Written by Eric Daoust Thursday, 06 June 2013 12:25 - Last Updated Thursday, 06 June 2013 21:20



The new Atlantic Division - how do the teams stack up from a cap perspective?

Three weeks ago we looked at <u>a breakdown of the salary cap situation for all 30 NHL</u>

<u>teams</u>
. The message is clear: there will be fewer dollars available for free agents this summer than there are normally due to the salary cap ceiling dropping to \$64.3 million. The impact on fantasy hockey, mainly cap leagues, is significant as there will be many players who will be forced to sign for less than what we may think they are worth.

Written by Eric Daoust

Thursday, 06 June 2013 12:25 - Last Updated Thursday, 06 June 2013 21:20 This week we will continue a team-by-team breakdown of potential moves that could happen this summer. Hopefully we can stay ahead of the curve in trying to determine which players could potentially become cap bargains when they sign their new contracts. Since the 2004-05 lockout, the popular course of action is for teams to take care of their own. Many pending contract expirations are settled during the season rather than waiting until after July 1st. Then, those who become free agents get whatever money is left, often with limited potential destinations. So with that in mind, it is highly probable that free agents who re-sign with their current teams will have more odds of signing contracts that resemble what we would have seen last summer. On the other hand, players who hit the open market may get the short end of the stick. Here is a breakdown of the NHL's new Atlantic division: **Carolina Hurricanes** 

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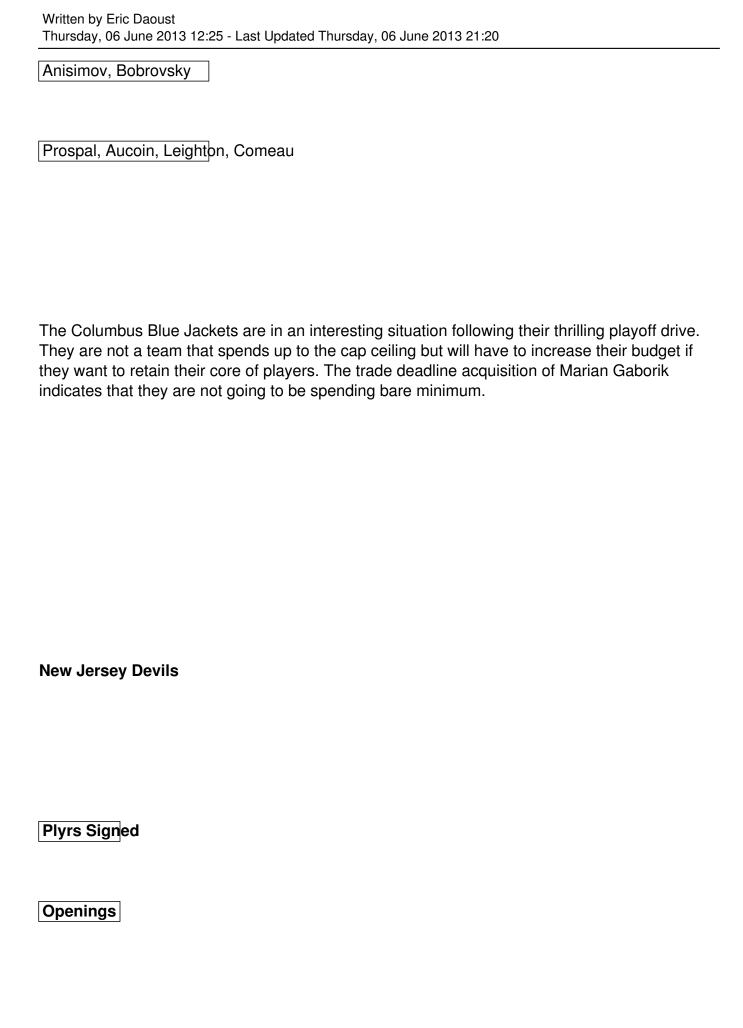
Plyrs Signed		
Openings		
Cap Space		
\$/Opening		
Key RFA		
Key UFA		
16		
7		
\$8,197,500		
\$1,171,071		

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Dalpe
Corvo, Larose, Bergeron, Ellis, Brent
Financially, the Carolina Hurricanes are in pretty good shape. They have a limited amount of cap space but aside from Joe Corvo none of their free agents will command a lot of money. Given the negative outcome of their season, it is possible that the team parts with many or all o its unrestricted free agents in favor of bringing in new blood. They could be active in free agenc or on the trade market as they try to improve their group for next season.
In Corvo's case, the team can replace him by simply giving younger defensemen more minutes and responsibility. If he goes the team will need to add a defenseman. Corvo himself could be a solid cap bargain moving forward. He has never had a cap hit greater than \$2.6 million despite putting up solid fantasy numbers most years. Expect him to get the short end of the stick financially once again.

## **Columbus Blue Jackets**

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Plyrs Signed		
Openings		
Cap Space		
\$/Opening		
Key RFA		
Key UFA		
16		
7		
\$19,393,691		
\$2,770,527		



Written by Eric Daoust

Thursday, 06 June 2013 12:25 - Last Updated Thursday, 06 June 2013 21:20 Cap Space \$/Opening **Key RFA** Key UFA 14 9 \$26,187,500 \$2,909,722 D'Agostini, Josefson, Henrique, Loktionov Elias, Zidlicky, Zubrus, Clarkson, Sullivan, Ponikarovsky

The New Jersey Devils are a team that could have a much different look by the time the summer is over. They are not in terrible shape cap-wise but have a lot of key players who are pending unrestricted free agents. Patrik Elias should re-sign with the team given the amount of

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Thursday, 06 June 2013 12:25 - Last Updated Thursday, 06 June 2013 21:20 years he has spent there but things are not as certain for the likes of Dainius Zubrus, David Clarkson and Marek Zidlicky. Clarkson is likely to receive a bloated contract this summer because of his rare combination of scoring ability and nastiness. The Devils have enough cap space to re-sign him but he clearly has options and would be wise to explore them. Zubrus has not scored more than 44 points in a season since 2007 and is likely overrated in fantasy hockey regardless of where he signs. Zidlicky had a poor campaign but has a history of producing and could be a good cap bargain next season. **New York Islanders** Plyrs Signed Openings

Written by Eric Daoust

Thursday, 06 June 2013 12:25 - Last Updated Thursday, 06 June 2013 21:20 Cap Space \$/Opening **Key RFA** Key UFA 13 10 \$30,325,167 \$3,032,517 Bailey, Poulin, Ullstrom, Hamonic, Hickey Thomas, Streit, Nabokov, Reasoner, Boyes The New York Islanders are a team that wants to spend as little as it can to get by. This means

that the restricted free agents will likely be re-signed while most of their unrestricted free agents

will probably hit the open market.

Written by Eric Daoust Thursday, 06 June 2013 12:25 - Last Updated Thursday, 06 June 2013 21:20 There are already rumors that Mark Streit will hit free agency while Brad Boyes will probably be let go in favor of another cheap player looking to resurrect his career. Evgeny Nabokov could be re-signed but the idea of acquiring Roberto Luongo in a trade sending a pricey asset back to Vancouver may be a better option to help control the team budget. The only departing free agent who could be a cap bargain is goaltender Tim Thomas who will probably not receive a massive contract should he decide to return to the NHL. He is only two years removed from winning the Conn Smythe trophy and may have a strong season or two left in him. **New York Rangers** 

Written by Eric Daoust

Thursday, 06 June 2013 12:25 - Last Updated Thursday, 06 June 2013 21:20 Plyrs Signed Openings Cap Space \$/Opening Key RFA **Key UFA** 17 6 \$14,155,833 \$2,359,306 McDonagh, Sauer, Hagelin, Stepan, Zuccarello Clowe, Eminger

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Written by Eric Daoust

The biggest question mark for the New York Rangers heading into the offseason is the status of centerman Brad Richards. He has not lived up to his massive contract and is a candidate to be bought out this summer. Even though they are in pretty good financial shape overall, parting ways with Richards may be the best course of action to get away from the lifetime commitment. Meanwhile, the status of Ryane Clowe depends on what happens to Richards as most of the available cap space will go to restricted free agents Ryan McDonagh, Carl Hagelin, Derek Stepan and Mats Zuccarello. Clowe will command a raise from his \$3.6 million cap hit but with fewer available dollars around the league he should still be affordable in roto leagues. Philadelphia Flyers Plyrs Signed

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Openings
Cap Space
\$/Opening
Key RFA
Key UFA
20
3
\$681,905
\$227,302
Gustafsson, Wellwood
Gagne, Fedotenko, Foster

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The Philadelphia Flyers are once again right up against the salary cap ceiling but with no major free agents this is not a bad thing. Still, after failing to qualify for the postseason they will probably look to make some changes. Aside from potential trades, there are a couple buyout candidates who could help create some space in addition to the cap relief that they will get for continuing to have Chris Pronger on long-term injured reserve.

Goaltender Ilya Bryzgalov has been a disaster in two seasons since signing with the Flyers. Should he be bought out he could be a good buy-low option and an excellent cap bargain should he find work elsewhere. The risk with Bryzgalov is that if he is bought out he could disappear entirely from the NHL.

The other buyout candidate is Daniel Briere who has two years left on his deal with a cap hit of \$6.5 million. He just completed a poor campaign with just 16 points in 34 games after just 49 points in 2011-12. Like Bryzgalov, if he is released by the Flyers he could be an excellent cap bargain as he is still a highly-talented player and would have a lot to prove if his long-term contract security is taken away.

## **Pittsburgh Penguins**

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Plyrs Signed		
Openings		
Cap Space		
\$/Opening		
Key RFA		
Key UFA		
17		
6		
\$8,501,667		
\$1,416,945		

Written by Eric Daoust Thursday, 06 June 2013 12:25 - Last Updated Thursday, 06 June 2013 21:20

The Washington Capitals are in a tough cap situation with regards to re-signing second-leading scorer Mike Ribeiro. The \$6 million in available space will probably go towards re-signing restricted free agents Karl Alzner and Marcus Johansson while Ribeiro's contract demands, both in terms of money and term, are likely too much for the Capitals to handle.

Should Ribeiro jump to another team, the void left up front gives a great opportunity for Johansson or Mathieu Perreault to take the next step in their development. Both would become strong cap bargains for next year.

If the team decides to use an amnesty buyout it could be to rid them of Jeff Schultz. The mammoth defenseman <a href="has frequently been scratched and wants out of town">has frequently been scratched and wants out of town</a>. He has not been the same player since finishing plus-50 back in 2010 and his average ice time slipped to 14 minutes per contest. Freeing up his \$2.7 million cap hit would help the team patch some holes to improve their team for next season.

Plyrs Signed

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Openings
Cap Space
\$/Opening
Key RFA
Key UFA
19
4
\$6,265,705
\$1,566,426
Alzner, Johansson
Ribeiro, Poti, Hendricks, Wolski

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