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Another month, another volatile thirty days in the standings. Who would go where if the Draft took place in November, and who has the best moustache potential? (okay, just kidding about that one)

1. New York Islanders- D Adam Larsson (Skelleftea/Elitserien)

A new month, a new team in last place. Unlike the New Jersey Devils- who got themselves out of 30th by beating Edmonton in overtime Friday night- the Islanders don't exactly look out of place here. Sure, they're injured all to heck, but the Isles are in year 14 of a five-year rebuild and there seems to be no way out of the darkness and a healthy (snicker) Rick DiPietro and Kyle Okposo likely doesn't push this team to eight place.

But the Isles would be justly rewarded for another sub-par season should they continue their

losing ways. Although John Tavares, Josh Bailey, Okposo and Nino Niederreiter is an enviable forward core, the defense is still very much a work in progress. Adding a franchise talent in Adam Larsson would be the best outcome for 2010-11.

2. Edmonton Oilers- C Sean Couturier (Drummondville/QMJHL)

If it were at all possible, the Edmonton Oilers have a worse defensive unit- now and most definitely in the future- than the Isles. Outside of Jeff Petry and 2010 2nd rounder Martin Marincin, Edmonton's pipeline of blueliners is a collection of projects and "safe, steady" (re: #6/7) types.

However, should the Oilers fail to secure the first pick for a second year running, they needn't fret- it's not as if there aren't a bevy of holes to fill throughout the organization. Although Shawn Horcoff is not the ECHLer many Oilers faithful like to paint him as, any team that's a) paying him \$5.5M a season b) using him as their #1 C is a team in trouble. Enter Sean Couturier. Like Hall last year, there's simply not a better fit for the Oilers up front. Couturier has the skill and speed to be a star forward in the NHL, and at 6'4, the frame to handle the punishment such a player must absorb on a night-to-night basis.

3. New Jersey Devils- D Ryan Murphy (Kitchener/OHL)

An unconventional pick, but once again, it's unlikely New Jersey Devils fans will find themselves cheering for the bounce of a bingo ball rather than for a playoff team. However, it's not as if the Devils couldn't use the help very, very soon; despite being a savvy team at the draft table that's shown a gift for making hay with any pick any where under David Conte, no fewer than nine players (ten if you include Brian Rolston) are on the wrong side of 30.

The key to New Jersey's success at the draft table has been to take the most gifted, most hungry player no matter the size (and/or speed) of the package it comes in. That's why Ryan Murphy would make the most sense in a hypothetical Devils lottery situation. Third in league scoring with 31 points in 18 games, Murphy has continued to dominate the Ontario Hockey League and has the immense hockey sense required to do so at the next level.

4. Boston Bruins (from Toronto)- D David Musil (Vancouver/WHL)

It's a terrible mix from which there is little to build on: scoring little (see: 29th in GF/G) and unable to keep pucks out- especially on the PK (26th; 76%)- the Toronto Maple Leafs desperately need an injection of blue chip talent either up front or on the back end. However, they'll get neither once again thanks to one of the more, uh, interesting trades to grace the NHL Registry since the Thornton-for-Sturm/Stuart/pocket lint deal of 2005-06.

So what will Boston do with another pick that's looking very much like a lottery selection? With the Bruins firmly secure up front for both the long-term and the present, 2011 would be a very

good time to address the organization's obvious need for a bluechip defensive prospect. Should Ryan Murphy not make it outside the top four, Boston will have their choice of a number of strapping young rearguard capable of playing gritty, responsible two-way hockey.

For argument's sake, let's say it's David Musil. The 6'3, 200 lbs Czech import continues to chug along as a WHL sophomore with 12 points, a +9 rating and 26 PIM in 22 games. Although still very much a raw talent both in terms of his skating ability and in how best to distribute the puck, Musil has the tools to be a top-two NHL defenseman- exactly what the Bs need.

5. Calgary Flames- C Ryan Nugent-Hopkins (Red Deer/WHL)

The Calgary Flames were in trouble the moment Jarome Iginla found himself outside the team's top five scorers for the first time in a decade. So it should be no surprise that they've become a serious contender for a high pick over the last five games thanks to up-and-down play from the likes of cornerstones Miikka Kiprusoff (1-4-0, 3.20 GAA) and Jay Bouwmeester (5 GP 0-2-2, -3).

However, the team's biggest area of concern has no doubt been down the middle. The incredible revival of Brendan Morrison's career has been the only bright spot for a group that swings from young and inexperienced (Mikael Backlund, 3-2-5 in 16 games) to old and feeble (Craig Conroy, 2-0-0 in 14 games).

That's why finishing bottom five and securing Ryan Nugent-Hopkins could be the best thing to happen to the franchise since the arrival of Kiprusoff. 'RNH' has continued his torrid scoring pace, notching 30 points in 22 games for the upstart Rebels. Although he'll likely never come close to having Iginla's bullish 6'1 207 frame, Nugent-Hopkins has the leadership required to take a floundering franchise on his back. In addition, the Sutters- who continue to have active ties with the Red Deer organization- will have a better sense of him than 29 other teams.

6. Florida Panthers- D Duncan Siemens (Saskatoon/WHL)

Despite being under the guidance of Stanley Cup-winning GM Dale Tallon, the Florida Panthers continue to look like a team without an identity. However, signs of recovery are there; despite poor starts by Stephen Weiss, Steve Bernier, Dmitri Kulikov and Cory Stillman, skill players like Michael Frolik and Dennis Wideman are slowly claiming their place as leaders both on and off the ice.

What's missing? Well, like the Hawks for a long time, Florida continues to lack big, gritty skaters who can take the game to their opponents and create the turn-overs and space necessary to get possession. One player from the 2011 class who would help a great deal in this regard is Duncan Siemens. A near carbon copy of 2010 third overall selection Erik Gudbranson from playing style to size to skillset, the abrasive 6'3, 192 lbs defender is exactly what Florida could use six of.

Tallon likely won't be afraid to pull the trigger, either; although not the man in charge during the 2003 and 2004 Drafts when the Hawks selected Brent Seabrook and Cam Barker 14th and 3rd overall respectively in consecutive years, the former NHL defenceman understands the importance of building a deep, balanced blueline.

7. Buffalo Sabres- RW Gabriel Landeskog (Kitchener/OHL)

Over the last couple of seasons, formerly unassailable goaltending mainstays such as Roberto Luongo and Martin Brodeur have endured significant injuries, testing the mettle of their clubs with often surprising results and seeing them bond in the end as stronger, more resilient units.

Not the Buffalo Sabres. After losing Ryan Miller October 29th to a hip injury, the Sabres proceeded to go 2-4 over their next six, averaging 3.5 GA per game. Although Miller has since returned, there's no guarantee that's a fix short-term- he'll likely have a bit of rust- or long term (the Sabres are 0-6-1 at home this season).

Like the Flames, finishing in the bottom ten would allow Buffalo to bring in the kind of player they're desperately missing in Gabriel Landeskog. The heart and soul of the Rangers, while teammate Ryan Murphy has been garnering all the headlines, it's no coincidence Kitchener has been in the midst of a five-game win streak since the Swedish import was named captain. Although (valid) concerns remain that Landeskog does not have quite the skillset necessary to create goals for himself at the NHL level- while money close to the net, he has trouble knowing how to get the puck there- he's a forward unlike any the Sabres currently have.

8. Carolina Hurricanes- C Ryan Strome (Niagara/OHL)

Although the Carolina Hurricanes have other holes to fill as they seek to return to the Eastern Conference's elite, center is one place the team has concerted their efforts at the draft table over the past few years. Not content with Eric Staal and Rod Brind'Amour, the Canes would select Brandon Sutter 11th in 2007 and Zach Boychuk 14th in 2008. Upon returning to the Draft's top half in 2010, GM Jim Rutherford wasted no time in adding sublime scorer Jeff Skinner to the fold.

That's why no one should be surprised to see Carolina once again select a center- and once again pick one from the OHL. Ryan Strome is the kind of enigma Skinner represented most of last year; a tremendous talent who seemingly came out of nowhere, Strome is as savvy a playmaker as Skinner is a finisher- a potentially mouth-watering combination in a "what if" scenario. As an added bonus, Strome- who co-leads Niagara's forward ranks in PIM- has an additional element of grit the Carolina's forward group is sorely lacking.

9. Dallas Stars- C Victor Rask (Leksand/Allsvenskan)

Call it the Curse of Mike Modano. With 2009 eighth overall pick Scott Glennie recently

suffering through an eight-game scoreless streak and 2010 first rounder Jack Campbell off to a painful start in Windsor, it's difficult to find a Dallas Stars prospect who is helping their team- never mind leading it. And don't mention Fabian Brunnstrom- please. While all cold streaks eventually end, it's an ominous start for an organization that seemingly couldn't wait to usher in the new and kick out the old.

The Stars are likely looking forward to another bottom-fifteen pick, and that's with a healthy Kari Lehtonen (knock on concrete/titanium). Should they end up around the tenth spot, continuing to add to the team's iffy center pipeline should be a top priority. Enter Victor Rask. Playing his first full season against men, the 6'2 center is off to a cold start himself and as such is practically a Stars prospect already. An extremely intelligent pivot who thrives on doing the small things, Rask is the type of two-way forward Dallas has built around in the past with the likes of Modano, Jere Lehtinen and Brendan Morrow.

10. Minnesota Wild- RW Ty Rattie (Portland/WHL)

27th in league GF, and it's safe to say the Minnesota Wild have not gotten what they expected out of the likes of Mikko Koivu, Martin Havlat, Andrew Brunette, Antti Miettinen and Chuck Kobasew. Totalling some \$15M in salary, five of Minnesota's top six forwards have scored a combined eleven goals- as many as Daniel Sedin and less than Sidney Crosby (12), Alex Semin (12) and Steve Stamkos (15).

The cure to what ails the Wild isn't a better (ice) trap or another big defenceman; it's scoring ability, pure and simple, and should Minnesota finish in the bottom half of the league there's no doubt what kind of player the team should target. The perfect example is Ty Rattie; A Jeff Skinner-esque prospect in the way the slick forward can score goals from anywhere despite owning neither exceptional speed or size, Rattie has quietly become one of the 2011 Draft's most sensational offensive talents. On a team laden with NHL draft picks, it's Rattie that leads the pack with 32 points in 20 games- 14 more than 2010 fourth overall selection Ryan Johansen.

11. Atlanta Thrashers- D Dougie Hamilton (Niagara/OHL)

After losing superstar and franchise cornerstone Ilya Kovalchuk to the Devils for good over the summer, many feared the Atlanta Thrashers and GM Don Waddell would act irrationally in attempting to replace the beleaguered sniper and, more precisely, the fans he brought to Philips Arena. After all, despite the on-ice results, Kovalchuk's name was perhaps his most valuable asset, and it helped generate attention in a market that has the NBA and NFL to also choose from.

Thus, it was a pleasant surprise to see Waddell target depth and players with Cup rings over a pricey UFA. While much can be made of the price he paid to acquire the likes of Dustin Byfuglien, Ben Eager and Brent Sopel, the team simply had the assets to do it following last deadline's Kovalchuk deal.

Should Waddell continue to try to emulate the Cup champs- he already has a couple key pieces in place, namely center depth and a young elite PMD- a player like Dougie Hamilton is sure to be high on his list. Surprisingly agile for his 6'4 frame, Hamilton is much like Alex Pietrangelo in the way he can create offense while also handling 25+ minutes. Along with Enstrom and Bogosian, adding Hamilton would give the Thrashers an incredibly gifted group of young rearguards in addition to the burgeoning core both up front and in net.

12. Colorado Avalanche- LW Brandon Saad (Saginaw/OHL)

Although the Colorado Avalanche boast one of the deepest and most talented prospect groups in the league, only time and experience can mold those players into consistent contributors- and that's after getting to the show in the first place. That's why Colorado's current struggles shouldn't be all that surprising; Chris Stewart's breakout year aside, the once-hot stick of Matt Duchene has cooled down dramatically and the team has just five players capable of making a difference every night (Stewart, Duchene, Milan Hejduk, Paul Stastny and JM Liles).

Picking 10-20 again, the Avalanche could once again reap the benefits of their simply sublime OHL scouting staff in adding American import Brandon Saad. Saginaw's points and goals leader with 11 and 22 respectively in just 19 games, Saad's game-breaking speed and scoring touch is what the Avs need more of as they seek to return to the franchise's heady glory days.

13. New York Rangers- C Vladislav Namestnikov (London/OHL)

Despite boasting a strong group on paper and an exciting array of young talent, the New York Rangers continue to flounder in the 10-20 range that's come to define the organization since the lockout. It's virtually impossible to guess how good- or rather, or how bad- the team will be from one year to the next, as getting to the second round is as probable as picking 10th overall.

Adding Vladislav Namestnikov would be one more drop in what's turning into a very full bucket of speedy, talented forwards who own game-breaking skill. Although showing more of a playmaking side with London- a useful attribute for a team such the Rangers- Namestnikov boasts some untapped goal-scoring ability and could be a franchise talent.

14. Nashville Predators- C Mark McNeill (Prince Albert/WHL)

Okay, that's enough defenceman now, Nashville. Not satisfied with the likes of Shea Weber, Ryan Suter, Kevin Klein, Cody Franson and the recently departed Dan Hamhuis all being home-grown blueliners, the Preds have continued to stock the pipeline with quality defensive prospects. However, even six Shea Webers can't replace the offense your forwards are supposed to provide and Nashville must be diligent in providing a balance.

Front and center is the team's, well, center issues. Cal O'Reilly's breakout year aside, the

Preds have not had a legitimate number one center since before Jason Arnott's departure- and maybe not even then. Getting a big, durable body who can both score goals and set them up would be a true boon to the team- bonus points if that player boasts a lunchpailer's attitude.

Enter Mark McNeill. At 6'2 and 210 lbs, McNeill might be the most underrated prospect in the entire top 30 this point. First covered here in this space back in 2009 when he was tearing up Midget AAA in Alberta, McNeill has gone to become a franchise WHL player and has everything that ails the Preds- from size to above-average top-end speed to an incredible array of puck skills. Adept at boxing out the puck with his body, with more time, there's no reason McNeill can't be an NHL power forward on the level of a Jeff Carter.

15. Boston Bruins- D Scott Harrington (London/OHL)

Continuing with the theme of adding defencemen, it's a strong possibility the Bruins invest both their first round selections on rearguards given the team's stark lack of star power at that position. Although offensively not the level of a Ryan Murphy or Cam Fowler, there's plenty of reason to believe London Knights star defender Scott Harrington has the ability to be better than either.

A diligent own-zone player who is at his best when he's taking away lanes and taking his man into the boards, Harrington has always had the vision and hockey sense to be a difference-maker, but only recently has he been able to match the speed of his mind and feet with that of his hands. In addition to his incredible hockey sense, Harrington is a strong, balanced skater who owns a deceptive separation gear perfect for blowing by guys on the rush. A reasonable 6'1 and 190 lbs, he has the tools to be a poor man's Duncan Keith.

16. Chicago Blackhawks- LW Sven Bartschi (Portland/WHL)
17. Tampa Bay Lightning- C Alexander Khokhlachev (Windsor/OHL)
18. San Jose Sharks- LW Nicklas D. Jensen (Oshawa/OHL)
19. Columbus Blue Jackets- RW Joel Armia (**Ässät**/Finland)
20. Pittsburgh Penguins- LW Matt Nieto (Boston University/NCAA)
21. Phoenix Coyotes- D Oscar Klefbom (Skåre BK/Allsvenskan)
22. Ottawa Senators- C Daniel Catenacci (Sault Ste. Marie/OHL)
23. Anaheim Ducks- RW Shane McColgan (Kelowna/WHL)
24. St. Louis Blues- LW Lucas Lessio (Oshawa/OHL)
25. Vancouver Canucks- D Nathan Beaulieu (Saint John/QMJHL)
26. Montreal Canadiens- C Michael St. Croix (Edmonton/WHL)
27. Detroit- D Myles Bell (Regina/WHL)
28. Philadelphia- LW Seth Ambroz (Omaha/USHL)
29. Los Angeles- C Boone Jenner (Oshawa/OHL)
30. Washington- D Joe Morrow (Portland/WHL)