	225	225	16	0
13	Edmonton	243	214	27	29	28	Ottawa	220	225	17	-5
14	Minnesota	242	219	22	23	29	Montreal	220	217	23	3
15	New York	241	222	20	19	30	Dallas	215	237	9	-22

Dobber's Predicted Final Standings...

As with every year, these won't match up with the wins projected above for the goaltenders (so put down your calculators). Injuries and trades happen, so the goaltender's wins could be for other teams (or after a broken leg they may not happen at all). When the dust settles, this is how I see things shaking out.

Of note...

- The Devils fall and barely make the playoffs. We've been wondering when their might finally crumbles.
- Calgary also falls. Right out.
- Nashville, Phoenix and LA were no fluke last season. The Preds are easy (and common) pickings by other experts to fall out of the playoffs, so it takes some cajones to stand by them. They're a good, deep, well-coached team.
- The Blues get into the playoffs.
- The Oilers surprise and fall just short – they are my pick for most improved team.
- Toronto surprises with 89 points, missing the dance on the final day.
- Carolina builds on an awesome second half of 2009-10

EASTERN CONFERENCE STANDINGS						WESTERN CONFERENCE STANDINGS					
Atlantic	W	L	OTL	Pts	Playoffs	Central	W	L	OTL	Pts	Playoffs
Philadelphia	47	27	8	102	*	Chicago	46	27	9	101	*
Pittsburgh	47	29	6	100	*	Nashville	46	28	8	100	*
New Jersey	42	34	6	90	*	Detroit	46	29	7	99	*
New York	39	34	9	87		St. Louis	43	30	9	95	*
Long Island	38	34	10	86		Columbus	38	33	11	87	
Northeast						Northwest	W	L	OTL	Pts	
Boston	44	29	9	97	*	Vancouver	51	24	7	109	*
Buffalo	42	31	9	93	*	Colorado	39	34	9	87	
Montreal	39	31	12	90	*	Edmonton	40	37	5	85	
Ottawa	41	34	7	89		Calgary	33	39	10	76	
Toronto	38	33	11	87		Minnesota	29	44	9	67	
Southeast						Pacific	W	L	OTL	Pts	
Washington	51	23	8	110	*	Los Angeles	49	24	9	107	*
Carolina	43	29	10	96	*	San Jose	45	27	10	100	*
Tampa Bay	35	35	12	82		Phoenix	46	28	8	100	*
Atlanta	33	39	10	76		Dallas	38	33	11	87	
Florida	31	37	14	76		Anaheim	31	41	10	72	

Cup Pick: Pittsburgh over Vancouver

Norris Pick: Drew Doughty, Los Angeles

Hart Pick: Sidney Crosby, Pittsburgh

DOBBER'S ROTISSERIE INVITATIONAL

Pit Your Fantasy Hockey Wits Against the Likes of Dobber, Angus, Miller et al...

Every year, we at DobberHockey host a Three-Tiered Invitational Rotisserie contest and here is how it works. Sixty people are randomly selected (75 if you count the reserves) to participate in four divisions of 15 (the Entry Tier). Those 15 owners will draft on the draft date assigned to them (this year it will be the evening of Sept. 23, 27, 28 and 29) and compete with each other for top prize – the winner will receive a free DobberHockey Ultimate Fantasy Pack and they will also graduate to the Pro Tier. The Pro Tier consists of two divisions of 12. The winner of each of the Pro divisions wins an Ultimate Fantasy Pack and they will also graduate to the Expert Tier next season. The team in last place in each division gets demoted to the Entry Tier where they could be eliminated if they don't win.

That's where you face-off against the big-wigs. You get one year. If you finish in the Top 2 you can remain in the Expert Tier the following season. If not, down you go to the Pro. One year. One chance to show your stuff against myself and the rest of the gang. Furthermore, if an expert finishes in last place, he moves down to the Pro Tier as well. So the pressure is on! Senior writer Russ Miller will join the Pros this season. Cats: G, A, PP, S, PIM, +/-, W, Sv, GAA. Forwards: 4 at each position, 6 d-men, 2 goalies, 5 bench.

This year's Expert League participants are:

Dobber

Jeff Angus

Jason "Frozen Pool" Arbuthnot (defending champ)

John "Youth Injection" Ireton (Graduated from Entry, then Pro – his last chance to stick in the Expert Tier)

Jim "Grizzlies" Hooper (Graduated from the Pro – his last chance to stick in the Expert Tier)

Ian Fergusson

Ryan Ma

Steve "Notch" Johnson

Brent Lemon

Scott "Sin Bin" Parker (won division in last year's Pro Tier – his only chance to stick in the Expert Tier)

Francois "Chicleteur" Gaucher (won division in last year's Pro Tier – his only chance to stick in the Expert Tier)

Ryan Van Horne

The Draft:

I pick fifth, so my fingers are crossed that I can get Luongo. He is reliable and the best bet to get 40 wins. If I can't get him, I'll take Mike Green as the top defenseman and worry about goalies next round. Surely Pekka Rinne will still be around – fantasy owners do not rate him like they should. But suddenly, I notice that Ilya Kovalchuk has LW and RW eligibility. His value just shot up in my eyes. I take him. **Note: a dummy team (for the commissioner) drafted last, which is why the number one is sometimes removed. I took out all the dummy picks.**

Round 1

1	Alex Ovechkin (Was - LW)	YOUTH INJECTION	7	Martin Brodeur (NJ - G)	Chicleteur
2	Sidney Crosby (Pit - C)	Maaaasquito ...	8	Ryan Miller (Buf - G)	Expert's Audit
3	Evgeni Malkin (Pit - C)	FrozenPool	9	Nicklas Backstrom (Was - C)	Van Horne
4	Roberto Luongo (Van - G)	Lemon	10	Zach Parise (NJ - LW)	Angus Unleashed
5	Ilya Kovalchuk (NJ - LW,RW)	Dobber	11	Steven Stamkos (TB - C)	Grizzlies
6	Mike Green (Was - D)	Sin Bin	12	Dany Heatley (SJ - LW,RW)	Notch

When Brodeur and Miller go back-to-back, I become very concerned that a run of goaltenders was starting. That would kill me and taking Kovalchuk would have been a mistake. But things go back to normal. So I stick Rinne at the top of my list, and I wait. I should note that Grizzlies was on auto-draft for the first 18 rounds or so, and thus wound up with an impressive group of forwards, but the worst goaltending. Angus was also not in attendance for the first half, but he had a trusted partner fill in for him. As it creeps towards my pick I see that Halak, Rinne, Anderson, Fleury and Lundqvist are all still available. So screw goalies – it's on the short portion of the snake draft (as in, my next pick is 10 away instead of 14). I'm going to take the best RW available for multiple categories.

Round 2

2 Ilya Bryzgalov (Pho - G)	Notch	8 Henrik Lundqvist (NYR - G)	Sin Bin
3 Henrik Sedin (Van - C)	Grizzlies	9 Corey Perry (Anh - RW)	Dobber
4 Daniel Sedin (Van - LW)	Angus Unleashed	10 Jimmy Howard (Det - G)	Lemon
5 Alexander Semin (Was - RW)	Van Horne	11 Craig Anderson (Col - G)	FrozenPool
6 Pavel Datsyuk (Det - C)	Expert's Audit	12 Rick Nash (CIs - LW,RW)	Maaaasquito ...
7 Patrick Marleau (SJ - C,LW)	Chicleteur	13 Miikka Kiprusoff (Cgy - G)	YOUTH INJECTION

Not even Lundqvist going right before me will stop me from taking Corey Perry. I now have potentially 80 goals and 150 PIM on my wings from two players. Right now, all I am focusing on is points and penalty minutes – later I will worry about shoring up plus/minus and I will also pay more attention to shots on goal than I have in the past, as that category cost me last year (I finished third place last season). So I take Perry and then watch...extremely nervous as Howard, Anderson and Kipper go almost immediately. Then Fleury goes, and the run on goalies seems to end. So do I tempt fate and wait another round? After all, both Halak and Rinne are still out there and they are two of my favorite goalies to own in one-year leagues. They both have the starting job free and clear and each will post Top 5 numbers in all categories. Ryan Getzlaf is tempting me. But then again, I see Vincent Lecavalier is also still available and I know he'll definitely slip. Ditto for Eric Staal. And bottom line, if Vinny rebounds even a little, his stats will be reasonably close to Getzlaf's.

Round 3

1 Patrick Kane (Chi - RW)	YOUTH INJECTION	7 Ryan Getzlaf (Anh - C)	Chicleteur
2 Marc-Andre Fleury (Pit - G)	Maaaasquito ...	8 Jarome Iginla (Cgy - RW)	Expert's Audit
3 Zdeno Chara (Bos - D)	FrozenPool	9 Bobby Ryan (Anh - LW)	Van Horne
4 Martin St. Louis (TB - RW)	Lemon	10 Tuukka Rask (Bos - G)	Angus Unleashed
5 Pekka Rinne (Nsh - G)	Dobber	11 Eric Staal (Car - C)	Grizzlies
6 Drew Doughty (LA - D)	Sin Bin	12 Jaroslav Halak (StL - G)	Notch

I get my goalie. It's awesome getting the No.2 goalie on your list in the third round. I see that Staal and Getzlaf both go, but I'm confident Vinny will still be around. Some say I put too much faith in him, but I think the downside is minimal. What's the worst? Seventy points? Sixty PIM? That's a pretty good downside, when the upside is 90 and 80. One thing that does make me nervous though is the Doughty pick so soon after Chara. If defensemen start to go, I need to get on it, but at the same time I can't let all the good pivots slip past me. I'm at the short end of the rounds again, so I take Lecavalier and look at defensemen next round.

Round 4

2 Duncan Keith (Chi - D)	Notch	8 Dan Boyle (SJ - D)	Sin Bin
3 Joe Thornton (SJ - C)	Grizzlies	9 Vincent Lecavalier (TB - C)	Dobber
4 Cam Ward (Car - G)	Angus Unleashed	10 Henrik Zetterberg (Det - C)	Lemon
5 Chris Pronger (Phi - D)	Van Horne	11 Marian Gaborik (NYR - RW)	FrozenPool
6 Jeff Carter (Phi - C)	Expert's Audit	12 Anze Kopitar (LA - C)	Maaaasquito ...
7 Tomas Vokoun (Fla - G)	Chicleteur	13 Marty Turco (Chi - G)	YOUTH INJECTION

As Turco and Vokoun go, I start eyeballing Leighton. The only reason I let him continue to slide is his Yahoo average draft slot is around 170. No need to rush on him and I should take not just one, but two defensemen.

Round 5

1 Jonathan Toews (Chi - C)	YOUTH INJECTION	7 Sergei Gonchar (Ott - D)	Chicleteur
2 Paul Stastny (Col - C)	Maaaasquito ...	8 Dion Phaneuf (Tor - D)	Expert's Audit
3 Ryan Kesler (Van - C)	FrozenPool	9 Shea Weber (Nsh - D)	Van Horne
4 Michael Cammalleri (Mon - LW)	Lemon	10 Jason Spezza (Ott - C)	Angus Unleashed
5 Mark Streit (NYI - D)	Dobber	11 Daniel Alfredsson (Ott - RW)	Grizzlies
6 Semyon Varlamov (Was - G)	Sin Bin	12 Andrei Markov (Mon - D)	Notch

My selection of Streit kicks off a run of defensemen – six of the next 10 picks. So that means I’m definitely taking another one next round. At this point I realize that none of my favorite defensemen left are proven veterans. Just Subban, Karlsson and McBain are far and away my next three. I like Subban for his PIM potential.

Round 6

2 Erik Johnson (StL - D)	Notch	8 Steve Mason (Cl - G)	Sin Bin
3 Johan Franzen (Det - RW)	Grizzlies	9 P.K. Subban (Mon - D)	Dobber
4 Lubomir Visnovsky (Anh - D)	Angus Unleashed	10 Nathan Horton (Bos - RW)	Lemon
5 Jonathan Quick (LA - G)	Van Horne	11 Mike Richards (Phi - C)	FrozenPool
6 Marian Hossa (Chi - RW)	Expert's Audit	12 Nicklas Lidstrom (Det - D)	Maaaasquito ...
7 Patrick Sharp (Chi - C,LW)	Chicleteur	13 Steve Downie (TB - RW)	YOUTH INJECTION

When Hiller goes early in Round 7, my list of Tier 2 goaltenders is down to Leighton and Price. This may not be the “intelligent” strategy and it may not be the reasoning that you want to hear from me, but it’s the truth – I have Price in two keeper leagues, so I don’t want him in a third league if I can help it. That’s the main reason I take Leighton.

Round 7

1 Scott Hartnell (Phi - LW)	YOUTH INJECTION	7 Ales Hemsky (Edm - RW)	Chicleteur
2 Jonas Hiller (Anh - G)	Maaaasquito ...	8 Alexandre Burrows (Van - LW)	Expert's Audit
3 Christian Ehrhoff (Van - D)	FrozenPool	9 Carey Price (Mon - G)	Van Horne
4 Paul Martin (Pit - D)	Lemon	10 Brad Richards (Dal - C)	Angus Unleashed
5 Michael Leighton (Phi - G)	Dobber	11 Chris Stewart (Col - RW)	Grizzlies
6 Thomas Vanek (Buf - LW)	Sin Bin	12 John Tavares (NYI - C)	Notch

Now I have Rinne and Leighton as my 1-2. I honestly believe that Leighton will be this year’s Craig Anderson. And Rinne is the most underrated goaltender in the league in terms of numbers – these two could give me 75 to 80 wins and I believe they will. But, have a I seen enough from Leighton? Can he stay healthy? This uncertainty has me sliding some Tier 3 goalies into my watch list. The criteria – they have a real shot at being No.1. Antti Niemi is at the top of that list. Now I’m looking at wingers and my favorite left wingers are Ennis, Hall, Gagne and Penner. I look at right wingers and see a big pile of them that I like, so I focus on LW. I ask my Twitter followers their thoughts. The vote was fairly split, with leanings towards Penner or Ennis. However, Ennis won’t give me PIM. I put my money where my mouth is (in this very Guide) and move Hall to the top of my queue. He’ll flirt with 70 points, provided Hemsky stays healthy, Gagner takes a step forward and Eberle has a big rookie year.

Round 8

2 Tomas Plekanec (Mon - C)	Notch	8 Loui Eriksson (Dal - RW)	Sin Bin
3 Phil Kessel (Tor - RW)	Grizzlies	9 Taylor Hall (Edm - LW)	Dobber
4 Tomas Kaberle (Tor - D)	Angus Unleashed	10 Tyler Ennis (Buf - C,LW)	Lemon
5 Matt Duchene (Col - C)	Van Horne	11 Dustin Penner (Edm - LW)	FrozenPool
6 Niklas Backstrom (Min - G)	Expert's Audit	12 Travis Zajac (NJ - C)	Maaaasquito ...
7 Mikko Koivu (Min - C)	Chicleteur	13 Claude Giroux (Phi - RW)	YOUTH INJECTION

I’m okay between the pipes, I have two LW, two D, one C and one RW. Again, since centers are easy to fill, I decide to focus on either defensemen or right wingers. And again, since right wingers seem to be pretty deep still, I look at defensemen. We need six of them. At this point I notice that Marc Savard is still around. I am aware of his concussion, but I am also aware of how he always returns from injury before he is expected to. He hates sitting out. So at what point is the risk worth it? Certainly not now, but I slot him in my queue so I don’t forget.

Round 9

1 Derek Roy (Buf - C)	YOUTH INJECTION	7 Shane Doan (Pho - RW)	Chicleteur
2 Joe Pavelski (SJ - C,RW)	Maaaasquito ...	8 Brian Rafalski (Det - D)	Expert's Audit
3 Patric Hornqvist (Nsh - RW)	FrozenPool	9 Ryan Smyth (LA - LW)	Van Horne
4 Jiri Hudler (Det - RW)	Lemon	10 Simon Gagne (TB - LW)	Angus Unleashed
5 Tyler Myers (Buf - D)	Dobber	11 Antero Niittymaki (SJ - G)	Grizzlies
6 David Backes (StL - RW)	Sin Bin	12 Mark Giordano (Cgy - D)	Notch

I take Myers over Rafalski, risking the sophomore slump, because of the better penalty minutes and hope that the gap in points is not that great. When Rafalski goes three picks later, I look at other defensemen. I see McCabe is there as a nice 40-point, 80-PIM player to grab. But then I notice Wayne Simmonds is around. Potential 50-point, 120-PIM, plus-20, 150-shot player. His jump from his rookie to sophomore numbers was impressive. Clearly he is trending up and I don't see a step backwards when a player does this. I've found my No.2 RW, but I don't dare say his name on Twitter for fear of losing him to someone else who may have Twitter open.

Round 10

2	Dustin Byfuglien (Atl - RW,D)	Notch	8	Dan Carcillo (Phi - LW)	Sin Bin
3	Patrik Elias (NJ - C,LW)	Grizzlies	9	Wayne Simmonds (LA - RW)	Dobber
4	Danny Briere (Phi - RW)	Angus Unleashed	10	Brian Campbell (Chi - D)	Lemon
5	Jakub Voracek (CIs - RW)	Van Horne	11	Rene Bourque (Cgy - RW)	FrozenPool
6	Brenden Morrow (Dal - LW)	Expert's Audit	12	Peter Mueller (Col - C,LW)	Maaaasquito ...
7	Alexander Frolov (NYR - LW)	Chicleteur	13	Keith Yandle (Pho - D)	YOUTH INJECTION

I briefly consider Erik Karlsson, but in the end I want to keep hammering the PIM category.

Round 11

1	Jussi Jokinen (Car - LW)	YOUTH INJECTION	7	Alexander Edler (Van - D)	Chicleteur
2	Tobias Enstrom (Atl - D)	Maaaasquito ...	8	Kari Lehtonen (Dal - G)	Expert's Audit
3	Brooks Laich (Was - LW)	FrozenPool	9	Mike Knuble (Was - RW)	Van Horne
4	David Clarkson (NJ - RW)	Lemon	10	Wojtek Wolski (Pho - LW)	Angus Unleashed
5	Bryan McCabe (Fla - D)	Dobber	11	Alex Goligoski (Pit - D)	Grizzlies
6	Nikolai Zherdev (Phi - RW)	Sin Bin	12	Keith Ballard (Van - D)	Notch

So with Streit, Subban, Myers and McCabe I am very pleased with my rearguards. All four will top 40 points at worst, with Streit and Subban possibly hitting 55. And none of them are slouches in the PIM department. I like Streit's upside with an improved John Tavares. Now I need to address the one position that I have just one player in – center. Savard is still available. But still too risky for me. Let someone else roll the dice. Jordan Eberle is there. Do I think he wins the Calder or not? If I have faith in Hall, I have to go full bore and have faith in Eberle. The fact that he'll get RW eligibility very soon seals the deal for me.

Round 12

2	Kevin Bieksa (Van - D)	Notch	8	Erik Karlsson (Ott - D)	Sin Bin
3	Zach Bogosian (Atl - D)	Grizzlies	9	Jordan Eberle (Edm - C)	Dobber
4	Ryane Clowe (SJ - LW)	Angus Unleashed	10	Tomas Fleischmann (Was - LW)	Lemon
5	Marek Zidlicky (Min - D)	Van Horne	11	Chris Mason (Atl - G)	FrozenPool
6	Milan Lucic (Bos - LW)	Expert's Audit	12	Stephane Robidas (Dal - D)	Maaaasquito ...
7	Jason Pominville (Buf - RW)	Chicleteur	13	Pavel Kubina (TB - D)	YOUTH INJECTIO

I'm disappointed to see Karlsson go, but I already have four defensemen. However, right after my pick Fleischmann goes and I kick myself. He'll get C eligibility I'm sure. I should have prepared for that and had him on my queue. I'm happy with Eberle, though. When Chris Mason goes, I decide that I need to cover myself off for Leighton.

Round 13

1	Michael Del Zotto (NYR - D)	YOUTH INJECTION	7	Kristian Huselius (CIs - LW)	Chicleteur
2	James Neal (Dal - LW)	Maaaasquito ...	8	Teemu Selanne (Anh - RW)	Expert's Audit
3	Joni Pitkanen (Car - D)	FrozenPool	9	Ray Whitney (Pho - LW)	Van Horne
4	Ryan Suter (Nsh - D)	Lemon	10	Jordan Staal (Pit - C)	Angus Unleashed
5	Antti Niemi (SJ - G)	Dobber	11	David Booth (Fla - LW)	Grizzlies
6	David Krejci (Bos - C)	Sin Bin	12	Steve Ott (Dal - C)	Notch

So Rinne, Leighton and Niemi in a league with weekly changes. I am certain that Niemi will be great to have for some weeks. Antero Niittymaki isn't exactly an iron man. So I'm set in goal and happy on defense. I scan the wingers and pivots for potential

deals and I like Kunitz the best. He was hurt for much of last year, but if you pay attention to when he was healthy and playing with Crosby, you get two windows – last year's playoffs (almost a point per game) and down the stretch in 2008-09 (almost a point per game). If he's healthy, I like him for a career year. And he'll also get me 50 penalty minutes and 25 goals. Yes, at this point a criteria I am looking at is shots and, secondly – goals. I admit that I am sorely tempted to take Sean Avery over Kunitz. Even though I have Perry, Simmonds and McCabe, I am tempted to take Avery because he should not be available so late.

Round 14

2	Chris Neil (Ott - RW)	Notch	8	Sam Gagner (Edm - C)	Sin Bin
3	Mason Raymond (Van - LW)	Grizzlies	9	Chris Kunitz (Pit - LW)	Dobber
4	Tom Gilbert (Edm - D)	Angus Unleashed	10	Mike Fisher (Ott - C)	Lemon
5	Olli Jokinen (Cgy - C)	Van Horne	11	Kurtis Foster (Edm - D)	FrozenPool
6	Kimmo Timonen (Phi - D)	Expert's Audit	12	Martin Havlat (Min - RW)	Maaaasquito ...
7	Sean Avery (NYR - LW)	Chicleteur	13	Ryan Whitney (Edm - D)	YOUTH INJECTION

Chicleteur makes it easy for me. So I get Kunitz. I have three LW, three G, four D, two RW and two C. Again I am happy with what is left on the right side...but pivots are surprisingly slim. And...Marc Savard...really? Nobody rolls the dice on him after 14 rounds? That's 168 picks! I realize that if I take him, I need to get a fifth centerman. That breaks one of my rules – not to waste a bench spot for a pivot because they are easy to find on the wire. (When I made this decision, the ESPN report I note of in the Boston section had not come to light as of yet – oops)

Round 15

1	Jack Johnson (LA - D)	YOUTH INJECTION	7	Brent Seabrook (Chi - D)	Chicleteur
2	Dustin Brown (LA - RW)	Maaaasquito ...	8	Nik Antropov (Atl - C)	Expert's Audit
3	Kris Letang (Pit - D)	FrozenPool	9	Dan Ellis (TB - G)	Van Horne
4	Jamie McBain (Car - D)	Lemon	10	Victor Hedman (TB - D)	Angus Unleashed
5	Marc Savard (Bos - C)	Dobber	11	Jonas Gustavsson (Tor - G)	Grizzlies
6	Tyler Bozak (Tor - C)	Sin Bin	12	Alexei Ponikarovsky (LA - LW)	Notch

I considered Bozak, but didn't like the 12 penalty minutes he would give me. If Savard plays even 60 games he'll give me a huge boost for 20 of the rotisserie weeks. All the same, I need to make certain I get a great No.4 center to cover my ass here. I'm looking at Steen, Weiss and Ribeiro. I like Ribeiro the best. But first, I want my third RW. I see Troy Brouwer and his steadily rising goals, points and penalty minutes year after year. Since it's the short end of the draft for me, I set aside centers because I want Brouwer.

Round 16

2	Mikael Samuelsson (Van - RW)	Notch	8	Tim Connolly (Buf - C)	Sin Bin
3	Niklas Kronwall (Det - D)	Grizzlies	9	Troy Brouwer (Chi - RW)	Dobber
4	Kyle Okposo (NYI - RW)	Angus Unleashed	10	Alex Tanguay (Cgy - LW)	Lemon
5	Brian Gionta (Mon - RW)	Van Horne	11	Tim Thomas (Bos - G)	FrozenPool
6	Jay Bouwmeester (Cgy - D)	Expert's Audit	12	Michal Neuvirth (Was - G)	Maaaasquito ...
7	Brian Elliott (Ott - G)	Chicleteur	13	Andy McDonald (StL - LW)	YOUTH INJECTION

Got him. Now with at least three in every position, I can solve that C problem that is nagging at me.

Round 17

1	Pascal Leclaire (Ott - G)	YOUTH INJECTION	7	James Wisniewski (NYI - D)	Chicleteur
2	Sheldon Souray (Edm - D)	Maaaasquito ...	8	Stephen Weiss (Fla - C)	Expert's Audit
3	J. Langenbrunner (NJ - RW)	FrozenPool	9	James van Riemsdyk (Phi - LW)	Van Horne
4	Andy Greene (NJ - D)	Lemon	10	Brad Boyes (StL - RW)	Angus Unleashed
5	Mike Ribeiro (Dal - C)	Dobber	11	Andrei Kostitsyn (Mon - LW)	Grizzlies
6	Kris Versteeg (Tor - LW)	Sin Bin	12	Tomas Holmstrom (Det - RW)	Notch

I have Lecavalier, Eberle, Savard, Ribeiro up the middle. I'm set in net. I have Perry, Simmonds and Brouwer for RW; Kovalchuk, Hall and Kunitz on the LW. I think I would like either another winger or another defenseman. Either wing. So I look through what is available. Before the draft, I had bumped up all my sleepers and/or underrated Yahoo picks up the list so I don't miss them. For

defensemen I see two that I like – Jeff Schultz was a plus-50 last year. I think 25 points and plus-30 would help my team. I also see an improving Matt Carle available, and John Carlson. If I take two of them, I think I would have the best one through six in this league. But I'm leery of taking Carlson since I already have Hall, Eberle and Subban. Enough with the rookies!

Round 18

2	Nikita Filatov (Cls - LW)	Notch	8	Evander Kane (Atl - LW)	Sin Bin
3	Mathieu Carle (Mon - D)	Grizzlies	9	Jeff Schultz (Was - D)	Dobber
4	Patrice Bergeron (Bos - C)	Angus Unleashed	10	Alex Steen (StL - C)	Lemon
5	Zenon Konopka (NYI - C)	Van Horne	11	John Carlson (Was - D)	FrozenPool
6	Ed Jovanovski (Pho - D)	Expert's Audit	12	Alex Kovalev (Ott - RW)	Maaaasquito ...
7	Ian White (Cgy - D)	Chicleteur	13	Lee Stempniak (Pho - RW)	YOUTH INJECTION

That Grizzlies pick is an autopick still – Yahoo really messed up their Carle's. It's the Philly Carle who should have went there. Anyway, I get Schultz. I see Steen goes. He was my preferred bench pivot. I think he'll get winger eligibility as well, so it would have been nice to have him.

Round 19

1	Antoine Vermette (Cls - C)	YOUTH INJECTION	7	Niclas Bergfors (Atl - RW)	Chicleteur
2	Matt Carkner (Ott - D)	Maaaasquito ...	8	Steve Sullivan (Nsh - LW)	Expert's Audit
3	Ryan Malone (TB - LW)	FrozenPool	9	Carlo Colaiacovo (StL - D)	Van Horne
4	Valtteri Filppula (Det - C)	Lemon	10	Colton Orr (Tor - RW)	Angus Unleashed
5	Matt Carle (Phi - D)	Dobber	11	Chris Osgood (Det - G)	Grizzlies
6	Scottie Upshall (Pho - RW)	Sin Bin	12	Devin Setoguchi (SJ - RW)	Notch

I like it: Streit, Subban, Myers, McCabe, Schultz and Carle. With the latter two really boosting my plus/minus. I need to fill my last LW and RW spots and then my bench. I immediately want Frolik and Benn – I'm looking at goals and shots. In that order. However, the Yahoo average draft spot has Benn being taken an average of 30 spots ahead of Frolik. And besides, LW is a tougher fill than RW. So I cross my fingers and wait. I stick other players in my queue so I'm not caught off guard, including Leino (LW).

Round 20

2	Matt Moulson (NYI - LW)	Notch	8	Dennis Wideman (Fla - D)	Sin Bin
3	Anton Stralman (Cls - D)	Grizzlies	9	Jamie Benn (Dal - LW)	Dobber
4	Dwayne Roloson (NYI - G)	Angus Unleashed	10	Jonathan Bernier (LA - G)	Lemon
5	Kyle Quincey (Col - D)	Van Horne	11	Guillaume Latendresse (Min - LW)	FrozenPool
6	Martin Erat (Nsh - RW)	Expert's Audit	12	Brent Burns (Min - D)	Maaaasquito ...
7	Scott Gomez (Mon - C)	Chicleteur	13	John-Michael Liles (Col - D)	YOUTH INJECTION

Got him. Now have eyes only for Frolik. Todd Bertuzzi is my backup. To me that's a huge gap. I want Frolik. His goals and shots will both improve this year, possibly by a lot.

Round 21

1	Jason Arnott (NJ - C)	YOUTH INJECTION	7	Fedor Tyutin (Cls - D)	Chicleteur
2	Mike Comrie (Pit - LW)	Maaaasquito ...	8	Dan Hamhuis (Van - D)	Expert's Audit
3	Brandon Dubinsky (NYR - C)	FrozenPool	9	David Perron (StL - LW)	Van Horne
4	Craig Rivet (Buf - D)	Lemon	10	Jason Demers (SJ - D)	Angus Unleashed
5	Michael Frolik (Fla - RW)	Dobber	11	Brooks Orpik (Pit - D)	Grizzlies
6	Dmitry Kulikov (Fla - D)	Sin Bin	12	Marc-Edouard Vlasic (SJ - D)	Notch

Bingo. Now to fill out my bench. Currently that includes Niemi. Need a defenseman, a center and one of each wing. Leino is by far tops on my list. Did everyone forget him? The guy was a top playoff producer – even if that was a fluke, he shouldn't have slipped beyond the 15th round. Also in my queue – Dennis Seidenberg, because his improving numbers have me thinking 35 points and a solid plus/minus and 150 shots. Also, Shawn Horcoff – he'll fill in for Savard to start, and if I'm right about Hall and Eberle, then

Horcoff will have a huge rebound year. If not, I'll be in the bottom half. A lot riding on my Oilers hunch, but that's fantasy hockey for you. I could at the same time look like a genius.

Round 22

2 Peter Regin (Ott - C)	Notch	8 Anton Babchuk (Car - D)	Sin Bin
3 Rick DiPietro (NYI - G)	Grizzlies	9 Ville Leino (Phi - LW)	Dobber
4 Cody Franson (Nsh - D)	Angus Unleashed	10 Scott Clemmensen (Fla - G)	Lemon
5 T.J. Oshie (StL - C)	Van Horne	11 Jochen Hecht (Buf - LW)	FrozenPool
6 Erik Cole (Car - LW)	Expert's Audit	12 Milan Michalek (Ott - LW)	Maaaasquito ...
7 Andrew Brunette (Min - LW)	Chicleteur	13 Tyler Seguin (Bos - C)	YOUTH INJECTION

Leino. For my bench. Between Hall and Leino, one of them should be good for 65, right?

Round 23

1 Matthew Lombardi (Nsh - C)	YOUTH INJECTION	7 Johnny Boychuk (Bos - D)	Chicleteur
2 Cam Barker (Min - D)	Maaaasquito ...	8 Radim Vrbata (Pho - RW)	Expert's Audit
3 Bill Guerin (Phi - RW)	FrozenPool	9 Derek Dorsett (Cls - RW)	Van Horne
4 Blake Wheeler (Bos - RW)	Lemon	10 Eric Fehr (Was - RW)	Angus Unleashed
5 Dennis Seidenberg (Bos - D)	Dobber	11 Brandon Prust (NYR - LW)	Grizzlies
6 Dave Bolland (Chi - C)	Sin Bin	12 Joffrey Lupul (Anh - LW)	Notch

While I think Boychuk is the better pick here, I think Seidenberg is the safer one. And I need "safe". If you go too nutty on your hunches, and rookies, and rebounds...you need to balance that with some safety. Especially when the upside isn't that much greater, but the downside is significant. I really like the Bolland pick here – I almost took him over Horcoff, but don't like his fragility. I also like the Fehr pick. He was in my final three in terms of right wingers (so it makes my decision easier). I dislike the Guerin pick. He'll be replaced via waivers very early, methinks.

Round 24

2 Viktor Stalberg (Chi - LW)	Notch	8 Tuomo Ruutu (Car - LW)	Sin Bin
3 Ryan Callahan (NYR - RW)	Grizzlies	9 Shawn Horcoff (Edm - C)	Dobber
4 Rich Peverley (Atl - C)	Angus Unleashed	10 Andrew Ladd (Atl - LW)	Lemon
5 Ryan Wilson (Col - D)	Van Horne	11 Tom Poti (Was - D)	FrozenPool
6 Joe Corvo (Car - D)	Expert's Audit	12 Antti Miettinen (Min - RW)	Maaaasquito ...
7 J.P. Dumont (Nsh - RW)	Chicleteur	13 Milan Hejduk (Col - RW)	YOUTH INJECTION

Horcoff, as I noted earlier. I notice Grizzlies are very deep up the middle and his autopicker gave him Niittymaki. Potentially, I could deal him Niemi for DiPietro and in exchange upgrade myself at center. I tuck that idea away for later in the week.

Round 25

YOUTH INJECTION			
1 Magnus Paajarvi (Edm - LW)	INJECTION	7 Zack Stortini (Edm - RW)	Chicleteur
2 R.J. Umberger (Cls - C)	Maaaasquito ...	8 Derick Brassard (Cls - C)	Expert's Audit
3 Manny Malhotra (Van - C)	FrozenPool	9 Braydon Coburn (Phi - D)	Van Horne
4 Filip Kuba (Ott - D)	Lemon	10 PM Bouchard (Min - LW)	Angus Unleashed
5 Bryan Little (Atl - RW)	Dobber	11 Cody Hodgson (Van - C)	Grizzlies
6 Oliver Ekman-Lar (Pho - D)	Sin Bin	12 Nick Boynton (Chi - D)	Notch

C - Lecavalier, Eberle, Savard, Ribeiro

LW - Kovalchuk, Hall, Kunitz, Benn

RW - Perry, Simmonds, Brouwer, Frolik

D - Streit, Subban, Myers, McCabe, Schultz, Carle

G - Rinne, Leighton

Bench - Leino (LW), Seidenberg (D), Horcoff (C), Little (RW), Niemi (G)

ADDED/ CHANGES...

Added or changed since September 17, 2010

All training camp cuts are noted in the Prospect chart for each team. I won't be noting them here, as there will be too many. You will need to review, team-by-team, those charts to see if your player was cut. If I predicted points for the player and he was cut, I will adjust accordingly.

- Salmela injury note added (NJ)
- Kuba injury note added (OTT)
- Savard injury note added (BOS)
- Russell injury note added (CBJ)
- Stepan added to chart (NYR)
- Drury injury note added (NYR)
- Josi injury note added (NSH)
- Smith injury note added (TB)
- Savard injury note updated (BOS)
- Expert League Draft article complete
- Hockey Pool Geek exclusive offer added (page 85)
- Ryan/Beleskey note/charts updated, (ANH)
- Stajan injury note, (CGY)
- Horcoff note added, (EDM)
- Schenn note updated, (LA)
- Line combo note added (MTL)
- Kostitsyn note updated (NSH)
- Sterling note added (PIT)
- Mueller injury note added, (COL)
- Samsonov note added, CAR charts adjusted
- camp note added, CHI
- Fransson note updated (LA)
- Charts updated for most teams.
- Harding note added (MIN)
- Streit note added, roster adjusted (NYI)
- Rangers lineup note added
- Leafs lineup note added
- Training Camp Invites updated
- Calder picks chart updated
- Replaced 2009 preseason scoring leaders with 2010 preseason scoring leaders
- Lupul note updated (ANA)
- Boychuk note added (CAR)
- Most rosters updated, including new players added to replace cut ones (i.e. Cohen, COL). Check all teams
- Zharkov lowdown updated. (NJ)
- Laperriere/Guerin note added (PHI)
- Sterling note updated (PIT)
- Injury notes added for St. Louis
- Morrison note added (VAN)
- Mottau note added (NYI)
- PIM note updated (COL)
- Team cuts, proj changes on Festerling, Sbisa, Hall, Eberle, Paajarvi, Santorelli, Streit
- Santorelli note added (FLA)
- Goalie note added (NSH)
- Cole note added (STL)
- Calder picks updated (added Kubalik, CBJ)
- Preseason scoring leaders updated
- Theodore note added (MIN)
- Campbell injury note (CHI)

- Vanek injury note
- Grabner/Santorelli note (FLA)
- Sauer inserted into lineup (NYR)
- Prospal injury note added (NYR)
- Goalie note updated (LA)
- Muzzin note added, inserted into lineup (LA)
- Morrison note updated (VAN)
- UFA and camp tryouts updated
- Burmistrov note added (ATL)
- Morrison note added, added to roster (CGY)
- Potulny note added (CHI)
- Olver/Holos inserted into lineup, charts updated (COL)
- Peckham inserted into lineup (EDM)
- Souray note updated (EDM)
- McArdle inserted into lineup, PIM note updated (FLA)
- Grabner removed from lineup, note updated (FLA)
- Clune removed from roster, Clifford inserted (LA)
- PIM note updated (LA)
- Lineup note added re: Parse, Loktionov, Lewis (LA)
- Andersson, Parent removed from NSH, O'Brien added
- PIM note updated (NSH)
- Grabner added to lineup, charts updated (NYI)
- Christensen note updated (NYR)
- Kennedy/White note added (NYR)
- Guerin note updated (PHI)
- Wingels added to roster, charts updated (SJ)
- Moore added to roster (SJ)
- Ritola added to roster (TB)
- Morrison/Tambellini note updated (VAN)
- Fedotenko added to roster (NYR)
- Prospal injury note updated (NYR)
- Schremp injury note added (NYI)
- Zubrus note added (NJ)
- Brent added to roster (TOR)
- Sloan added to roster (WAS)
- Fowler put back into lineup, ANA
- Stewart added to roster, ATL
- Caron added to roster, charts, plus note added, BOS
- McCormick added to roster, Ellis removed, BUF
- Sutter added to roster, CGY
- Kotalik/Moss injury note added, CGY
- Kopecky note added, CHI
- Leddy added to roster, CHI
- Dupuis added to roster, COL
- Wilson added to roster, CBJ
- Eriksson injury note added, DAL
- Contract note added, Lindgren removed from roster, DAL
- PIM note updated, VAN
- Hordichuk added to lineup, FLA, removed from VAN
- Paetsch added to lineup, VAN, removed from FLA
- Weaver added to lineup, FLA
- Zubrus note updated, NJ
- Urbom added to roster, NJ
- Schlemko added to roster, PHO
- Leighton injury note updated, PHI
- Calder Picks chart - FINALIZED
- Preseason scoring leaders updated - FINAL

UPCOMING, AND OTHER INFO...

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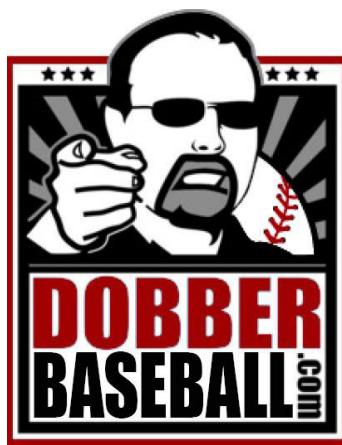
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