

## Banking on the Islanders

Written by Scott Campbell

Thursday, 09 December 2010 18:52 - Last Updated Friday, 10 December 2010 01:44

---



It's no secret amongst NHL fans that the Islanders' perils on the ice have resulted in the once proud franchise being relegated to perennial basement dweller. While the franchise continues to toil in a state of flux both on and off the ice, there are still those who remain cautiously optimistic. After all, with a cupboard of young players like John Tavares, Kyle Okposo, Josh Bailey, Nino Niederreiter and a plethora of promising young defensemen, what's not to like?

Well for starters, there's a harsh dose of realism. A flashy 4-2-1 start to the season piqued the interest of most. After losing Mark Streit and Kyle Okposo for an extended period of time, and with Tavares going down early in the season opener, others relished the opportunity like Josh Bailey and Blake Comeau who suddenly appeared to be fantasy steals in the making. As a closet Islanders fan, I have to admit that even I was cautiously optimistic by the club's start, but things quickly came crashing down.

Now the Islanders certainly are not a major team of interest for owners in short term fantasy leagues. Chances are the only Islanders in small leagues might be Tavares and James

## Banking on the Islanders

Written by Scott Campbell

Thursday, 09 December 2010 18:52 - Last Updated Friday, 10 December 2010 01:44

---

Wisniewski; with Okposo and Streit lingering on an IR somewhere, poised to be hopeful boosts when they return to full health. Where the Islanders do come into play, however, are the more comprehensive keeper leagues. Looking around the NHL, you'd be hard pressed to find a more rounded group of players under the age of 23, giving the Islanders no shortage of valuable pieces to supplement your long-term plan in a keeper league.

Where the concern comes into play, however, is that this team lacks a sense of direction, and with some of the most recent off-ice antics to derive from Long Island, these concerns should be paramount for poolies looking to invest in New York Islanders prospects. It's become no secret that team owner Charles Wang is one of the most bizarre owners in the league, and his hands on approach has undoubtedly cost this team heavily. Whether you want to focus on the Alexei Yashin contract, or the Rick DiPietro contract, or how the team has flip-flopped general managers and coaches, there's plenty of cause for concern.

As an avid keeper league general manager, it's getting to the point where drafting New York Islanders prospects in fantasy hockey is almost like drafting Russian Players for NHL Clubs. Sure, John Tavares, Kyle Okposo and Mark Streit can make it on any fantasy club. But how much is their upside impacted from playing with the Islanders? How much can you really expect out of a 20 year old Tavares who is left to play with Matt Moulson and PA Parenteau on the "top" line? Sure, you're going to get limited production out of them, but how long will the Islanders wait until they finally decide to invest some money into this team?

Sadly, it's probably going to take a new ownership group to really stimulate any legitimate change, and the timeframe on that is sceptical at best.

## Banking on the Islanders

Written by Scott Campbell

Thursday, 09 December 2010 18:52 - Last Updated Friday, 10 December 2010 01:44

---

Which leaves the question for keeper league general managers. If your league keeps up to date with entry drafts, how confident can you be in your high picks like Travis Hamonic, Calvin de Haan, Nino Niederreiter and Kirill Petrov? Case in point, look at Josh Bailey, the 9<sup>th</sup> overall pick in 2008. Many agree that he was rushed to the NHL as a 19 year old and would have been better served with another year in Windsor and potentially a year in the AHL before lacing them up in the show. Well, after 66 points in two years of NHL hockey plus 18 games this season, Bailey has landed himself a spot in the AHL after the Islanders decided to “loan” him to their AHL affiliate in Bridgeport. This is something that has to concern you if you’re a fan of say, Nino Niederreiter.

And then you have to consider that the Islanders inevitably look like they’re on a path for another Top 5 pick this season, potentially even getting top honours at the 2011 NHL Draft Podium. How much of a cause for concern is it that your high draft pick could potentially be playing in the New York Islanders organization?

As it stands, these factors are all a huge concern and something you need to consider in your decision making process. In a keeper league, I always weight the team a player plays on, and frankly, the Islanders are probably the most concerning franchise to have your player belong to in the NHL right now.

My advice? Be leery of anyone belonging to the New York Islanders. This state of this team is going to get worse before it gets remedied, and that does not bode well for any player you have belonging to this franchise. Any Islanders prospect is a risk right now, and you need to assess and manage those risks before making your move.