I have found it difficult to make trades in my own fantasy hockey leagues since joining the DobberHockey crew full-time over two years ago. I share my thoughts on sleepers, overrated players, and my favourite players/prospects with all of you on a daily basis. When I propose a trade in any of my leagues, my potential trading partner is usually quick to check out the site to see what I have said in the past about the player(s) I am inquiring about.

However, I managed to pull the trigger on a very interesting deal yesterday in my favourite league. It is a head-to-head league with many DobberHockey veterans, and I finished fourth out of 12 last year (my first year in the league after taking over a pretty decent roster).

The League: The Ultimate Fantasy Pool (who the hell named it this?)

The Team: The Crosby Show

The Scoring Categories:

Skaters: G, A, PPP, SHP, GWG, +/-, SOG, PIM, FOW, HITS

Goalies: GP, SAVES, W, L, SO, SV %, GAA

My roster before yesterday's trade:

C	Crosby
C	Stamkos
C	B. Richards
LW	Neal
LW	Carcillo

LW	Kulemin
RW	Franzen
RW	Gaborik
RW	Clarkson
D	Boyle
D	Del Zotto
D	Roszival
D	Souray
D	Eminger
D	Karlsson
G	Luongo
G	Quick
Bench	Bolland
Bench	Latendresse
Bench	Cullen
Bench	Roszival
Bench	Lehtonen
Bench	Roloson
Farm	Shattenkirk
Farm	Ekman-Larsson
Farm	Crawford
Farm	Empty
Farm	Empty

A few things...

I have no idea why Steve Eminger is there. Perhaps I was trying to bring down my plus-minus during the final week of the season? My defensive depth was atrocious last year, obviously.

I had been looking to move Jonathan Quick since the season ended. I have a feeling that Jonathan Bernier plays at least 30-40 games this year. Quick is a very solid goalie, but he faded down the stretch and in the playoffs last year (playing over 70 games will do that to almost any goalie). Goalies are very important in our league (especially durable ones with a GP category), as they are in most. After Luongo and Quick, I had Kari Lehtonen, who is not a player I want to be relying on. Dwayne Roloson is a decent depth option, and I am still holding on to Crawford in hopes he sees time with Chicago at some point *ever.*

We added hits as a category to the pool this off-season. I have never used hits in a league and it will be interesting to see how this affects player values. I will start doing my research closer to the draft in September.

The Negotiations

I targeted two teams that I figured would be interested in Quick. One player I really focused my efforts on was Patrick Sharp. He is a LW in our league, and his ability to count towards faceoff wins makes him incredibly valuable. I really like Neal but figured his value outweighs his worth for the next few seasons (I want to win now). Great young player, but you have to give up value to get value (especially in this league).

8:30 PM Wednesday

I proposed Quick and Michael Del Zotto for Alex Edler, Cory Schneider, and Patrick Sharp last night. I really like Edler, and feel he has 50-point upside, especially with defensive studs like Ballard and Hamhuis taking away some of the tough minutes. Del Zotto is a great young player but I already have a few other young defensemen (Karlsson, Ekman-Larsson, and Shattenkirk) and want to stagger my talent in terms of where they are on the development curve. I don’t like having all veterans or all prospects, and Edler is a nice balance.

Sharp is a stud in our league and represents a short-term upgrade on Neal. In the long-term Neal has 40-goal upside, but Sharp is an upgrade for today. The proposal is rejected. I mention James Neal, and he comes back with Versteeg and draft picks to balance. Not a fan of Versteeg in Toronto.

10: 00 AM Thursday

The counter-proposal involves Ondrej Pavelec instead of Schneider. I favour Schneider for a few reasons – Mason will probably see most of the games in Atlanta (although Pavelec will play more than Schneider this season), and Vancouver is primed for a strong season. The division is the weakest in hockey, and having both Luongo and Schneider would give me arguably the best fantasy goaltending situation in the league. With daily lineup changes I won't have to worry about trying to guess when Schneider will see his starts. I also see him starting full-time in the NHL ahead of Pavelec.

The counter-offer: Quick, Del Zotto, Neal, for Sharp, Pavelec, Edler, player-to-be-named (Conklin was discussed)

The haggling continues... I am really trying to add in David Perron or Mason Raymond. I favour Perron but of course I don't tell him that (I let him choose). I'd be happy with either but I think Perron sees time on the top line this season – not much competition on the left side in St. Louis right now (he's better on his off-wing).

11:00 AM Thursday

I manage to get Perron in the deal, but have to give up some draft picks. The deal is finalized:

Outgoing: Jonathan Quick, James Neal, Michael Del Zotto, 9th overall farm draft pick, and 21st overall pro draft pick

Incoming: Cory Schneider, Patrick Sharp, Alex Edler, David Perron, 15th overall farm draft pick, 27th overall pro draft pick

I don't mind giving up the small upgrade with the draft picks – I usually find a way to get the players I want, some way or another.

This trade strengthens my incredibly weak LW position. I upgrade on defense in the short-term, and I improve my keeper list dramatically. I am still debating whether to keep Roloson or Latendresse – I figure I can probably redraft Latendresse or get a similar winger. Goalies are incredibly valuable and tough to get.

I won't be relying on Lehtonen as my second goalie. Brad Richards is trade bait.

Oh, and if Chicago trades Sharp to Atlanta like they did half of their roster, I won't be happy.

His breakdown on the trade:

I knew you wanted Perron more than Raymond. I don't have an account, but I followed some of the discussion on twitter. Regardless, my depth at LW and my history with Perron (lots of disappointment and impatience thusfar) meant Perron was in my list of potentials for that last keeper spot but could have easily been my final drop. The picks made the decision easier for me.

I asked for some trade advice on twitter, which was a bit of a role-reversal. This deal benefits both of us because he had too many potential keepers and I was short a few.

As for Edler, I agree that he's worth more now but like Del Zotto because of more pp time for the Rags.

Great point. Tortorella loves him, and Tortorella plays the crap out of players he likes.

I see Sharpie and Neal as a virtual wash with any edge tilting your way for the here and now aspect. I need the latter, but I've had a very hetero man-crush on Neal since I saw him play at the Traverse City prospect tourney a few years back. He was one of the few players on anyone's block that made me even slightly budge on Sharp.

I really like Neal too (having originally acquired him from this same guy last summer).

Finally, I think Schneider is more likely to stick as a starter at some point. Like I said, I love that guy. Still, the fact that he is the handcuff in Vancouver makes him worth more to you than me in the short-term unless he gets traded to a team on which he can start. I may deal Pavelec still. He has some sentimental value for me because I drafted him in front of Rinne a few years back (hindsight, eh?) and he spent some time on my farm. I know of a few GMs that need to take a risk on a tender. Plus, I hate ATL for fantasy purposes.

Agreed on all accounts.

Roster now:

C	Crosby
C	Stamkos
C	B. Richards
LW	Sharp
LW	Carcillo
LW	Perron
RW	Franzen
RW	Gaborik
RW	Clarkson
D	Boyle
D	Edler
D	Roszival
D	Souray
D	Eminger
D	Karlsson
G	Luongo
LW	Kulemin
Bench	Bolland
Bench	Latendresse
Bench	Cullen
Bench	Roszival
Bench	Lehtonen
Bench	Roloson

Farm	Shattenkirk
Farm	Ekman-Larsson
Farm	Crawford
Farm	Schneider
Farm	Empty

Keeper list:

1	Crosby
2	Stamkos
3	B. Richards
4	Carcillo
5	Kulemin
6	Franzen
7	Gaborik
8	Clarkson
9	Boyle
10	Souray
11	Bolland
12	Edler
13	Sharp
14	Perron
15	Luongo
16	Lehtonen
17	Roloson

Farm	Shattenkirk
Farm	Schneider

Farm	Karlsson
Farm	Ekman-Larsson
Farm	Crawford
Farm	Empty