I am currently in five fantasy hockey leagues, and yesterday kicked off five drafts in 12 days for me . The Ultimate Fantasy Pool is a head-to-head league, and all of the league's members are readers of DobberHockey (a few of them are regular contributors on the hockey forum as well). The team (The Crosby Show), was audited by the HockeyPoolGeek crew back in August (you can read the in-depth analysis here ).

I went in to the draft with a few goals, and in the end I think I accomplished what I set out to do.

The roster heading in to the draft (keep 17):

C – Crosby, Stamkos, Bolland, Koivu

LW – Perron, Sharp

RW – Clarkson, Gaborik, Franzen

D – Boyle, Karlsson, Edler, Ehrhoff, Souray, Ballard

G – Luongo, Lehtonen, Roloson

Prospects – Ekman-Larsson, Shattenkirk, Schneider

The draft was nine rounds long. The first six rounds were for “pro” players (at least one game of NHL experience), while the last three rounds were for “farm” players (any player with less than 200 NHL games played, a goalie with less than 100 NHL games played, or a player drafted/owned by an NHL club).

I wasn't comfortable with my defensive depth, or my goaltending. My centers are incredibly strong for this league, and I had my eyes on one in the first round who was a perfect fit.

I used the advice given to me by the HockeyPoolGeek crew throughout the draft. I snatched up Mike Fisher in the first round with the ninth overall pick. Michael Leighton went first overall. Around this time I began to enter in serious discussions with a competitor involving a potential Steven Stamkos deal. I had been mulling over moving Stamkos all summer long – I like my centers without him (especially with Fisher), and I want to win the pool now. I felt that I was only a few players away from improving my team considerably in the short term.

The final trade (again, our league counts hits, PIM, and faceoff wins, all of which skew the values of players. Make sure to read the deep analysis done by the HockeyPoolGeek crew for some more perspective):

Outgoing: Steven Stamkos, Kevin Shattenkirk, Kari Lehtonen, draft pick

Incoming: Zdeno Chara, Martin Brodeur, conditional draft pick

Giving up Stamkos hurts, but this trade improves my team immensely in the short term. With Brodeur and Luongo, I have two all-star goaltenders. Chara is a star and should be among the best defensemen in this league. I had a trio of young defensemen and could afford to move Shattenkirk (there are several somewhat comparable prospects still available as well).

Our league places a huge emphasis on goaltenders. More specifically, goaltenders who play a lot. Both Brodeur and Luongo are workhorses. Both are playing behind improved defenses/teams, as well. Even if Stamkos scores 51 goals again, I think that this trade still makes my team better (assuming Brodeur wins 40+ games and Chara has a productive season as well). With six defensemen starting each night, a goal of mine this summer was to improve my back end. I started the offseason with Boyle, Roszival, Souray, Eminger, and R. Blake as my defensemen, and I now have Boyle, Chara, Ehrhoff, Edler, Souray, and Ballard (not to mention Karlsson and Ekman-Larsson waiting in the wings).

I wouldn't advocate trading Stamkos in most cases. He's one of the best players in the game, and quality almost always trumps quantity in terms of trade value. I just think this trade filled two huge holes for me without creating a significant one at center.

In rounds two through six, I ended up taking JM Liles, Andy Greene, Andrew Ladd, Matt Beleskey, and Raffi Torres. Liles was simply too good to pass up at the time. I like Greene a lot with New Jersey’s talent up front, and Ladd is a solid player for the scoring categories. I am hopeful that Beleskey earns top line minutes, and with Torres I am gambling on that small chance he sticks with the Sedin twins either at even strength or on the PP. We are given 40 moves during the season so I am not hamstrung in case he is placed in an energy/grinding role with Vancouver instead.

During the three prospect rounds, I ended up with Jeremy Morin, Jordan Caron, and Mats Zuccarello Aasen. I picked ninth overall (Aasen), and obviously missed out on the notables like Hall, Seguin, Skinner, and Niederreiter. I wanted Derek Stepan as well, but he went before I could grab him. Beau Bennett was another player who I had my eyes on, but he won't be in the NHL for at least another two years. As I said before, I am looking to win in the short-term with this club.

I loaded up on defensemen because we start six each night, and a lack of depth at the position cost me dearly last season.

My post-draft roster:

C – Crosby, M. Koivu, Bolland, Fisher

LW – Perron, Sharp, Beleskey, Ladd

RW – Clarkson, Gaborik, Franzen, Torres

D – Boyle, Chara, Ehrhoff, Edler, Ballard, Souray, Karlsson, Greene, Liles

G – Luongo, Brodeur, Roloson

Prospects – Ekman-Larsson, Schneider, Morin, Caron, Zuccarello Aasen

I was really happy to get Fisher, as I didn't expect him to slide all the way to nine. He is a contributor across the board - goals, power play points, short handed points, hits, penalty minutes, faceoff wins, and shots on goal. Bolland is a similar sort of producer. With a full-time center in one of my left wing spots (Sharp), I'll be winning the faceoff category with regularity.