We did a Deep Analysis of Jeff Angus' team, The Crosby Show, before last season and we're back again to give him another edge. Check all of our fantasy hockey tools out over at the HockeyPoolGeek.

(Editors note: considering my entire league will be reading this, not sure how much of an edge I actually get!)

Team Name: The Crosby Show

League Name: Ultimate Fantasy Hockey Pool

GM: Jeff Angus

Date of Analysis: September 2011

League Structure:

Format: 12 teams, head-to-head, no maximum games played, three minimum games played per week.

Rosters: 23 player main rosters (start 3 c, 3 lw, 3 rw, 6 d, 2 g, bench of 6), 8 on the farm (200gp or less for skaters at nhl level, 100gp or less for goalies)

Scoring categories: G, A, +/-, PIM, PPP, SHP, GWG, SOG, Hits, FOW, GS, W, SV, L, GAA, SA, SV%, SO

Number of keepers: 17, all 8 farm positions

Season add/drop limit: 40

Trade deadline: 6 weeks before end of NHL regular season

Team Assets at Time of Deep Analysis:

Roster: The Crosby Show

C – Crosby, Hanzal, Ott, Lecavalier

LW – Sharp (C/LW), Leino, Booth, Bouchard (LW/RW), Ladd

RW – Little (RW/C), Franzen (LW/RW), Gaborik, Eriksson (LW/RW)

D – Chara, Edler, Boyle, Giordano, Montador, White, Timonen

G – Luongo, Roloson, Schneider

Farm – Karlsson, Ekman-Larsson, Brendan Smith, Yemelin, David Savard, Jeremy Morin, Matt Calvert, Zac Dalpe

Background and Environment:

After we did our Deep Analysis last year, Angus has been busy. His trades (with his comments in italics) are below:

- Traded away Shattenkirk, Stamkos and Lehtonen for Brodeur, Chara, Liles last September. *Ouch. Chara is a stud with our cats and was counting on Marty return to glory, so I would own goalie stats. Stamkos was redundant or so I thought with my strength up the middle*

- Traded away Ehrhoff and P Bergeron for Lecavalier, Raymond last October. *Wanted Vinny, Ehrhoff was more valuable last season, though.*

- Traded Justin Williams for Steve Ott back in June. *Love Ott with our categories*

- Traded David Rundblad for Ville Leino and Zac Dalpe's draft pick. *Leino may play C and as a LW getting FOW is a huge plus. Not a huge fan of him, though. This trade may hurt. Have tons of young d-men so Rundblad was trading from position of strength.*

- Traded Brodeur, Liles for Loui Eriksson. *Cutting my losses, unless Marty bounces back? Eriksson loses a bit of value with this but he is steady for other cats, young, and healthy.*

- 3rd round draft pick pro for David Booth. *Needed LW*

- Traded Mikko Koivu for Bryan Little, Kimmo Timonen, and a pick. *Little playing C, is a RW in Yahoo. I have a hunch he bounces back on the top line. Timonen's numbers aren't going to wow but he was a valuable d-man in our league last year. Koivu is solid but I think he has reached his peak.*

A Look at League Strategy:

Much of the commentary here hasn't changed since the Deep Analysis we did last year, so we won't rehash it here. We've updated the League Breakdown with last year's numbers, though:

Position

G

A

+/-

PIM

PPP

SHP

GWG

FOW

SOG

HITS

C

25

39

8

43

21

1

4

538

211

83

LW

26

34

3

43

18

1

4

71

200

87

RW

26

33

6

43

17

1

4

73

215

75

D

8

28

4

44

14

1

1

0

136

87

GS

W

L

SA

GAA

SV

SV%

SO

59

32

20

1,746

2.47

1,602

0.917

5

What does this tell us about strategy in this league?

- In this league, faceoff wins change the complexion of everything. Bench spots are more likely to be assigned to centres because centres contribute in that category and wingers generally don't. As a result, you can expect approximately the same scoring out of wingers and centres – the usual "wingers score 10 points less than centres" rule doesn't apply because the extra value that scoring wingers bring is offset by their poor faceoff performance.
- Approximately 200 shots is the magic number: players that shoot less than that should be avoided, unless they perform particularly well in another category.
- Similarly, 45-50 PIM is a reasonable cut-off to shoot for.
- Faceoff wins as a category are a big deal – if your centres are bad at faceoffs, it really puts you at a disadvantage.
- Most wingers win very few faceoffs, so if you can get wingers on your roster that will win quite a few, this gives you a **huge** edge.
- Hits mean that you want to put some sandpaper into your lineup. Players that avoid contact will have their value negatively impacted.

- As with most category-totals leagues, goalies are very important in this one too. Of 18 total scoring categories, 8 are for goaltenders – that's a whopping **44%** of scoring being contributed by two starting goaltenders, or **11%** of the starting roster. Hate to sound like a broken record, but goaltending is critically important in this league… not so much that goaltending will win the league for you, but poor goaltending could lose it for you.

- It's important to note that of those eight goaltending categories, five of them are likely improved by making more goalie starts (GS, W, SA, SV, SO) while one the balance are indifferent (SV%, GAA, L). Put another way, you're never going to adversely affect the first five categories by playing a goalie, but the last three depend on the outcome. Especially with SV% and GAA, you can hurt your chances by putting in a goalie that has a stinker of a game.

A critical thing to consider in any league format is the impact that injuries can have on a roster. This league is a head-to-head league with weekly matchups and a playoff format to determine the winner. What does that tell us? The first, and most important thing, is that the playoffs happen in the last month of the season so that's when you want to have the most production out of your roster, provided your team is good enough to make the playoffs in the first place.

Tying into that are injuries – you accept them pretty easily in this league for a few reasons: the fact that there are 4 IR slots, and it has a playoff format. Having injured stars on IR for the bulk of the season, only to play the last 20 games of the year and join your roster for a playoff run is a very viable option, again provided the team is good enough to make the playoffs. Because of this, there is much less need to shy away from injury-prone players when compared to rotisserie leagues with max games played.

Angus' team is a good blend of youth and veterans that is a threat for the league title this coming year, though he has a few issues to work out.

The Team:

We've generated rankings customized for this specific league setup using last year's statistics, so we don't have to give away Dobber's hard work on his 2011/12 projections for free. HockeyPoolGeek subscribers have access to them!

A summary of the results is in the table below, and to guide how we think the players will do in the future, there's also a column showing the players' HPG value using Dobberhockey's projections for the coming season.

2010/2011 SEASON

Dobber 2011/12

Player

POS

GP

G

A

+/-

PIM

SOG

GWG

PPP

SHP

HITS

FOW

HPG Value

HPG Value

Sidney Crosby

C

41

32

34

20

31

161

3

19

1

31

546

-16

38

Vincent Lecavalier

C

65

25

29

-5

43

210

5

28

0

93

591

-13

5

Steve Ott

C

82

12

20

-9

183

120

4

10

4

252

644

78

4

Starting C Summary

47

Patrick Sharp

C/LW

74

34

37

-1

38

268

6

26

3

76

244

50

28

Andrew Ladd

LW

81

29

30

-10

39

195

2

18

3

68

15

-11

-20

David Booth

LW

82

23

17

-31

26

280

3

10

0

129

24

-54

-18

Starting LW Summary

-10

Johan Franzen

RW/LW

76

28

27

5

58

248

5

17

0

143

74

-19

17

Marian Gaborik

RW

62

22

26

8

18

192

4

16

0

46

0

-37

11

Loui Eriksson

RW/LW

79

27

46

10

8

179

6

25

3

26

1

17

-5

Starting RW Summary

23

Zdeno Chara

D

81

14

30

33

88

264

2

15

2

153

0

88

48

Mark Giordano

D

82

8

35

-8

67

165

1

25

0

140

0

22

25

Dan Boyle

D

76

9

41

2

67

199

2

27

0

55

0

32

18

Alexander Edler

D

51

8

25

13

24

121

1

17

0

83

0

-7

12

Kimmo Timonen

D

82

6

31

11

36

147

0

16

2

96

0

14

-14

Ian White

D

78

4

22

3

26

138

0

6

0

59

0

-38

-22

D Summary

67

Starting Skaters

127

Steve Montador

D

73

5

21

16

83

118

0

1

0

86

0

-9

-22

Bryan Little

RW/C

76

18

30

11

33

158

1

10

3

41

616

-3

-25

Martin Hanzal

C

61

16

10

4

54

149

5

7

0

147

518

-46

-33

P.M. Bouchard

LW/RW

59

12

26

-3

14

98

2

10

0

15

17

-118

-45

Ville Leino

LW

81

19

34

14

22

117

2

11

0

35

78

-47

-47

Now the goalies:

2010/2011 SEASON

Dobber 2011/12

Player

GP

GS

SA

SV%

L

SV

W

GAA

SO

HPG Value

HPG Value

Roberto Luongo

60

60

1753

0.928

15

1627

38

2.110

4

19

16

Dwayne Roloson

54

54

1596

0.914

25

1458

24

2.590

4

-36

-11

Cory Schneider

25

22

714

0.929

4

663

16

2.230

1

-81

-57

Roster Review:

Jeff’s team should be pretty competitive, but where does he need to focus his efforts in order to improve?

As with the rankings, we won't give away the detailed results (which include Dobber's projections) for free, but here's the high level view:

Priority

Category

Selected

Required

Remaining

1

SA

3588

5396

1808

2

SV

3294

4936

1642

3

GS

127

185

58

4

W

84

110

26

5

PPP

332

434

102

6

A

641

831

190

7

G

391

467

76

8

SOG

3542

4075

533

9

SO

10

17

7

10

GWG

54

76

22

11

PIM

970

1069

99

12

+/-

61

81

20

13

HITS

1703

1836

133

14

FOW

2891

3096

205

15

SHP

19

22

3

16

SV%

0.918

0.92

0.002

17

GAA

2.228

2.4

-0.172

18

L

34

61

-27

When you've got a player of Crosby's caliber – ie the very best player there is in this setup, when healthy – on your roster, your performance in the league is going to be tied to how he

does. We do not have a crystal ball, as it turns out.

Angus' team will go as Crosby goes. There's simply no other way to put it. From a management perspective, that's pretty fatalist and not particularly insightful, so we're going to have to look at it a little deeper than that.

As far as team competitiveness goes, we've roughed out an idea of how Angus' team would finish if this were a rotisserie league based on Dobberhockey's projections for 2012. We know this isn't a roto league, but the scoring in this style of H2H league is based on the ranking within each scoring category – the only difference is that it occurs each matchup, rather than over the whole season as with a rotisserie league. This gives a good approximation of the team's competitiveness:

Rank

Team

Roto Points

1

Bulldogs

158.5

2

Biscuits & Gravy

146.5

3

Great Whites

142.0

4

Crosby Show

135.0

5

Pro Stars

131.5

6

Thunder

125.5

7

Eurotwin

124.0

8

Hackers

121.0

9

Wu Crew

95.0

10

Legion

85.0

11

Fire on ice

71.0

12

Sharks

69.0

Goaltending:

Jeff has good starting goalies in Luongo and Roloson and the Canucks handcuff with Schneider. He will be extremely competitive, week in and week out, in 3 goalie categories – GAA, SV% and Losses. With this goaltending, he will also be in the mix for Shutouts each week – but that category is really too difficult to predict in terms of match value from week to week – frequently it will be a draw.

Jeff will not compete strongly in SA and SV's, against teams with 3 full-time starters (there are 5 teams in the league that look to be in that position). The other 2 of the 8 goalie cats, Games Started and Wins are probably going to be more closely contested by Jeff against those 5

teams because of the quality of his goaltending but he still has a disadvantage going in. Of course, there will be weeks where his goaltending will get more starts because of the schedule and things will even out.

Generally, Jeff's goaltending is more than adequate for the regular season. He will win his share of goalie battles and qualify for the playoffs with this team. It is the playoffs where he needs to be concerned about his goaltending, especially as he is likely to run up against a team with 3 decent, fulltime starters. If Jeff's boys don't play well, he could lose most goalie categories and that would be catastrophic. There is some good news here though: Vancouver and Tampa Bay have 11 games each, over the Yahoo playoff schedule, which is matched by 6 other NHL teams. Tampa Bay is the only team with 4 games in the final week of the playoffs though.

If Jeff did nothing else with his goaltending, we think if he could manage a trade for Garon to ensure he got all the TB and Vancouver starts, then he would definitely beef up his goaltending. Yeah it isn't the best strategy to take up two roster spots with backup goaltending, but unless he can land another quality starter and put Schneider on the farm, then adding Garon is probably the simplest and cheapest means to insurance in goal.

Trading for a starter in this league will not be cheap and really not a recommendation we would make at this time. Fire On Ice holds Garon and since he is not a particularly competitive team this season and Garon isn't really an answer to anything permanent in goal for him, perhaps a prospect or a future pick might entice him to make the trade. We feel that Garon will not jeopardize Jeff's peripheral goaltending strengths to any great extent and he will contribute in the playoffs to the volume categories in goaltending, where Jeff is soft.

So let the goaltending ride and acquire Garon, if you can.

Skaters:

Jeff's team is ***projected*** to be strong in the traditional offensive categories of Goals, Assists, SOG, PPP's (40% of offensive cats). He is better than average but not really strong in FOW, SHP and PIM's (30% of offensive cats) and he is average in Hits and +/-. He is projected to be weak in GWG (which is slightly paradoxical when you are strong in goalscoring but that is the nature of that unpredictable category)

The team is good enough to qualify for the playoffs, but we think there are at least 2 and as many as 4 teams that could work him over in the playoffs. Those teams tend to be on par or better with Jeff's team in goal and since he is not likely to make a big move in goal, any work he does to improve on his competitiveness is basically going to have to happen in the offensive zone with his skaters. So let's take a closer look at what he has and what he might be able to do.

Let's deal with the simplest thing first, GWG. Players that score more goals will tend to score

more GWG. There are some clutch players who will defy this logic but in general with Jeff's team scoring as much as it looks like it could, GWG should take care of itself. There's not really much choice here because you can't really recruit for that specific stat. Hopefully when the match is on the line, that category swings Jeff's way. So let's forget about it.

Next let's talk about Jeff's strong cats: G, A, PPP, SOG. A strength is always under threat for another team to target, so it is important to tweak the roster towards maintaining or improving on these categories if possible. You know how it goes, you don't actively deal to beef up these cats but you do make a move then consideration should be given to the player who will serve these cats well. Jeff isn't in the clear in these cats especially when it comes to the other most competitive teams, so more of the same would be nice, in addition to filling other needs in weaker categories. Part of the issue for Jeff's team is that his roster has players who produce well in these cats but not particularly well in the peripheral stats… there simply are not enough multicat studs (5 or 6 cat coverage).

Jeff does have the potential on his roster to improve these 4 cats though. Lecavalier, Booth, Franzen, Little, Bouchard, Gaborik, Ott and Hanzal could all cover Dobber's projections and then some. Of course, production could go the other way for some guys but we can't know that either, so we don't plan for it. Because Jeff has some reasonably significant latent potential in his forward group, we would not consider chasing the purer offensive cats as a priority through forwards but would give it consideration through D men. Of course, having Erik Karlsson on the farm gives Jeff the potential to swing the offensive axe even harder – but oh the +/-.

So of the 5 cats left to look at, let's look at SHP and +/- first. SHP are tough to project at the best of times – you need penalty killers on your squad and then hope they produce a little every week to win or tie that category and turn it into an advantage or at least neutralize it as a disadvantage.

Can you go after +/-? Well, we actually think so, because there are deadly penalty killers out there every year, but they change from year to year so frequently that we don't think chasing SHP is really going to produce assured results. So we think that Jeff should only keep players PK ability in mind when he is making moves, but not make it a focus. As far as +/- is concerned, as we look at Jeff's present roster we think it stands a very good chance of improving on last year (hence this year's projections). If Lecavalier, Booth and Ott can somehow reign in their negative numbers here then we like Jeff to gain a fair amount of competitiveness in this cat – Timonen, Crosby, Franzen and White could all increase their numbers over projections by 100% or more as well. Not much you can do to manage this if you like your roster in most other regards.

Alright, getting down to the short strokes – FOW, PIM's and Hits. Let's deal with PIM's and Hits together in the grit family. Generally, Jeff isn't that far back in these cats but he might as well be miles back, when it comes to taking down his foes in the playoffs – lose by one unit or 100, it comes to the same thing – category loss. As suggested before, Jeff is lacking truly multicat guys that would help these categories while maintaining strengths in the more offensive cats. Eriksson, Gaborik, Timonen and White are notably deficient in Hits and PIM's. Now if you can figure out to win L, GAA, SV%, G, A, SOG and PPP and hope for a draw or two in SHO and SHP – you still have to find 2 cats for the match win. Where are they going to come from? (assuming not GS, W, SA, SV's, GWG, +/-) That's right – the grit couple is likely the easiest to target to give your team a chance. So let's put that on the back burner for a minute and finish out the cats.

FOW – well Jeff isn't really far off here, but he has himself behind the 8 ball in a way. He really only has Bryan Little to win faceoffs from the wing position (and possibly Patrick Sharp, should Chicago play him that way) and that's probably not enough, the way dual eligibility has gone in Yahoo, without at least one or two more guys like Backes, Carter, Zetts, Giroux, Dubinsky, Datsyuk, Laich, etc giving you points and FOW.

It's almost no longer possible to win FOW in the playoffs without a couple of these bodies in play on your team. What we see Jeff has done is gone for PIM's and Hits and FOW in Hanzal and Ott which is cool because he is targeting his deficiencies but they are both Centers so really the impact of their FOW isn't going to be felt as much as it could be if they were wingers. Actually Gaustad is probably a better acquisition than either of these guys (except of course, Jeff is also playing the breakout game that he has a sixth sense for). Gaustad will give you grit and FOW with reasonable points playing from the left wall.

As for positional balance, when we first started looking at this team, we thought Jeff's team was really in trouble at LW. Then Yahoo updated position eligibilities, and gave LW to Sharp (C/LW) and Eriksson (RW/LW). Catastrophe averted.

The Past Trades:

We think past trades are spilled milk as it were… no sense dwelling on where we've been, it's just a matter of getting from where we are today to the ultimate goal of the league title. We've taken a look only to get a sense of direction the GM is taking the team. You win some, you lose some (who knew that Brodeur would bomb?) but the point here is that intuitively Jeff knows what he needs to do and he works away at it in his trades.

Recommendations:

Jeff is close enough to go for it. He finished 2nd in the playoffs last season after a 5th place regular season placing. We also know that Jeff has a low tolerance for rebuilds, so to even consider recommending that would be foolish – even though that might be the most assured way of going after the power forwards (wingers) that he could use to bolster his roster.

So in order of ease, here is what we would recommend that Jeff consider to strengthen his 2011-12 squad:

1. **Pray** – that Booth and Karlsson clean up their +/- messes. Even if they are still minus but 10 closer to the break even that would be a real boon for Jeff, as he can strongly consider playing Karlsson for his offense which would help add to Jeff's already strong cats. Also above all else, pray that Sid plays a full season and is healthy going forward.

2. **Get** – some emerging power forwards on his farm roster. The points he has now aren't going to retire anytime soon, so he should start looking for the magical points/grit players to feed onto his roster. The closer to ready the better, he might get an injury break later in the season.
3. **Figure out** – why he has so many D guys on the farm. Yeah, a really good D corps is very important in this league but at what point is he going to possibly use all those D prospects? OEL has to be trade bait here – he should get talking to Smack at Wu Crew – there might be a trading fit.
4. **Move** – Eriksson for a good C with points, grit and FOW or a multicat winger that takes faceoffs – yeah you will lose some points but gain in other areas. Leino - if/when the hype machine gets cranked flips him for some of what you really need… this guy doesn't get dirty enough.
5. **Target** – the Bulldogs. Through the early part of the season, take a very critical view of the Bulldogs strengths and weaknesses and chase his strengths only if it's possible to challenge those cats, while relentlessly build to take cats he is weak in. Ensure he doesn't encroach on your strengths without you taking some action to increase the gap again. Pretty singular focus, but if Jeff can beat him, he can win the league… no guarantees but that's the goal! On paper, Bulldogs will win a match 13-5 with present lineup; if Jeff can gun him down in G, A, +/-, PPP and Hits (all close cats) then the match is all square at 8-8.
6. **Begin with the end in mind** – assess your roster for games played at the end of the season during the playoff rounds. As early as November, make a move to strategically build a roster for the playoffs, if it makes sense. Look at games conflicts as well as games played in the playoff period. Max it out.
7. **Determine** – if Montador is going to give enough. He might actually, but a 7 D in this league needs to clearly be additive.

Jeff has to try and make moves some moves; he isn't strong enough as he sits. While better goaltending would likely help Jeff's chances of winning a title, the cost/benefit analysis would almost certainly show that the cost of upgrading probably will exceed the benefit. Yeah, 3 very good starting goalies would make life easier but if he has to take a step back from his offensive

cat positions, he likely doesn't get better as a team. However, if he is able to invest in some incremental gains in key offensive categories, then I believe he does get better and likely at a much lower cost.

The projection could easily swing and in dramatic fashion with the rise or fall of several players on Jeff's roster. If his recent picks come home then he is in a very good position and can either sit tight or use the enhanced assets to reprofile his roster somewhat. Jeff is an astute trader, so he will figure it out when the time is right. If his picks bomb then he should consider improving his keepers for next year as a focus of process; he would have to be pretty sure he wasn't going to compete effectively to take this approach though.