“We have a trade to announce...” are the only words any hockey fan ever wishes to hear out of Gary Bettman’s mouth. There may be no more exciting off-ice situation in the NHL than the draft day trade announcement.

In 2008, the Coyotes acquired All-Star center Olli Jokinen from Florida for Keith Ballard and spare parts. The Flames added Mike Cammalleri from Los Angeles. Washington dealt Steve Eminger to the Flyers for a pick they would use that same day on John Carlson. In 2009, the Flyers added Chris Pronger minutes before the first round kicked off. It seems like there is anticipation and hype every year as the draft approaches, but from everything we have heard from those with strong connections in the hockey world, this could be the busiest draft ever in terms of wheeling and dealing.

There is no shortage of star players available at the draft this year – Mike Ribeiro, Tomas Kaberle, and Sheldon Souray to name a few. There are several premier soon-to-be-free agents whose rights may be up for grabs as well – Ilya Kovalchuk, Anton Volchenkov, Dan Hamhuis, Patrick Marleau, Paul Martin... the list goes on.

I asked the DobberHockey community to share their trade ideas a few days ago (check the topic out here). I borrowed a few of the ideas shared there and added them to some of my own.

To Minnesota: Nathan Horton

To Florida: Brent Burns

(As suggested by Renegade)

Why?

Nathan Horton is as good as gone from the Panthers if you are one to read into rumours. The Panthers would love to add a dynamic top-four defenseman like Burns, and Horton would bring size and skill to a very underwhelming forward group in Minnesota. Both players have teased us with some flashes of brilliance (Burns in particular with a monster 2007-08 season). Perhaps a fresh start will be exactly what the doctor ordered for both.

Fantasy Impact?

Burns needs to get back on track after a few injury-plagued seasons. He has 45-50 point upside provided he sees enough power play time. In Florida, he would become the best offensive defenseman, while in Minnesota he has to compete with Cam Barker and Marek Zidlicky for ice time. Minnesota isn't blessed with a wealth of offensive talent, but Horton could still see a spike in production because of the scenery change alone. He has the size and skill to be a star, but so far in his career he hasn't shown enough intensity or battle on a consistent basis to get there.

To Columbus: Jason Spezza, Brian Lee

To Ottawa: 4th overall pick, Cody Goloubef, Derrick Brassard

Why?

Columbus has cap space and a clear need for a top line center. Jason Spezza is unhappy in Ottawa and would probably welcome playing in a less hockey-crazed market. Brassard has the upside to one day replace Spezza on Ottawa's top line, and he is still on his entry level contract. The Blue Jackets probably wouldn't move both Brassard and their 2010 first round pick in a trade for Spezza, but in my estimation they could get away with doing it if they really wanted to. Goloubef is a solid prospect and would add to Ottawa's defensive depth on the farm.

Fantasy Impact?

Rick Nash owners would rejoice. With Spezza, Nash's upside jumps up 10-15 points. Spezza would remain a 75-85 point player with the upside for (a lot) more, health permitting. Brassard would see lots of offensive minutes in Ottawa, and would probably skate on a line with the likes of Daniel Alfredsson and Milan Michalek.

To Toronto: David Clarkson and Matt Halischuk

To New Jersey: Tomas Kaberle

Why?

The New Jersey Devils have a glaring need for a puck moving defenseman. They traded away Johnny Oduya at the trade deadline, and all signs point to Paul Martin leaving as a free agent in a couple of weeks. Toronto is very thin up front, and Clarkson would bring 20+ goal potential in addition to a wealth of grit, belligerence, and truculence. Halischuk is not going to be a star at the NHL level but he should be a serviceable player for a long time. Toronto fans may read this and be disappointed with the return, but without an extension Kaberle's trade value isn't as high as many believe it to be. Leaf fans would fall in love with Clarkson after a shift or two.

Fantasy Impact?

In New Jersey, Kaberle would play with the likes of Zach Parise, Travis Zajac, and Patrik Elias on the top power play unit. A return to the 60 point mark would be a very reasonable projection for him. Clarkson would probably slide in on the second line in Toronto, while Halischuk would compete for a spot on one of the bottom two lines in training camp.

To Montreal: Ryane Clowe, Douglas Murray

To San Jose: Carey Price, Roman Hamrlik

Why?

San Jose gets a young goalie to build around. They also get a strong veteran presence to help replace the void left by Rob Blake on the back end. Montreal dumps Hamrlik's contract and they add a solid top six winger in Clowe and a very steady defensive presence in Murray. Clowe would be great alongside Mike Cammalleri and Tomas Plekanec – in addition to being large and physical, he has more skill than given credit for.

Fantasy Impact?

Price would immediately become one of the best goalies to own in any league format on the Sharks. He hasn't shown the ability to be a starting goalie over the course of a full season, but to be fair he has never been given that kind of opportunity yet. Clowe's value wouldn't change all that much in Montreal.

Do you have an idea/rumour/proposal to contribute? Post it here or on the message board, as I'll be running a few more draft day trade articles over the next 10 days or so.