

Mikhail Grabovski just may have landed in the perfect spot in Washington for a few reasons. Adam Oates is much more offensive minded than Randy Carlyle and even though both teams had similar Goals For numbers last year, Grabovski figures to get put in better offensive situations this year. The departure of Mike Ribeiro should also help his cause with added minutes. A one-year deal at \$3M shouldn't bring much pressure and if he can hit 60-plus points, he's got a shot to cash in with a better deal next summer.

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Speaking of Mike Ribeiro, it will be interesting to see what he does for Radim Vrbata this season. Not counting the lockout shortened year in 2013 where he had 12 goals in 34 games, Vrbata had averaged 26 tallies in the previous three campaigns. Playing alongside a creative player like Ribeiro it's not unreasonable to think Vrbata has 30-35 goals in him if he stays healthy.

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If I were the Flyers or a Claude Giroux owner I would be mildly concerned about the news that he [won't be attending](#) Team Canada's Orientation Camp. His injury situation certainly doesn't warrant avoiding him this season, but tempering expectations for the early part of the year might be wise. Giroux should be ready for the start of the campaign, but finger injuries can be annoying and hamper the way you shoot. Not to mention that missing a large chunk of training camp can lead to a slow start.

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Tiering players based on specific positions prior to your draft is a great way to assist you when making selections. It works really well for fantasy football and it is helpful with hockey as well. If you don't already use this method give it a shot.

Essentially you take a position and place players into different Tiers based on where you feel they should be. So if you're looking at centre you might have Sidney Crosby, Steven Stamkos, etc. in Tier number one. Then when you feel like there is a legitimate drop-off from one player to the next, you start a new Tier. You may end up with five, six, or seven Tiers of centres depending on your draft size.

If you value all the players similarly in a Tier, in theory it shouldn't really matter who you get.

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Meaning if it's your selection and you see 10 centres still available from your second Tier, and there are only eight selections after you before it becomes your pick once again, you don't need to reach for a centre. You know at least two will be waiting for you when the draft snakes back around. You could look at another position in the meantime and it helps prevent you from jumping the gun on someone. It's all about value.

\*

It looks like it may be the end of Hall Gill's career. The 38-year-old is still unsigned and with his style of play it is tough to survive in today's NHL. He's a combined minus-25 over the last five seasons and didn't record a point with Nashville in 32 games in 2013.

\*

Interesting read here from Cam Charron on how [Sergey Tolchinsky went undrafted](#) and now has himself an entry-level deal with the Carolina Hurricanes. The undersized Russian was ranked fairly high on a couple of pre-draft rankings, but it appears his lack of physicality made teams shy away from him. The Hurricanes might be the benefactors when it's all said and done.

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The MTV Video Music Awards go down Sunday night and New York Islanders forward Matt Martin [will be working the red carpet](#) ???

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Roberto Luongo revealed that he had [serious discussions with the NHLPA about voiding his contract](#) this past May. He would have been giving up on over \$40M had he done so.

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Contrary to popular belief, Grabovski was once an offensively skilled player before being

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shackled to the bottom-six last year.

{youtube}l691l7c4zXU{/youtube}

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St. Louis has a [new ticket policy](#) this year aimed at deterring Chicago fans from attending games when the Blackhawks come to town.

\*

While we are on the subject of new ticket policies, the one the Leafs have come out with is brutal. MLSE already raised prices by 2.5% for this season, but now they have instituted a system that charges more for ["Premium Games"](#), which is crazy since they sell out every game anyway. It wouldn't matter if Toronto was playing a local Men's League team, fans would still pack the ACC.

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Only 10 games have been deemed “Regular” for this season and they include opponents like Colorado, Anaheim, and Phoenix. Obviously the argument is that it should cost more to see Pittsburgh than Phoenix for example, but starting it now is nothing more than a money grab. And do you think if Sidney Crosby is injured they are going to drop the price from a “Super Premium” game and give people a break? No chance. The frustrations of being a Leaf fan continue.

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Marc-Andre Fleury's [new mask is pretty sweet](#) . Let's hope he still gets to use it during the playoffs this season.

\*

The Islanders goaltending situation will be a tricky one in 2013-14. Evgeni Nabokov has played well for them, but you have to wonder how long he can go before his numbers start to slide.

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Kevin Poulin might not be the answer as he struggled in limited action last year; however, he showed flashes of brilliance in 2010-11 while posting a .924 save percentage in 10 games. New York seems like they could challenge for a playoff spot again and make a push towards contending if they had some solid goaltending. With plenty of cap space available do they take a short-term risk, on dare I say it, Ilya Bryzgalov?

\*

It's surprising that no one has offered Vinny Prospal a contract yet. He had a 30-point campaign last year and should be good for 50-55 points a season if he stays healthy. At 38-years-old Prospal could be a nice veteran presence on a young team looking to develop and improve.

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