Eric Maltais first approached me with regards to joining the Industry Experts League he was running in the summer of 2008. I jumped at the opportunity to join a league featuring writers and bloggers from the likes of TSN, Yahoo, Rotoworld, Rotowire, McKeen's Hockey; in other words the cream of the crop with regards to fantasy hockey on the internet. Maltais won the league last year, so I wanted to make sure that DobberHockey was going to be well represented in this league once again.

After floundering in the middle of the pack for the better part of the first 25 games, I have slowly climbed away from the pack and got as high as first place. Through January 14, I am sitting in third place; five back of the fantasyhockey.com representative, and three and a half back from Rocky of NHL.com. Maltais was near the top of the league for a while but has slipped a bit back to fifth place, although he is still very much in the thick of things as the stretch run begins.

The league has unlimited moves and I have made 45 up to this point, good for the second most in the league. A maximum games played level obviously exists as well, which adds an additional element of difficulty. Unlike the Dobber Experts League, the Industry Experts League features daily line changes.

On the trade front, there have been a few minor deals made over the past few weeks. Gus from McKeen's acquired Erik Cole at the end of December, sending Christian Ehrhoff to Fanball – Flowers. Cole has been red hot the past three weeks and he is currently making Gus look like a genius with this move. Maltais and Nick from Sports Forecaster made a deal in mid December. Maltais received Pierre-Marc Bouchard and John-Michael Liles (a fan of the hyphenated first name I suppose), sending away Martin Havlat and Fedor Tyutin. Maltais was definitely selling high on the injury-prone Havlat, but Bouchard has been a huge disappointment thus far.

The most recent significant trade in this league occurred in early November, as Sergei Fedorov, Jakub Voracek, Andrew Brunette, and Jeff Drouin-Deslauriers were exchanged for Nikolai Kulemin, Dan Cleary, Fabian Brunnstrom, and Cristobal Huet. At this point the trade basically breaks down as Fedorov/Voracek/Brunette for Cleary and Huet. It was made between NHL.com and fantasyhockey.com, which is significant because those two sit as second and first respectively in league standings.

The lack of trading is not reflective on the league activity though, as there are lots of daily roster additions and a quick frenzy to add the latest call-up or trade bait.

I am welcoming back Roberto Luongo (my first round pick) with open arms, as I am lagging behind in the wins category. I made a few offers for goalies (Turco and Fleury), but was unable to pry a goalie away without giving one up, which I just couldn't afford to do.

Full Standings Through January 14

		Offense						Goaltending		
Rank	Team	G	A	+/-	PIM	PPP	SOG	W	GAA	SV%
1	fantasyhockey.com Ev	217	319	100	482	209	1885	38	2.43	0.913
2	NHL.com All-Stars	217	306	9	506	204	1916	44	2.45	0.915
3	DobberHockey - Angus	186	333	71	695	181	1810	26	2.41	0.923
4	Rotoworld	181	343	27	631	192	1717	50	2.53	0.914
5	DobberHockey Maltais	159	326	-38	589	200	1728	48	2.51	0.917

6	TSN.ca	191	316	8	569	189	1741	49	2.68	0.907
7	Rotowire - Levine	211	346	-21	569	218	1911	25	2.92	0.901
8	Sports Forecaster	187	291	90	499	147	1810	36	2.6	0.908
9	Fanball - Flowers	176	320	92	724	164	1652	37	2.87	0.904
10	Y! Romig	194	287	-10	468	201	1719	44	2.72	0.905
11	Rotowire - Topper	172	291	46	481	178	1770	34	2.75	0.909
12	mckeenshockey.com	167	293	-34	469	176	1701	41	2.73	0.904

Looking at the numbers (which every fantasy hockey junkie loves to do), there are a few interesting things to note.

- Levine sits dead last in every single goalie category, but thanks to impressive offensive totals currently sits in seventh place.
- If I have any chance at winning this pool, I need to get some wins. I am still picking my games carefully, as I want to keep my first place hold on both GAA and SV%. Luongo's return will no doubt help me, as I was running with Bryzgalov and whoever the hot hand was (Craig Anderson, Brian Elliot, and countless others) in his absence
- Maltais is dead last in goals but near the top in assists. Might be time to get some players to bury all those passes!
- It will be interesting to see if a few more deals get made with some large disparities forming across all of the categories

The Experts are:

Eric Maltais - Dobber Hockey
Jeff Angus - Dobber Hockey
Ray Flowers - Fanball
Scott Cullen - TSN
Ian Gooding - FantasyHockey.com
Jan Levine - Rotowire
John Topper - Rotowire
Gus Katsaros - McKeens Hockey
Matt Romig – Yahoo! Sports
Michael Finewax - Rotoworld
Nicolas Chabot - The Sports Forecaster
Rocky Bonnano - NHL.com