

It's a fantasy hockey revolution!

For the fourth consecutive season I had the privilege of competing in the annual Dobber Hockey's Expert League, which contains essentially the "brain trust" of the DobberHockey plus the two winners of the Pro League (Lord of the Rinks and The Comish) from the season before.

During my three-year stint in the league, I had finished third (2008), eighth (2009) and second (2010) last year, so there was really only one place left for me to claim. Last year's heart-breaking loss was the one that hurt the most, as the winner (FrozenPool) nipped me on the final weekend of the season. I still condemn you for that one Jason... This week's column will break down the road to success and hopefully give you an insight into what went down in the DobberHockey Expert league this season and eventually leading to yours truly winning the championship.

Written by Ryan Ma Tuesday, 10 April 2012 12:36 - Last Updated Tuesday, 10 April 2012 13:02

League Settings

15-teams: Dry Island Holdout (Tim Lucarelli), Lord of the Rinks (Peter Hadley), Hockey Knight (hockeyknight.com), HR's Look Ahead (Dave Poleck), FrozenPool (Jason Arbuthnot), Angus Unleashed (Angus), Messier4Life (Anthony Lancione), The Dean's list (Brendan Ross), Thunder Bay Moose (Marty Kwiaton), GMG Market Buzz (Gates Imbeau), The Comish (Russ Miller), Legion of Dobber (Dobber), Cage Match (Steve Laidlaw), Nation of Domination (Brian Kom) and Maaaasquito Bites (myself).

Yahoo! ROTO scoring (G, A, +/-, PIM, PPP, SOG, W, GAA and SV), FAAB, Weekly lineup changes and snake drafting.

Positions 4 C, 4 RW, 4 LW, 6 D, 2 G, 5 bench and 2 IR.

Background Info.

Most of the names in the league you'll probably recognize. **Lord of the Rinks** was the dark horse, as he's the one that has snuck up through the ranks winning the DobberHockey Entry League in 2009-10, and then winning the DobberHockey Pro League in 2010-11, earning a chance to play against the "experts" this season.

I was also not picked by as a potential winner by any of the noteworthy forum members in the Dobber Expert League thread. Well known forum members such as Pengwin, Renegade and Joos all went with Gates, Lucarelli, Dobber, Miller and Arbuthnot instead.

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Initial Draft

I was drafting from position 11, which I was 50/50 about. I was upset that I missed out on one the first four picks, but I was happy that I at least ended up in the middle. In these types of drafts which included many experts, it's very hard to plan 30 picks ahead of time, especially if you're on the edge of the snake draft, so snagging the 11th pick allowed me to determine the trend of each round, making my life a lot easier throughout the draft.

The entire recap of the draft can be found here and a breakdown of each of my picks can be found here.

Looking back at it retrospectively, Patrik Elias, Daniel Alfredsson, Joffrey Lupul and Gabriel Landeskog

in rounds 10, 11, 16 and 18 proved to be the difference makers for me. Overall I didn't have very many "do-overs",

James Wisniewski

Devin Setoguchi

Milan Hejduk

and

Brad Boyes

in rounds nine, 12, 14 and 15 were probably the biggest ones, but they weren't too detrimental at the end of the day.

Written by Ryan Ma Tuesday, 10 April 2012 12:36 - Last Updated Tuesday, 10 April 2012 13:02 After my initial draft I finished with: C- Crosby, Thornton, Toews, Langkow, Hanzal LW- Hall, Elias, Lupul, Landeskog, Sturm RW- Alfredsson, Setoguchi, Hedjuk, Boyes, Dorsett D- Lidstrom, Edler, Wisniewski, Gonchar, Carkner, Jovanovski, Larsson G- Brodeur, Smith, Emery For a 15-teamer with that many positions, I was quite pleased with it. I didn't think it was a championship team right from the get-go, but still felt quite positive. The primary areas that I needed to address were the goalies and a bit more depth in the wings. Season Breakdown At the start of the season everything was just settling down, so it wasn't surprising not to see a lot of moves being made. I ended up snagging Matt Niskanen and Daniel Winnik primarily

because of their SOG totals (one of the major areas for identifying player trends) and traded out

Sturm (after his horrible start and then getting traded to FLA).

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On October 31, I was tied for fourth place (84.5 points) as Lord of the Rinks stormed out of the gates with 105 points overall, leaving me over 20 points behind the leader (mostly because of struggling goalie stats 3.5 in WIN, 6 in GAA and 5 in SV), so something needed to be addressed here.

The biggest move of the season was the trade that took place on Halloween day. I took full advantage of the news of Crosby being cleared for contact, so I tossed a few lines out there. One of the things with drafting Crosby was that I knew that I was either going to 1) live and die with him or 2) move him in a deal that would boost the rest of my team. I decided on the latter, which saw me land

Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, Dan Boyle and Kari

Lehtonen

from HR's Look Ahead (Polek) for Crosby, Gonchar and Emery. That enabled me to upgrade two key positions, cementing my goalie starts with Brodeur, Smith and Lehtonen, while taking a slight downgrade from Crosby to RNH (11 points in 11 games at the time).

Much of the same for November, as I just made three moves. Ended up snagging Zac Rinaldo (73 PIM and 10 SOG in the first 14 contests),

Slava Voynov

(after he was recalled from the minors in mid-November) and

Kurtis Foster

(PP TOI that he was receiving in Anaheim) while dropping Langkow, Jovanovski and Winnik. At the end of November, I ended up making up the difference and now was sitting pretty in second place (93.5 points) and trailing the leader Dry Island Holdout (Tim Lucarelli) by just six points.

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Once again a pretty quiet December as I only ended up making two roster moves with the additions of Kyle Palmieri (recalled from the minors to audition on the top line with Ryan Getzlaf

and

Corey Perry

) and

Carl Hagelin

(SOG being the major determining factor 16 in eight contests) while returning Foster back to the waiver wire. At the end of December, I dropped back down to fourth (84.5 points), with Messier4Life (Lancione) now claiming the top position with 99 points.

January was when the trade talks really started to pick up as five of the 11 trades this season took place in the first month of the New Year.

After doing a bit of research for Dobber's Midseason Guide and succumbing to my biases I sent out a pretty stupid boneheaded offer (at the time) of Alfredsson (31 points in 35 games) for <u>Sam Gagner</u>

(0.76 point-per-game numbers after the ASB) to Dry Island Holdout (Lucarelli) and obviously he accepted with pleasure. I luckily ended up escaping out of that one relatively unscathed (Alfy 28 points and 98 SOG in 40 games, Gagner 28 points and 85 SOG in 42 games as the post-trade numbers).

A week later I was involved in two more blockbuster trades. First I moved <u>Jonathan Toews</u> (44 points in 45 games) to Messier4Life (Lancione) for Vinny Lecavalier (32 points in 43 games) and

Chris Kunitz

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(29 points in 43). I mostly used splits stats

as my main determinant, as Toews was a very strong player on the road, but was average at home and Chicago had a few more home games remaining on the rest of the schedule.

The second part of the blockbusters saw me move Hall (30 in 35), Lupul (47 in 44) and Lidstrom (24 in 44) to Thunder Bay Moose (Kwiaton) for St. Louis (35 in 38), Pavelski (31 in 41) and Bogosian (19 in 42). Dobber pretty much predicted it with a crystal ball in his summary of the trade in his ramblings. Once again, I was mostly playing the splits with this one. I wanted the combo of Lecavalier and St. Louis for the second half (because of the remaining home/away splits), plus I already had the Thornton/Boyle combo, so I wanted to add another piece to that puzzle.

Funny thing about the trades is how every player I traded away went down with a significant injury of some sort soon afterwards. Toews, Hall, Lupul and Lidstrom all missed noteworthy time, so I guess I caught a few breaks on that one.

A final minor trade saw me move underachiever, Setoguchi (17 points in 34 contests), to Angus for another, Patric Hornqvist (22 points in 45 contests). Looking back at it retrospectively, saw me slightly win that one, as Seto finished with a line of 19 points and 86 SOG in 34 contests compared to Horny's 22 points 105 SOG in 29 games post-trade.

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In terms of moves, January was the busiest month for me as I snagged Nazem Kadri, Erik Condra

Trevor Daley

Carl Gunnarsson

Ryan Reaves

Wojtek Wolski

Tom Wandell

David Savard

T.J. Galiardi

and

Yannick Weber

while letting go of Palmieri, Dorsett, Carkner, Larsson, Boyes, Hagelin and Niskanen. Most of those moves were "hot" pickups for the weeks, so there wasn't anything really significant there.

After a pretty active January, I managed to climb back up to 91.5 points and cut down the margin between the leader, Lord of the Rinks (Peter), and me down to 6.5 points.

February was once again fairly quiet on the moves front, but I did end up pulling off a "trade that helped put me over the edge". I ended up moving Kunitz, Gunnarson, RNH, Smith and Lehtonen in a "win-win" trade with The Dean's List (Ross) for Alex Tanguay, Matt Carle, Derivative Brassard

and

Henrik Lundavist

. I broke down the trade in my

Anatomy of Trading column

back in February.

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Numbers post-trade:
Team
G
A
+/-
PPP
PIM
SOG
W

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GAA
SV
Ross
19
30
-3
12
36
162
34
2.04
.934

Written by Ry Tuesday, 10 /	an Ma April 2012 12:36 -	Last Updated Tu	esday, 10 April 20	12 13:02	
Ме					
15					
47					
+13					
15					
39					
135					
16					
2.19					
.913					

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I may have lost out on the goalie stats in the end, but with Brodeur, Smith and Lehtonen at the time I was just spending too much time trying to decide which of the three to start and causing me a fair share of headaches. With Lundy and Brodeur, my goalie stats were taken care of and I was essentially worry-free. What also pushed me over the edge were my initial thoughts of Tanguay and Brassard coming into fruition. Both gambles ended up in my favour and ultimately led to the championship for me.

In terms of the moves front, I ended up adding Kyle Broziak (Mikko Koivu injury), Roman Josi (was thinking

Ryan Suter

being traded at deadline) and

Matt Taormina

(lack of NJ PP QB) while letting go Wandell and Weber.

February was the month that I finally pulled ahead of the pack. I finished off the month with 104 points along with a miniscule 3.5 point lead over Lord of the Rinks.

With the trade deadline passing, and heading into the final month of the fantasy season, there wasn't a lot that could be done. It's pretty much taking a "sit and wait" approach. A few minor www moves were made, I ended up picking up Brett Clark (TB PP QB), Jamie McGinn (hot-streak after the trade deadline),

David Moss

(SOG),

Mark Letestu

(garnering tons of TOI after the roster clean up),

Johnny Oduya

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Brandon Bollig

(PIM) and Chad LaRose, while letting Taormina, Galiardi, Ganger, Hanzal, Josi, Wolski and Wisniewski go.

On March 30th, Lord of the Rinks held a slim 105.5 to 104.5 lead against me, with essentially a week to go. With big days on Tuesday and Thursday last week, I managed to pull ahead with an unsuspecting nine-point lead after all of Thursday's nights matches and I was beginning to think that I was in the clear. I held the front on Saturday night and ending up finishing the season with a 10-point win and the DobberHockey Expert League crown.

Here are the final standings of the league.



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						Offens	e			Go	altending		
Rank	Team			G	A	+/-	PIM	PPP	SOG	W	GAA	sv	Total
1.	Maaaasquito Bites			12	15	13	6	15	14	13	9.5	9	106.5
2.	Lord of the Rinks			14	13	5	11	12	9	7.5	12	13	96.
3.	Dry Island Holdout			15	2	7	10	8	15	7.5	15	6	85.
4.	Legion of Dobber			4	10.5	12	15	9	5.5	15	8	5	8-
5.	Cage Match			6.5	10.5	6	13	13	12	4	4	12	8
6.	Messier4Life			2	12	14	14	2	2	10.5	13.5	3	7
7.	HR's Look Ahead			8	8	11	9	6	8	6	9.5	7	72.
8.	The Comish			6.5	14	1	12	14	13	3	5	2	70.
9.	Angus Unleashed			11	6	9	8	7	11	5	1	10	6
10.	The Dean's List			5	9	2	1	4.5	3	14	13.5	15	6
11.	GMG Market Buzz			1	4	15	3	1	4	10.5	11	14	63.
12.	FrozenPool			3	7	3	7	10	5.5	12	6	8	61.
13.	HockeyKnight			10	5	10	5	11	7	1	2	1	5
14.	Nation of Domination			9	1	8	2	3	1	9	7	11	5
15.	Thunder Bay Moose			13	3	4	4	4.5	10	2	3	4	47.
Ove	rall Stats												
					Offense					Ge	altending		
Rank	Team	GP	G	A	+/-	PIM	PPP	SOG	GP	W	GAA	SV	
1.	Maaaasquito Bites	1414	307	590	85	758	284	3241	124	67	2.43	3017	
2.	Lord of the Rinks	1418	310	507	-3	949	236	3053	131	58	2.30	3284	
3.	Dry Island Holdout	1437	317	447	11	901	223	3337	114	58	2.20	2921	
4.	Legion of Dobber	1389	285	501	72	1023	224	2902	121	69	2.49	2911	
5.	Cage Match	1366	293	501	7	981	244	3131	115	48	2.64	3168	
6.	Messier4Life	1404	263	503	100	1022	176	2623	110	64	2.27	2695	
7.	HR's Look Ahead	1367	297	497	59	892	215	2960	110	57	2.43	2939	
8.	The Comish	1422	293	571	-42	969	275	3236	89	45	2.59	2332	
9.	Angus Unleashed	1328	306	478	30	834	216	3096	117	51	2.94	3133	
10.	The Dean's List	1359	286	498	-25	591	212	2771	133	68	2.27	3696	
11.	GMG Market Buzz	1375	253	457	101	720	166	2789	124	64	2.42	3299	
12.	FrozenPool	1365	268	482	-13	767	226	2902	119	66	2.57	2957	
13.	HockeyKnight	1210	302	465	40	755	233	2927	45	19	2.78	1039	
	HockeyKnight Nation of Domination	1210	302 299	465 431	40 15	755 639	233 186	2927 2473	45 121	19 60	2.78	1039 3134	

The second of each line I sent an offer of Pavelski and Hornqvist out to Dobber for Jack in the second of the seco