Thanks to a few well-timed strong finishers, my undermanned team (The Crosby Show) in an extremely competitive head-to-head keeper league managed a second place finish after the playoffs. As you can probably tell from my team name, Sidney Crosby was my star. This league counts standard categories (goals, hits penalty minutes, and so on), and over the past few seasons we have added a few more (faceoff wins and hits).

Over the past few weeks I have been formulating a plan for my team this summer. I've decided to share it with you, even though every single one of my competitors reads this site (in fact one of them is even a fellow columnist). Why? I'd like to think it is because I am such a nice guy, but I am also looking for feedback and your opinion as to how I should approach the summer ahead.

My roster as of June *(potential keepers in **bold**)* :

Mike Fisher

C

Vincent Lecavalier

C

Vladimir Sobotka

C

Mikko Koivu

C

Mark Giordano

D

Zdeno Chara

C

Dan Boyle

D

Johnny Boychuk

D

Alex Edler

D

Andrej Sekera

D

Doug Murray

D

John-Michael Liles

D

Martin Brodeur

G

Roberto Luongo

G

Dwayne Roloson

G

Patrick Sharp

LW

Andrew Ladd

LW

Mason Raymond

LW

Justin Williams

RW

Marian Gaborik

RW

Johan Franzen

RW

PA Parenteau

RW

IR Sidney Crosby

C

IR David Perron

LW

Farm Erik Karlsson

D

Farm Cory Schneider

G

Farm Steve Kampfer

D

Farm David Rundblad

D

Farm Brendan Smith

D

Farm Oliver Ekman-Larsson

D

Farm Matt Calvert

LW

Farm Jeremy Morin

RW

Farm Mats Zuccarello

RW

Odds & Ends:

- This league really values defensemen, as six are started each game. Three are started for each forward position (LW/C/RW) and two goaltenders are on the active roster.
- I have made a few blockbuster trades over the past little while. I traded Steven Stamkos away last summer in hopes of securing the goaltending categories (I received Martin Brodeur and Zdeno Chara). Ouch. The worst part? I also moved Kevin Shattenkirk in the trade. Chara is a very valuable player with our scoring categories, but this one still hurts.
- I moved Christian Ehrhoff and Patrice Bergeron for Vinny Lecavalier and Adam Banks Mason Raymond. Bergeron and Ehrhoff are both valuable players in this league, but I don’t think we have seen the last of Lecavalier as a star forward.

- One final smaller move – I traded Jordan Caron, one of my favourite prospects, for Alex Steen.
- We get to keep eight players on the farm. The rules – must have less than 200 games played at the NHL level (which is why I can have Karlsson listed there with 135 NHL games of experience).
- As you can tell from my farm makeup, I have bought into the “you can never have enough good defensemen” saying that many teams in the NHL believe in. Smith, Rundblad, Ekman-Larsson, and Karlsson are all potential elite offensive defensemen.
- Jeremy Morin should crack Chicago’s roster. Of course I own Matt Calvert.

The Decisions:

- When healthy, I am set up the middle. Crosby’s looming concussion issues will probably drag on throughout the summer, which won’t help me much. I did have a strong finish to the season, but without Crosby I am probably a bottom half team in this league. I probably won’t focus on the center position much this summer.
- Our draft is nine rounds long – the first six are for professional players only (more than 1 NHL game played), while the final three are for prospects to fill out the farm team.
- My LW is weak. Raymond has been a flop. Sharp is very valuable as a LW since he accumulates faceoff wins. Ladd had a solid season overall, but he is inconsistent and I don’t like relying on him as my second best LW (hoping for a big return from David Perron).
- On the right side, I have three band-aid boys and PA Parenteau. Franzen is a playoff performer. Williams had a great season and fills a lot of categories. I am hoping that Richards moves to New York to help Gaborik out (at one time I used to own Richards as well, if only I had kept him).
- Keepers – we keep 17 on the roster, and eight on the farm. I can slide Cory Schneider to the farm, and drop someone like Zuccarello. We can keep up to four goaltenders, but if you keep four you can't draft one, and if you keep three you can only draft one. I think Roloson has to be a keeper at this point, no?
- I have bolded my potential keepers. Do I keep Parenteau over a depth defenseman like Liles or Boychuk?

The Result:

- I will definitely be targeting wingers via trade and at the draft. I have a long list of prospects that I am interested in (thanks to the DobberHockey 2011 Prospects Report).
- I like my defense a lot, especially from a two-to-three-year perspective
- I can have a great draft and make a few shrewd trades, but my team won't be much without Crosby. Not exactly the most reassuring feeling, but what can you do?
- Any other thoughts/ideas/feedback?
- **The draft is in September, plenty of time to see how free agency plays out.**