

15 Prime Cuts - Gleason, Carter, Hedman, and more

Written by Jeff Angus

Monday, 30 January 2012 13:43 - Last Updated Tuesday, 31 January 2012 09:53



In this week's Prime Cuts, I discuss Jeff Carter, the Tim Gleason extension, an OHL sleeper to watch, and more.

1. The Hurricanes announced the re-signing of Tim Gleason today. The deal is for four years at a cap hit of \$ 4 million per, including a no trade clause for the first two years of the deal. Gleason is a solid top-four defenseman who was involved in many trade rumours recently (he was an impending free agent on a bad team... connecting the dots wasn't too difficult).

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The deal now gives the Hurricanes six defensemen under contract already for next season – Gleason, Joni Pitkanen, Jamie McBain, Jay Harrison, Justin Faulk, and stud rookie Ryan Murphy. I guess GM Jim Rutherford took a look at all of the youth on the back end and wanted to solidify a veteran presence for the foreseeable future. Seems like a lot of money to me, though.

2. Is the Crosby fractured vertebrae news good or bad? The good news – there is now a more definitive reason as to why he was experiencing the symptoms. The bad – a fractured vertebrae and a concussion is worse than just a concussion. I'm not really sure what side of the fence I am on.

It reminds me a bit of the Cody Hodgson injury situation a few years ago in Vancouver. Doctors believed and treated Hodgson like he had a disc issue in his back, but after a year or so they realized it was actually a torn muscle. Rehabilitation is a very strenuous process, and can do more damage than good (or just no good at all) if it is focusing on the wrong part of the body.

3. Calgary's need for a legitimate top line center continues, just as it has for the past decade or so. [Is Jeff Carter a fit there?](#)

"The assets required to get even a depreciated Jeff Carter would be enormous on a Flames

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team that is lacking in young depth. To give up a good portion of the few significant youth they have for a player who has an injury history, potential off-ice issues and be married to him for a decade has to have some Flames fans drawing a deep breath.

Will the trade happen? It depends how badly the Jackets want to move Carter and how much of the precious few good young assets the Flames want to give up.

These are not trading partners made in heaven.”

I would concur with the above article. There is a need in Calgary for a big center with Carter's pedigree, but the Flames don't have the depth to be able to put a competitive package together for Carter. It would likely have to involve Giordano and/or a young forward like Backlund or Sven Bartschi.

4. There is at least some positive news to report from the Edmonton organization this year. Their AHL affiliate in Oklahoma City is having a great season (first overall in the AHL, in fact). Goaltender Yan Danis has been fantastic. 2008 5th round pick Philippe Cornet has 20 goals, and future Oiler Teemu Hartikainen has 20 points in 31 games. Magnus Paajarvi has nine points in 12 games (although only one goal), as he has garnered his fair share of frequent flyer

miles with the trips between Edmonton and Oklahoma City this season.

5. Colorado prospect Calvin Pickard [recently set the mark](#) for most all-time saves in the WHL.

“The 19-year-old from Winnipeg, MB, stopped 42 of 45 shots he faced in a 3-2 setback to the Giants, giving him 6,959 career saves, eclipsing the previous long-held record of 6,958 saves set by former Thunderbirds netminder Danny Lorenz (1986-1990).”

Pickard is in his fourth season in the WHL with the Thunderbirds, having appeared in 217 career regular-season games. He currently sits sixth on the WHL’s list of All-Time Games Played and third on the All-Time Minutes Played list at 12,639.”

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That is a lot of hockey. Calvin is the younger brother of Chet, a prospect in the Nashville system. Young goalies are hard to project and I wouldn't recommend holding on to many of them in your keeper league, though. Just look at how long the likes of Cory Schneider and Tuukka Rask have to wait, and look how long it took Jimmy Howard to become a full-time NHL goalie.

6. Most of you are familiar with Bruce Arthur, a terrific writer with the National Post. He recently wrote on the impending CBA negotiations, and [I'd recommend giving it a read.](#)

"When this begins, everything will be on the table. Realignment, which the players rejected earlier this year; supplemental discipline, which Fehr noted has no "due process," which he described as something which creates "philosophical issues"; relocation, which is tied to revenues, which make the whole NHL go round. Hockey is on the table, in every way. And at some point these two men will sit down across from one another, and they will bring with them everything they know. And the game, for good or otherwise, will be in the middle."

7. The '[last games lines](#)' and '[last three games lines](#)' tools from Frozen Pool have been a huge help to me as I write the ramblings and put together columns for the site. I don't get to watch all 30 teams play, and with so many injuries, demotions, call-ups, and so on, tracking lines each game is difficult. The tools are now free for you to use, as well. They are a great way to see why certain players are producing (or conversely, not producing).

8. Dallas has recalled defenseman Philip Larsen. It is only a matter of time until he is a mainstay for them. Even if he is stuck behind Alex Goligoski for PP duties, he still has the upside to be a 30-35 point defenseman in the next few years. The recall gives Dallas eight defensemen, but Souray and Robidas are both banged up. Adam Parady was signed last summer, but he has been a major flop. Don't be surprised to see the team cut ties with him soon.

9. Breaking news: [Patrick Kane is now maturing](#). It sure would be nice to see a few more goals, though. In all seriousness, Kane is a great buy-low candidate right now. He's going to break out at some point, either down the stretch this season, in the playoffs, or early next season. He'll be among the highest scoring right wingers for the next 10-15 years, and the Blackhawks are set up to be a good team for a long time. He's on pace for 18 goals and 67 points, and both would be the lowest of his six year NHL career. I'd value him as an 80-90 point winger with the potential for more, and his consistency also factors into the equation. Especially in leagues with weekly line ups, consistency is a very important (and often overlooked) attribute.

10. I stumbled across this two part piece on the Columbus Blue Jackets from NHL.com over the weekend. Here's the decription: "*NHL.com's Corey Masisak spent a week in Columbus with the Blue Jackets, reporting the inside story on a team with high expectations at the start of the 2011-12 regular season.*"

[Part I](#) and [Part II](#).

On Brassard:

"Derick has certainly shown these spurts before, and he is still a young player as far his NHL life goes," Howson said. "We think that he can grow into a top-six forward -- a consistent top-six forward -- because he's been one inconsistently on our team. He's making strides again.

"He's showing more maturity, more consistency, more commitment. We'll see where it goes here. He's got a wonderful opportunity. He's playing higher in the lineup and right now he deserves to be higher in the lineup."

Brassard could be a player who swings the fortune of the 2012-13 Blue Jackets. He is in the final season of his contract, and Columbus needs the player who scored 47 points this past season and currently is playing well -- not the one who had five points in 24 games while also being scratched at times earlier in the season."

As I wrote a few years ago, I think Columbus' future lies with the likes of Ryan Johansen and whoever they draft this year, not Rick Nash or Jeff Carter. The Jackets need to blow it up and build around a legitimate young goaltender, something they don't have right now.

11. Dennis Wideman was in the All-Star Game? Really?

12. Brandon Saad's linemate in Saginaw (OHL), Vincent Trocheck, is [having an impressive season](#)

The expectations for Trocheck have been high since early in his rookie year, when former Spirit coach and General Manager Todd Watson said midway through the season that Trocheck could become the best player in team history.

Two years later, he hasn't disappointed. Earlier this season, Trocheck moved into the top 10 in both the Spirit's career points and career goals lists. He could finish his career at or near the top of both lists — as an 18-year-old, he's likely to return next year.

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“He possesses that ability to be a game-changer,” Spirit coach Greg Gilbert said. “When he’s using his abilities at the right times and not trying to do too much, he’s a heck of a player.”

Trochek was drafted by the Panthers in the 3rd round last summer. Keep an eye on him.

13. I wrote a piece for the Canucks Army on Kevin Connauton last week – [here’s a great video](#) which highlights the good parts of his game. He’s a great defenseman to own in any keeper league format. Awesome song choice, too.

14. Victor Hedman hasn’t played in a month due to a concussion. He’s skating and could be back soon. Where does he stand in your eyes right now? Does he still possess the offensive upside many thought he did at the time of his draft? He hasn’t shown much in the way of offense up to this point with Tampa Bay, but big young defensemen often need to figure out the defensive side of the game first.

15. Off to Hawaii today for 10 days – zero internet access. I am looking forward to seeing Mike Schmidt’s debut with DobberHockey. He’s a terrific writer and knows the sport really well. I am looking forward to unplugging for a bit, but I hope I don’t miss too many trades....

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