A good fantasy draft requires preparation, but no matter how much preparation and reading up you've done, you're always at risk of getting caught up in the fast pace of the draft and forgetting key picks leaving you frustrated when their names are called out by other owners.

In order to avoid such a situation, you need to bring a check list to the draft. That list should include all the players you need to keep in mind in order to draft them at the right moment. Here is a list of players that should be on everyone's draft check list. Print it out and have it with you during the draft and most importantly add to it with the list of players YOU don't want to forget about. That check list and Dobber’s Fantasy guide are the two best tools to guarantee

a successful draft.

Ryan Whitney – Don't forget he had an important foot surgery and will miss several weeks if not months, but also don't forget that he'll be back and can put up top 10 numbers for defensemen when he plays. It looks like Whitney could play anywhere from 40 to 60 games this season and since he might be rusty when he gets back you should play it safe and expect 25 to 30 points. Which means you should draft him once the 35 to 40 point blueliners are off the board.

Dustin Byfuglien – Is he eligible on defense or not in your league? Can be considered a top 15 defenseman if you can play him at the position, particularly with the goals he'll give you, otherwise he's only worth owning he deep leagues.

Dan Ellis – It's déjà vu in the Nashville crease this season. Last year it was Chris Mason, this time around it's Ellis. A new starting netminder full of promise who took advantage of an opportunity the previous year will be a hot commodity in fantasy drafts. Same story and Ellis' stats in 2007-08 are eerily similar to Mason's the year before.

Ellis 2007-08 44 GP, 23-10-3 record, 2.34, .924, 6 SO
Mason 2006-07 40 GP, 24-11-4 record, 2.38, .935, 5 SO

Let's hope Ellis doesn't suffer the same fate as Mason, but with Pekka Rinne in the wings we could be saying déjà vu all over again next year.

Michael Ryder – Don't forget that he had two straight 30 goal seasons before last year debacle. He'll be playing with either Marc Savard or Patrice Bergeron, two guys who definitely know how to set up a guy.

Miroslav Satan – Satan has four seasons of 33 goals or more, including one 40 goal season and had not scored fewer than 26 goals for eight straight seasons before last year's disastrous 16 goal showing. This year he'll most probably line up next to Sydney Crosby, the game's premier playmaker, so a return to the 30 goal level is more than possible with an upside of 40 a distinct possibility.

Other players I think will come back strong – Maxim Afinogenov, Thomas Vanek, Miikka Kiprusoff, Matt Carle and Jordan Staal. Don't let them slip too low in your drafts.

Rookies – It's easy to get caught up in the excitement surrounding the potential of a rookie. However, no rookie finished in the top 30 in scoring last season and there were only two in the top 80. So don't go crazy over Steve Stamkos and wait a while before drafting such hot names as Bobby Ryan, Kyle Turris, Kyle Okposo, Nikita Filitov, etc.

Breakout players – There's nothing as rewarding to a fantasy owner as drafting a player who exceeds expectations. Here are a few of my favourites;

- **Phil Kessel** - Displayed tremendous drive and ability during the playoffs against Montreal.

I'm picking him to score 30 goals this season.

· **Nicklas Backstom** - I wouldn't be surprised to see him reach close to 100 points with a full season with Ovechkin at his side.

· **Cam Barker** – It took a while for the 2004 third overall pick to get there, but he should be a perennial 40-pointer starting this season.

· **Sergei Kostitsyn** – Montreal is determined to add another talented center which would provide the younger of the Kostitsyns an opportunity to score 60 points this season.

· **Erik Johnson** - Ready to become a superstar, 50 points are easily within reach.

· **Patrick O'Sullivan** - Has 35-goal potential.

Players whose numbers were low because of injury – They tend to slip or be forgotten in many drafts because fluke injuries caused them to miss an important number of games last season. So not only are their 2007-08 numbers lower because of the missed games, but in several cases also their performances were affected by injury even when they were on the ice. This category doesn't include band-aid boys a la Martin Havlat who can never be trusted to have a healthy season; it only consists of players who have shown the ability to stay healthy for a notable period of time. Here is a list of players and their stats from last year pro-rated on an 82-game season. (You'll notice I left out Syd the Kid since there's no way he'll slip in any draft).

Player

2007-08 statistics

Pro-rated over

82 games

GP

G

A

PTS

G

A

PTS

Paul Stastny

66

24

47

71

30

58

88

Shawn Horcoff

53

21

29

50

32

45

77

Michael Nylander

40

11

26

37

23

53

76

Rod Brind'amour

59

19

32

51

26

44

71

Jonathan Toews

64

24

30

54

31

38

69

Joffrey Lupul

56

20

26

46

29

38

67

Justin Williams

37

9

21

30

20

47

66

Mike Cammalleri

63

19

28

47

25

36

61

Mikko Koivu

57

11

31

42

16

45

60

Simon Gagne

25

7

11

18

23

36

59

Patrice Bergeron

10

3

4

7

25

33

57

Alexander Semin

63

26

16

42

34

21

55

Ryan Smyth

55

14

23

37

21

34

55

Brendan Morrison

39

9

16

25

19

34

53

Bryan McCabe

54

5

18

23

8

27

35

Sheldon Souray

26

3

7

10

9

22

32

Need some advice to prepare for your draft, write to the Fantasy Frog at fantasyfrog@dobberhockey.com to get personalized croaks.