Developing in a losing environment, Boston's embarrassment of riches, the next Jeff Skinner, and more!

1. Look for the Business of Fantasy Hockey series to return very soon. Mike Colligan and I are going to roll out some fresh content in the coming weeks and months. Check out Part I from last year (Value Investing) to get an idea of what the series is all about. We are open to suggestions – I read a lot of business/investment-related books, and the similarities between many of the topics I read about and fantasy hockey continue to pop up.

2. The point has been made on the site by myself before – don't underestimate the effects of player development in a winning or losing environment. Drafting is great, but if you can't develop talent, it doesn't matter how many high picks you have each year. The Red Wings brought players like Datsyuk and Zetterberg up in a winning environment. Anaheim did the same with Getzlaf and Perry. New Jersey did it with Zajac and Parise. Vancouver is doing the same with Cody Hodgson. Hall and Eberle are going to be elite scorers in this league, but I'd be

slightly worried if I owned them in a keeper league. Long-term winning and losing both rub off on players.

3. What do the Canucks have in rookie defenseman Chris Tanev? His story is an interesting one. He was passed over by most junior teams because he was 5'3" after grade 11. He grew seven inches over his final year of high school and went on to star at R.I.T. (Rochester Institute of Technology) last year. Like most young defensemen, trying to peg his offensive upside right now is basically impossible. He is an incredibly smart player and he moves the puck with authority. The comparisons to a young Alex Edler aren't without merit.

Tanev now stands in at 6'2". His time in the NHL this season is probably coming to a close soon with the impending return of Andrew Alberts, Aaron Rome, and Sami Salo to Vancouver's defence. The Canucks owe the Tanev finding to Dave Gagner, who used to coach him when he played with Dave's son, Sam, back in Toronto.

Brad Ziemer of the Vancouver Sun wrote a solid piece on Tanev yesterday (link here). The most important quality I look for in young defensemen (fantasy and real life) is hockey sense. If you can think the game, the ice time will come. With ice time usually comes production. Get Tanev on your radar.

4. Corey Perry is one of the most valuable players in most fantasy hockey leagues because of his ability to fill a variety of categories (a "multi-cat stud" if you will). If you are anything like me,

you love getting a player who can produce 50 points and rack up at least 100 or 150 PIM. The combo player is rare and almost always undervalued. Being able to fill the PIM category while not suffering much (relatively) in other offensive categories is essential to winning consistently. Steve Ott, Ryan Kesler (of old), Alex Burrows (of old), David Clarkson, and Sean Avery are all great examples. Are there any feisty and offensively talented prospects to keep an eye on for next season or the one after? I'll give you three.

Zach Kassian is a gifted goal scorer. His shot is heavy and accurate, and he sees the ice well. To say that he plays the game with an edge would be an understatement. Kassian is a head hunter who hits to hurt. Buffalo lacks grit (and talent) up front. Look for him to earn a spot next season. Islander defenseman Former World Junior star Travis Hamonic is another. Big, nasty, gritty, and skilled. He may become too important to sit in the penalty box, but he will always have good PIM totals because of the style of game he plays. Another one to keep an eye on is Kings rookie Kyle Clifford. He is playing more of an energy role right now (and doing a fantastic job of it), but those hands can do more than punch.

5. Marc-Andre Bergeron won't be rushed by the Lightning. He has played a few AHL games and is working through the rust after a serious off-season knee operation. He has yet to score in 12 games with Norfolk (although he has five assists). Look for him to be called up at some point in March, though. If you are desperate for defensive points he could be your white knight for the last month of the season.

6. Why is Dion Phaneuf struggling so much in Toronto? Four reasons: 1) Toronto lacks the big forward to retrieve the puck and feed it to him on the PP like he had in Calgary. 2) The letter on his jersey has forced him into stepping outside of his comfort zone, both on and off ice. 3) The number on his paycheque has gone to his head. 4) He simply never was that good.

7. Jeff Skinner stepped in and made an immediate impact with Carolina after being drafted last summer. Who do I see making a similar jump in the 2011 draft class? Depending on where he is picked, Gabriel Landeskog could find himself on an NHL scoring line this coming fall. The Swedish Mike Richards (as he was dubbed by TSN) plays an NHL game – smart, physical, and skilled. The most intriguing player in the draft class is diminutive defenseman Ryan Murphy, though. His skating and skill set is otherworldly. If you have never seen Murphy play, give this video a look.

8. I have received numerous e-mails with poolies trying to decide what to do with Tomas Vokoun. Do you hold on to him in hopes that he is moved to a contender? What happens to his value if he re-signs with the hapless Panthers? Vokoun is one of the best goalies in the league, inconsistencies and all. He is a notoriously strong second-half goalie (buy-low bells should be ringing in your head) as well. I think the odds of him being re-signed are pretty good. He seems to like it in Florida and Jacob Markstrom's average AHL campaign has only reinforced the importance of a stabilizing presence between the pipes.

9. What are the odds that Columbus moves Jakub Voracek? Somewhere between 0 and 0.00001%.

10. Aside from getting embarrassed by Brent Johnson's left hand, Rick DiPietro was swimming all game against Pittsburgh. Sure, it is only one game, but something doesn't look quite right with his play right now. Kevin Poulin has looked pretty strong in most of his starts, which is amazing considering his age and the lack of talent and experience in front of him. I'd be taking a long look at picking up or trading for Poulin if you are retooling a young keeper league roster. Goalies are tough to peg from year to year (just ask Tuukka Rask owners), but Poulin has talent

and a lot of opportunity with only the injury-prone DiPietro ahead of him.

12. The Senators are in for at least a two-year rebuild. They have some talent on the roster, but it gets pretty thin beyond three or four players. One glimmer of hope has been the play of Swedish prospect David Rundblad this season. Rundblad has nine goals and 36 points in 44 SEL games, and many scouts believe he could step in to the NHL and contribute right now.

13. The Bruins have quite the pipeline of young players. Up front, we all know about Tyler Seguin, Brad Marchand (who is on a tear of late), Joe Colborne, and Jordan Caron (I am a huge fan of both). On defense, Steve Kampfer has emerged as a solid puck mover. Kampfer is getting an opportunity because the Bruins lack a true puck mover at the moment, and he taking advantage of it. More on Kampfer here. Adam McQuaid is a tower of strength in the defensive zone, and Yuri Alexandrov is adjusting well to the North American game. Matt Bartkowski is also having a solid rookie season in Providence as well.

Along with all of the talented young players I have mentioned, there are two Bruins draft picks doing quite well in the OHL. Ryan Spooner (Kingston) and Jared Knight (London) are both above the point-per-game mark. Kirk Lueduke is my go-to on everything Boston – check out his recent piece on Spooner
. They are set in goal for the short term and the long term, and both the forwards and the defensemen are a nice mix of proven veterans and talented rookies. Look for Boston to dominate the Northeast Division for a while.

14. One buy-low for this season: Kyle Okposo. Wouldn't be surprised to see him be among the league's top goal scorers over the last two and a half months of the season. One buy-low for the next few years: Peter Regin. I'm not ready to give up on him yet.

15. Patrice Bergeron may not be a top 10 center in the league, but he has played like one this season. It looks like the dominant two-way force that he was before the concussion issues is back.

*Elliotte Friedman's weekly **30 Thoughts** column on the CBC website is the best read in hockey. Friedman is insightful, articulate, knowledgeable, fair, and most importantly, interesting. He has sources and contacts in the hockey world that most could only dream of. Most importantly, has an ability which is rare in this day and age - providing a balanced and reasonable opinion on the league, the players, and all 30 of the clubs.*

Each week I will post my own observations (I couldn't completely steal Friedman's idea so I'll pick a number other than 30) with a heavy emphasis on the fantasy side of hockey, of course. Prospects, goalies, sleepers, busts, it will all be covered each week.