You’re way back in the standings in your fantasy league; you think you have no shot at the championship or at making the playoffs. If that’s the case, what do you do? Well, most people who aren’t in keeper leagues lose interest and just don’t bother to play anymore. But there’s another solution and while it’s a long shot, it sure is plenty of fun to go for.

Let’s face it, if you are 50 points off the pace in a typical pool or are 15 games back for a playoff spot in a head-to-head league, you have absolutely nothing to lose this season. So you might as well make the ultimate gamble and hope with all your might that it pays off.

Making the ultimate gamble means acquiring every player you can who has been a bust and whom no one else in your league wants a part of or will let go at a very low price. You want players who have the talent and at the start of the season were considered good to excellent, but are having such bad seasons that they are practically hopeless for the 2007-08 season.

You'll have to pay a little for those players and you 'll have to give players who are having better seasons, but you are going for the upside here and remember, you have nothing to lose. For example, you might offer Mike Comrie for Patrick Elias, Markus Naslund for Jonathan Cheechoo or Cam Ward for Ray Emery.

You want to build your team with guys who have displayed the ability to produce in the past in the hopes that they will perform in the second half of the season.

Other players to consider include Patrick Marleau, Jason Blake, Maxim Afinogenov, Matt Carle, Thomas Vanek and Slava Kozlov.

You can also go after guys who are going through a cold spell or are dealing with injuries. Players like Mike Cammalleri, Martin Havlat, Simon Gagne, Zach Parise, Paul Stastny, Milan Hejduk, Alexander Semin, Glenn Murray, Sheldon Souray, Dan Boyle, Bryan McCabe, Mattias Ohlund.

Some free-agents should also be available like Michael Ryder, Ladislav Nagy, Jordan Staal and Marc-Andre Bergeron

Of course, one of the reasons you might be so far off in your league is because you might have had too many of the players mentioned here on your roster during the first half of the season. But since you now have nothing to lose, you might as well throw all your eggs in the bust basket and hope for a turnaround.

Industry Experts League
http://hockey.fantasysports.yahoo.com/league/experts

I'm still in first place, but the three team race has now become a two team affair for the moment with Rotoworld dropping a little behind. My team is tied atop the standings with Rotowire-Topper 12.5 points ahead of Rotoworld. My pickups of Antti Mittienen and Colby Armstrong have turned out nicely. Armstrong has scored six points and been a plus-9 in six games since I picked him up and Mittienen has scored five points in seven games. I decided to part ways with Martin Erat and Dustin Byfuglien during the past week in favor of Eric Belanger and Jeff Carter. I needed another center and Belanger has a very good run in late December has been playing with Marian Gaborik lately so he's worth a gamble. Carter is one of my breakout candidates for the second half, particularly with Joffrey Lupul out for a while and if Simon Gagne suffers a setback upon his return from concussion. Byfuglien looks to be settling back on defense so his value

has lessened and I'm 16 games over the maximum at the position so I'll stick with Niklas Lidstrom, Andrei Markov, Dennis Wideman and Jaroslav Spacek for now.

Questions for the Frog

I need to replace Carey Price after he was relegated to the minors. I'm thinking Ramo, Garon or Conklin, and leaning towards Conklin, considering Fleury's so-so year and Tampa's inability to, well, win. Other available options include LaBarbera, Roloson, Lehtonen, Ellis, Auld and Smith. - Mike

FROG: First off, Price has been quite horrible lately, but don't think for a moment his value for te coming years has changed. Overall this season he has played well and he will be a star in the NHL within two years. The Habs are going with Huet and want Price to get plenty of ice time which he wouldn't have received in Montreal. I think Conklin is just a flash in the pan, but when a guy is 8-0, 1.88, .941, you can't pass on him. You have to ride him while he's hot and you can bet that if he remains this good (won't happen), Fleury will have a timeshare at best on his hands. The other options aren't interesting enough to pass up the chance to rack up some good stats.

Is Filppula the real deal or is it temporary?? I need to make a free agent move and he is available. - Ken

FROG: Filppula has a very good rookie North American season in 2005-06 in the AHL when he scored 71 points. He played in Detroit the entire season last year, but managed a mere 10 goals and 17 points, but his ice time rarely surpassed 15 minutes in a game. This season not only is it rare for him not to play at least 15 minutes a game, he's now playing with Pavel Datsyuk and Tomas Holsmtrom and usually sees over 17 minutes of ice time per game. Filppula is definitely the real deal and I think we'll be seeing his name very often on the scoresheet for a long time to come.

Wondering who to pick-up? Who to trade? Who to keep? Write to the Fantasy Frog at fantasyfrog@dobberhockey.com and you could see your fantasy hockey question answered in Croaks from the Fantasy Frog.

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