The thinking process that goes in to selecting the *Prime Cuts* roster is similar to Pierre McGuire's "Monsters" team on TSN (I promise that is the first and only time I will compare my thinking process to Pierre's). Since this is a fantasy hockey site, the selection process favors players that have had strong seasons on the score sheet, obviously. However, not just goals and assists are weighted – perhaps a player has started to shoot the puck more, or play better defensively. Intangibles like heart, grit, and determination factor in to the selection process as well. It is far and away my favorite article to write each year, and I hope you will all enjoy reading it as much as I have enjoyed writing it.

The final part of the series will name the top two lines.

The second line: Milan Lucic-Claude Giroux-Ryan Callahan

Lucic and Nathan Horton were twin towers of power for the Bruins this season. The duo combined for over 200 PIM, close to 60 goals, a plus-minus rating of 57. Lucic was more consistent than Horton, both offensively and overall. He played less than 17 minutes per night as well, so he still technically played as much as a second line winger. Lucic scored no more than seven goals in any given month. His PIM took a nosedive in January – in December and February he averaged 31 PIM, but he recorded a measly two PIM in January. Lucic is multi-category filler who is just entering his prime. His offensive game was once underrated and overlooked because of his physical play, but I don't think that will be happening again.

Claude Giroux entered the season as a potential star. He ended it (the regular season, anyway) as the best player on the Flyers, who boast arguably the best forward group in the entire league. Giroux is one of the most dazzling offensive stars in the entire league. His upside is sky high (95-105 points). He'll score 40 goals more than a few times, and he'll probably approach the 70 assist mark more than a few times in his career as well. Giroux can change his game depending on who he plays with – his most frequent linemates this season were Darroll Powe and Jeff Carter. In the long run, Giroux (the playmaker) and Carter (the scorer) seem to be a logical duo for the Flyers to build around.

Ryan Callahan is nothing if not consistent. His last three goal totals – 22, 19, and 23 (the latest coming in only 60 games). His PIM number – 45, 48, and 46. He has had over 220 hits in each of the last two seasons (although the statistician at MSG is very, very hit-friendly), and he would have been over the 200 SOG mark in 2010-11 if not for the 22 missed games. I have made this point before but I'll make it again – if you give me a team of 12 Callahan's up front, I'll give you a team that wins a lot of games. He does everything well and is the heart and soul of the Rangers.

The first line: Daniel Sedin-Steven Stamkos-Corey Perry

Daniel Sedin became the second Sedin in league history to win the Art Ross this season. In all seriousness, he followed up an extremely impressive 2009-10 (third in PPG behind Ovechkin and his brother Henrik) to lead the league in scoring. Although Perry (more on him soon) made a late charge, Sedin's scoring title was never really in doubt during the final few weeks of the season. Sedin was a better road player this season, scoring seven more goals and recording 10 more points away from Rogers Arena. He absolutely torched the Calgary Flames, scoring four times and adding five assists in six games. This was about as easy a choice as I had when filling out this roster.

Back in November, some were wondering if **Stamkos** had a legitimate shot at 50 goals in 50 games. He had 31 goals through December, but lit the lamp only 14 times during the final three and a half months of the season. His combination of blazing speed and the best one timer since Brett Hull allowed him to score virtually at will. His production decline was due in large part to teams figuring out how to better contain him. Stamkos is still very young (he only recently turned 21), and we haven't seen the best from him yet.

Perry was the fantasy hockey MVP of the 2010-11 season. Goals, assists, points, PIM, SOG – you name it, he brought it. The Ducks had to content with a series of injuries to star players (most notably Ryan Getzlaf and Jonas Hiller), and Perry kept the team afloat all season before taking them on his back for a final season surge. If you project Perry's March and April over a full season, he would have finished with 82 goals and 137 points. Perry scored 50 goals – 14 on the PP. He fired 290 shots on goal, and he earned 104 PIM. He is one reason why I think counting PIM is bogus (many of his were stupid 10 minute misconducts late in games), but as long as it is recorded as a stat, his value will be sky high.

The final roster:

Daniel Sedin-Steven Stamkos-Corey Perry

Milan Lucic-Claude Giroux-Ryan Callahan

Michael Grabner-Logan Couture-Jeff Skinner

Brandon Prust-Zenon Konopka-Brad Marchand

Keith Yandle-Dustin Byfuglien

James Wisniewski-Mark Giordano

Adam McQuaid-Travis Hamonic

Tim Thomas

Cory Schneider

2009-10 Prime Cuts

Alex Ovechkin – Henrik Sedin – Martin St. Louis

Jussi Jokinen – Steven Stamkos – Chris Stewart

Steve Downie – Brandon Sutter – Eric Fehr

TJ Galiardi – Jay McClement – Ian Lapperiere

Duncan Keith – Mike Green

Tyler Myers – Joni Pitkanen

Keith Yandle – Mark Giordano

Ryan Miller

Tuukka Rask

2008-09 Prime Cuts

Zach Parise – Evgeni Malkin – Martin St. Louis
Scott Hartnell – Travis Zajac – Martin Havlat
David Booth – Ryan Kesler – David Backes
Cody McLeod – Jay McClement – Cal Clutterbuck

Mike Green – Zdeno Chara
Mark Streit – Keith Ballard
Jan Hejda – Matt Greene

Tim Thomas
Scott Clemmensen

2007-08 Prime Cuts

Alex Ovechkin – Evgeni Malkin – Alex Kovalev
Zach Parise – Tomas Plekanec – Jason Pominville
Niklas Hagman – Ryan Kesler – Patrick Sharp
Steve Ott – Brandon Dubinsky – Milan Lucic

Nicklas Lidstrom – Brent Burns
Mark Streit – Mike Green
Braydon Coburn – Alex Edler

Evgeni Nabokov
Mathieu Garon