

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12



The [first edition](#) of this list was put together last year, and it is something I am going to update at least once each season. I have a few general rules when it comes to building a team in a fantasy hockey keeper league. One of the more important ones is to not plan beyond a two or three year window. You are not building a real NHL club, and too often I see poolies place too much of an emphasis on youth and prospects instead of trying to add players who could help them win now.

Using this rule, take a look at your team(s). Can you realistically say you will have a shot at winning the league at some point within the next two or three seasons? If not, time to scrap the rebuild and start adding proven NHL talent.

Keeping the two-to-three-year window in mind, I have compiled a list of the top 10 keeper

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

league right wingers to own (assuming standard keeper league rules and scoring categories). Using the scope, the long-term upside of these players is balanced with their NHL readiness.

I did my best to ensure only real right wingers were listed, not those who have the position eligibility but play elsewhere the majority of the time. I did include Claude Giroux, although he played most of this past season at center. He still has right wing eligibility, and his value as a right winger is immensely higher than his value as a center. If he changes position eligibility next season, the list will be updated without him. If you consider him a center, move him off the list and slide those below him up a spot.

This list is in order, which means that I wouldn't trade the fourth player straight across for the fifth player, and so on. The one year upside is for 2011-12, and the three year upside is for any season between the next and 2013-14.

1. Corey Perry

The 2010-11 fantasy hockey MVP for countless poolies is clearly the best right winger to own in

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

standard hockey pool formats. Perry shoots a lot, scores on a lot of those shots, fights, chirps the oppositions (and the referees), plays solid defense for a top line player, and does it all on a nightly basis. He defines the term "roto-monster." With linemates like Ryan Getzlaf and Bobby Ryan signed for the long term, Perry's reign at the top of this list is looking like it will be a long one.

He's hit 100 or more PIM in each of the last four seasons. He's been extremely consistent with his time in the sinbin too – the last four seasons his final PIM total has ranged between 104 and 111. Perry is one of the most skilled players in the game. He may not hit 50 goals again, but I'd wager that he comes very close for the next three or four years, at worst.

One year upside: 50 goals, 100 points, 120 PIM

Three year upside: 50 goals, 100 points, 120 PIM

2. Patrick Kane

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

The slick winger has lived up to the billing of a first overall pick. Kane has dazzled hockey fans with his wide arsenal of offensive skills since emerging as an 18-year-old during his rookie season. He can float in a deft saucer pass as easily as he can pick the top corner with a deadly wrist shot. Kane had a bit of a Stanley Cup hangover during the first half of the season, but he had a fantastic second half, finishing with 14 goals and 36 points in his final 32 games (a 36-goal, 92-point full season pace).

Like Perry, Kane has fantastic potential linemates all signed to long-term contracts in Jonathan Toews, Marian Hossa, and Patrick Sharp. Look for a bounce back season from the league's most skilled American skater (no slight to Ryan Kesler or Zach Parise). Kane won't get many PIM or deliver a ton of hits, but the peripheral statistics are easier to fill later in drafts and through shrewd free agency pickups during the course of a season.

One year upside: 40 goals, 105 points, 40 PIM

Three year upside: 45 goals, 110 points, 45 PIM

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

3. Claude Giroux

It is only a matter of time until Giroux is a full time center, as he is much more effective at the position. It allows him to have the puck on his stick more than playing wing does, which equates to more scoring chances for both himself and his linemates. Giroux was far and away the best Flyer this season, especially in the playoffs. He is sublime offensively, and is in the mix with Sedin, Crosby, and Datsyuk as the league's best play maker. He doesn't shoot the puck a lot, but he'll be a consistent 80-plus (emphasis on the plus) point player for the next decade.

He showed more of a physical edge this postseason – not sure if that is a sign of things to come (more PIM), or a player simply elevating his game in the spring. Giroux had four straight multi-point games to finish off the 2011 season – two against Buffalo, and two against Boston. He's my favorite player in the league after Zach Parise, and I can't wait to see his development into an NHL superstar continue. One way or another, the log jam at center in Philadelphia will sort itself out this summer.

One year upside: 30 goals, 90 points, 60 PIM

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

Three year upside: 40 goals, 100 points, 65 PIM

4. Martin St. Louis

If Steve Yzerman felt comfortable giving St. Louis a big contract well into his late 30's, I have no problem placing him so high on this list at the age of 35 (soon to be 36). St. Louis doesn't get the media attention and recognition he deserves, even after a Hart Trophy/Stanley Cup season back in 2004. He does it all at an elite level each game – few players compete on a shift-to-shift basis as hard as he does. One big reason for Steven Stamkos having a breakout season – St. Louis. One big reason for Vinny Lecavalier's resurgence? You guessed it, St. Louis.

One underrated skill he possesses is his one-timer. I didn't see much of Brett Hull in his prime, but St. Louis has an unbelievable ability to get a hard, accurate shot off regardless of where the puck is in his stance – front, middle, back, slow pass, saucer pass, whatever. You give him the

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

puck, he does something special with it. He didn't emerge as a full-time NHL player until the age of 25 – perhaps his legs have more left in them than other 35-year-old NHL skaters.

If you need PIM, he isn't your guy, though. St. Louis has averaged 12 PIM over the past three seasons.

One year upside: 35 goals, 100 points, 15 PIM

Three year upside: 35 goals, 100 points, 15 PIM

5. Jeff Carter

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

The shot-producing machine is [rumored to be on the trading block](#) as the summer approaches. The Flyers need cap space to fill other positions, and they are very deep up front. Carter is the best natural goal scorer on the team though, and something tells me they may try to move someone else first. He has eclipsed the 300 shot mark in each of the last three seasons. He's averaged 37 goals in those three seasons. His plus-minus has twice been over 25, and he has recorded respectable PIM totals as well. The best part? Carter hasn't scratched the surface of his offensive upside.

If he gets moved this summer, he could become the go-to player on his new team. Depending on who he lines up with, this could mean a lot more opportunity to score. Philadelphia is a good situation for him as he has great talent to play with, both at forward and on defense, but Carter sometimes gets lost in the depth. He was fourth among Flyer forwards in terms of power play ice time, trailing Giroux, Mike Richards, and Daniel Briere.

One year upside: 45 goals, 80 points, 55 PIM

Three year upside: 50 goals, 90 points, 70 PIM

6. Rick Nash

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

I have made no bones about the fact that I am not a Rick Nash fan. He dominates when he wants (especially in a Canadian sweater), but has been a fantasy flop (based on expectations) during his NHL career. Perhaps by ranking him fifth I doing exactly what I speak out against – overrating him based on potential?

Nash has the skills of a superstar forward. He lacks the surrounding talent and the consistent effort. Derrick Brassard has great upside but has been too inconsistent with his play and health. Antoine Vermette and RJ Umberger are both terrific two-way forwards, but neither should be anywhere near an NHL top line. The reason I like Nash this summer more than I did last summer – Ryan Johansen. The future top line center in Columbus is big, skilled, creative, and consistent. He has dominated the physical WHL on a fantastic Portland team for the past few years. He was one of Canada's best forwards at the 2011 World Juniors tournament. He may need a bit of seasoning at the pro level, but he will raise Nash's production to a new level once he establishes himself in the NHL.

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

I usually would advise against valuing a player based on a potential line mate who has yet to play a single NHL game, but I love the potential fit between these two.

One year upside: 45 goals, 85 points, 70 PIM

Three year upside: 50 goals, 95 points, 95 PIM

7. Dany Heatley

It is frustrating to watch Heatley float through a game with the Sharks, as he has so much talent to give. He seems to have settled in as a secondary scoring option on a very deep San Jose offensive group. The fact that Heatley scored only 26 goals with his combination of shot, size, and skill is almost insulting to poolies. He is only four years removed from consecutive 50+ goal, 100+ point seasons with the Senators. It would be wrong to right off Heatley has a dominant NHL forward at the age of 30, wouldn't it?

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

Heatley averaged 305 shots on goal during his 50 goal seasons – he had 217 last season. More shots on goal, more goals. Alex Ovechkin seems to understand the equation.

One year upside: 45 goals, 90 points, 60 PIM

Three year upside: 50 goals, 100 points, 75 PIM

8. ☐ Jeff Skinner

My 2010 man-crush made me look smart with a fantastic rookie season. The former figure skater twirled and twisted his way to 31 goals and 62 points. He had a few slumps during the course of the season (more at the beginning than the end, a great trend), but that should be expected from any 18-year-old in his first professional season. Skinner plays hard and is unafraid of going to the net and the tough areas on the ice. His skating stride and strength on his skates has garnered comparisons to Sidney Crosby. He doesn't have Crosby's top end speed (or skill), but he will be a fantastic NHL player for a long, long time.

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

I wouldn't be surprised to see him shoot up this list if he plays as well in 2011-12 as he did in 2010-11.

One year upside: 40 goals, 80 points, 60 PIM

Three year upside: 50 goals, 95 points, 75 PIM

9. Alex Semin

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

Semin is a very polarizing figure in the fantasy hockey world. Some look past his playoff struggles and defensive shortcomings and gladly reap the rewards of the goals, power play points, and shots on goal that he delivers in his 65-70 games each season. Others look at his inconsistent effort, the lure of the KHL, and his poor playoff performance and avoid him. I have a toe in both camps.

One on side, Semin is an elite offensive forward with the best shot in the game. He can score goals from anywhere on the ice and is a threat any time the puck is on his stick. On the other side, he hasn't shown the ability to stay healthy enough to take the next step to an elite level of production. The KHL should be a very real concern for Semin, but those who disregard him based on poor playoff performance are doing themselves a disservice. Unless your pool counts playoff statistics, don't overrate bad playoff players. Regular season is all that matters for you to win your pool. He was the best fantasy RW in 2009-10. The upside far outweighs the risk with this enigmatic Russian.

One year upside: 45 goals, 85 points, 60 PIM

Three year upside: 45 goals, 90 points, 60 PIM

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

10. Chris Stewart

I had some problems filling the last two spots on this list. I was dead set on putting Stewart's teammate, David Backes, in the position, but I decided to go with Stewart.

A few notes on Backes, and why I like him:

Like Giroux, Backes played 2010-11 primarily as a center. However, he is still listed as a RW in many places (including Yahoo!, where he is exclusively a RW). However, unlike Giroux, I believe Backes is more effective on the wing. He is big and extremely physical, and playing on the right side allows him to play deeper on the forecheck and to pound opposing defensemen on a more regular basis. Backes has scored 31 goals in two of the last three seasons. He doesn't have the offensive upside of many below him on this list, but he is a well-rounded player who will deliver in multiple categories. The most impressive statistic from 2010-11 wasn't his 31 goals or his 93 PIM. Backes finished with a plus-32 rating, 14 higher than any other Blue.

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

Back to Stewart. Why do I like him more than Backes? Look at the Blues up the middle – Patrik Berglund, TJ Oshie, Andy McDonald (I am aware the latter two dabble on the wing), and a rich prospect pool, including Jaden Schwartz, Vladimir Tarasenko and Philip McRae. Stewart has elite hands, a heavy, accurate shot, and a passion for playing physical, smash mouth hockey. He has the potential to become hockey's next great power forward. Stewart's numbers in St. Louis prorated over a full 82 game schedule – 58 goals, 74 points, 58 PIM. Like all great goal scorers, Stewart seems to pick up speed once he has the puck on his stick.

One year upside: 40 goals, 75 points, 80 PIM

Three year upside: 45 goals, 80 points, 90 PIM

Honorable Mentions:

Jarome Iginla – one of the best right wingers in the league last year. Pains me to leave him off

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

– good at everything, great leader, carried a weak Flames forward group all season.

Loui Eriksson – one of the best wingers in the game, was extremely tough leaving him off. Brad Richards uncertainty clouds his future upside.

Marian Gaborik – when healthy, few can touch him. Unfortunately, injuries are a huge issue.

Teemu Selanne – the ageless Finn looks to have at least one more year left. A true joy to watch.

Steve Downie – the reigns appear to be on – don't expect any 250+ PIM seasons.

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

Kyle Okposo – love his upside, but hasn't proven enough yet.

Michael Grabner – in the words of LMFAO, shots, shots, shots, shots, shots shots.

Nathan Horton – should be on the list with his physical tools.

Phil Kessel – what he has done with essentially zero help up front has been impressive. Could crack the list with better linemates.

Marian Hossa – huge fall from last year, hopefully has an excuse for inconsistent 2010-11.

Jakub Voracek – needs big rebound effort next season or could be on the block.

Top 10 Keeper League Right Wingers

Written by Jeff Angus

Friday, 13 May 2011 22:40 - Last Updated Monday, 16 May 2011 15:12

Johan Franzen – the Mule is one of the best goal scorers when he is on his game, but too inconsistent.

Jordan Eberle – give him a year or two and he'll be in the top five.

I could list several more honorable mentions – if you feel I should include someone, let me know who (and most importantly, why)!