The trade deadline has come and gone in the NHL and the same holds true for most fantasy hockey leagues. For those of you in contention for first place, more time is now spent focusing on which categories you need to improve during the final few weeks, and if there are any players available on the waiver wire that can help you in that regard. For those of you who have no shot at winning this year, now is the time to focus on next season (provided you are in a keeper league, of course). Once trading opens back up in the summer, the build for the future will continue. Trading for unproven prospects and young players is always a risk, but there are ways to mitigate that. (Reading DobberHockey is a great start!) There are several young players who are ready to step in and produce next season in the NHL, and you may be able to get a few of them below value this summer.

Michael Grabner

Grabner has recently been called up to the Canucks, and he will skate on the second line for the next few weeks with Mikael Samuelsson nursing a banged up shoulder. Grabner has always been a bit of an enigma for Canuck fans –always billed as a pure sniper with consistency issues, he has had a few disappointing training camps in Vancouver that have made many question his ability to play his game at the NHL level. He scored 39 goals in 55 games during his final season with the Spokane Chiefs, but was benched and called out by his coach on a few occasions for poor effort. Grabner has worked hard since joining the Moose in 2007 to improve both his consistency and effort level. He scored 30 goals last season in Manitoba, and has 15 in 38 games this season for the Moose.

Grabner's play away from the puck has improved in the AHL, but he still is as streaky as ever offensively. Of his 15 goals, three came in the first four games. He then went 14 without scoring again, and then had seven more in his next seven games. He played great for the Canucks earlier this season during a nine game call-up, scoring twice and adding three helpers (he also fired 31 shots on goal). Those nine games went a long way to silent some of his doubters. Grabner was able to use his speed on a consistent basis to beat NHL defensemen, and he did not look out of place without the puck. He sustained a freak ankle injury playing soccer before a game, and subsequently lost his spot with the Canucks. For the next few weeks at least, he will be given every opportunity to contribute at the NHL level.

The Canucks won't admit it, but he has a spot to lose in the lineup next season. Pavol Demitra is set to become an unrestricted free agent, and he won't be back. Grabner will probably slot in somewhere on the second line alongside Ryan Kesler and either Mason Raymond or Mikael Samuelsson. The Canucks are also expecting Cody Hodgson to make the jump, but Grabner will have a bigger immediate impact. His value in fantasy leagues will come from his ability to score goals and shoot the puck. Don't be surprised to see him score 20-25 next season with close to 200 shots on goal.

Jordan Eberle

Eberle could retire from hockey tomorrow and still be a Canadian hockey legend, thanks to his heroics at the past two World Junior Hockey Championships. He is a big game player, and his ability to excel in tight checking situations sets him apart from most other offensive talents. He has a motor that doesn't quit (I had to get at least one hockey cliché in), and can score goals from anywhere. He will be in the Oilers next season barring an injury or a horrendous camp, and could find himself alongside Ales Hemsky on the top line. Eberle could also potentially have a new line mate in either Taylor Hall or Tyler Seguin. He has little left to prove at the junior level, as he has been playing a few levels above the opposition for a quite some time now.

He was recently unanimously chosen to be a member of the WHL's Western Conference First All-Star Team. He finished the season with 106 points (interestingly the exact same number recorded by Taylor Hall and Tyler Seguin in the OHL), losing the WHL scoring title by one point to Calgary Hitmen forward and Kings prospect Brandon Kozun. Eberle's Regina Pats failed to qualify for the playoffs, but there are a few rumblings that have him finding his way onto Canada's roster for the upcoming IIHF World Hockey Championships. He may be a bit tougher to acquire than some of the other players suggested, as most are aware of him because of what he has done internationally for Canada. However, that inherent risk that comes with unproven

rookies plays a part with regards to Eberle's trade value. His numbers next season will depend a lot on what the Oilers do in the off-season, but he will contend for the Calder Trophy regardless. Over the long term, he should develop into a 35-40 goal scorer. He is one of the safest bets to become a star in the NHL as you will find among prospects.

Here is what Regina GM Brent Parker had to say about Eberle. "In my 15 years, he's the best player we've had in terms of the whole package, his leadership, his on-ice abilities, the type of person he is, everything."

Matt Calvert

Calvert made a name for himself with a very impressive training camp last September in Columbus. The team offered him a contract and the chance to play pro hockey in Syracuse, but Calvert declined and decided to return to his WHL team in Brandon (his hometown, as well) for a shot at the Memorial Cup (Brandon is hosting the tournament this season). The decision has paid off for Calvert, who recently got around to signing his first professional contract with the Blue Jackets. Calvert had 47 goals this season for the Wheat Kings; including a WHL-leading nine on the penalty kill (Eberle was second with six). He doesn't possess Eberle's elite offensive upside, but he works just as hard. He isn't big, but he plays with an edge and plays fearless with and without the puck.

He had 11 points in Brandon's final three regular season games, and finished the season with 99 points. He had to work so hard initially in his career because he was undersized. He has bulked up a bit, but hasn't lost the work ethic. Looking at many late bloomers who succeed, it is because they have had to work so hard to overcome size issues. There will always be some sort of a size bias among hockey management, so some of these smaller players have to work twice as hard for the same opportunity. And if they do end up hitting a late growth spurt, they have that experience and ability with playing hungry on a consistent basis.

He had some impressive linemates this season in Brayden Schenn and Scott Glennie (both high 1st round draft picks in 2009), so his numbers may be a bit inflated. Under-sized 5th round draft picks rarely make it to the NHL without some time at the AHL level, but Calvert may be an exception. In terms of offensive forwards, Columbus has Nash, Umberger, Huselius, Vermette, Brassard, and Voracek locked up through next season (and Nikita Filatov has to factor in to the equation as well). Calvert may start his NHL career on the third line, but could work his way up quickly if his high-energy game can transfer over to the NHL. Calvert is a name you will be hearing a lot during the Memorial Cup tournament this year, so if you are looking to acquire him this summer, cross your fingers that your competition isn't paying attention!

PK Subban

Even though he was born in Toronto, Subban was a Canadiens fan growing up. He finished his

rookie season in Belleville with just 12 points, but exploded the next season (2006-07) with 15 goals and 41 assists. He continued his assault on the OHL over the next two seasons, and had his coming out party at the 2009 World Junior tournament. He was named to the tournament all-star team, and was one of Canada's most dominant players, along with Eberle, Cody Hodgson, and John Tavares.

Subban is one of hockey's most exciting prospects. He can rush the puck effortlessly from one end of the ice to the other, and he handles it as well as most forwards. His size, skating ability, and hockey sense have enabled him to dominate at the AHL level for Hamilton this season. He is a lock to be on Montreal's blue line next season, even though the Habs have six NHL blue liners signed through 2010-11 (Markov, Hamrlik, Spacek, Gill, Gorges, and O'Byrne). He makes great decisions with the puck, and plays with a ton of poise. He has a physical edge to his game as well. Where he gets in to trouble sometimes is with his positioning in the defensive zone, as he has a habit of over pursuing the puck carrier. This season with Hamilton, Subban is second in the league among all defensemen with 16 goals, and second in points with 50. He has 74 penalty minutes, and is an impressive plus-39.

Kyle Beach

There are a few young players in Chicago to watch for this summer, as the Hawks will have to go with a few rookies up front to sneak in under the salary cap ceiling for 2010-11. Jack Skille will be on the team, but he hasn't developed offensively as hoped. However, Beach looks to be on his way to becoming a dominant power forward for many years in Chicago. He finished the

season second in scoring in the entire CHL with 52 goals, trailing Barrie's Bryan Cameron by one. Like Eberle, he was named to the WHL's Western Conference First All-Star Team. Beach also finished the season with 12 game-winning goals, good for first in the league (as well as a team record for the Spokane Chiefs).

Chicago still has to clear around six or seven million for next season to fit under the cap. Kris Versteeg is an obvious candidate to move. Dustin Byfuglien might be on the block as well, and even Patrick Sharp, if they get really desperate. Cristobal Huet may be buried in the minors as a last resort, but I am not sure the Hawks could swallow a $5 million AHL goaltender.

Beach is still a bit of a loose cannon, but he has toned it down a bit this season. The Hawks have made it clear to him that they don't want him to tone it down too much, as so much of what makes Beach valuable is his ability to intimidate the opposition. Perhaps the Hawks could have used him the other night against Anaheim?