I take a look at Alex Edler's situation in Vancouver for my weekly Canucks Army piece . Edler is slated to become a UFA next summer, and the Canucks would be wise to get him locked up for a long time.

"So, with all of that being said, what do the Canucks do with Edler? Numbers and statistics aside, it comes down to their belief in his upside. He already has emerged as a very solid top-four defenseman while showing signs of being a cornerstone, top pairing guy. If the Canucks believe he can reach that level on a consistent basis, I wouldn't be surprised to see a significant commitment (8-10 years) made, and soon."

I am a huge Jamie Benn fan (as you all probably know right now), but I'd temper my expectations for this coming season. With Derek Roy on the shelf until November, Benn will have to log some tough minutes for Dallas. Why? There isn't much behind him on the depth chart.

With Roy out, the contenders for the 2C spot to start the season are Tom Wandell , Cody Eakin , and Verne Fiddler. Eakin projects as a very good checking center, but he played pretty soft minutes in Washington last year (lots of offensive zone starts, weak competition). If he isn't ready, Dallas will have to lean even more heavily on Benn.

I'd expect Roy to play a two-way role once he returns from injury – he's much better defensively than Mike Ribeiro , and that should help Benn out.

Brandon Dubinsky 's excited to be in Columbus. I don't blame him – he goes from a third line depth guy to a potential top line player.

These guys want to win, but they also want to play a lot and contribute – look at Jordan Staal . He's likely Carolina's top center after playing third fiddle in Pittsburgh for so long.

There are so many options for Columbus lines – Dubinsky is a natural C but has been playing some W in recent years thanks to the depth the Rangers possessed. Columbus doesn't have that kind of depth.

Not fantasy hockey related, but interesting anyway – Gretzky was in Seattle to meet with officials in Bellevue (across the water from Seattle) to discuss another arena. I hope they get an arena for selfish reasons – only a two or three hour drive from Vancouver, and would be a great

rival (and I would love to get some NBA basketball back in the area).

"Maybe, but Gretzky wasn't in town to meet with Hansen. Instead, he discussed the potential of an NHL arena with city officials in Bellevue, which is directly across Lake Washington from Seattle. Bellevue has been rumoured to be working on building a new NBA/NHL arena since the Sonics left Seattle and have been in serious talks with private investors to make it happen. A year ago, Don Levin, part owner of the AHL's Chicago Wolves, was connected with rumours of a plan to build an NHL arena in Bellevue.

Gretzky's visit certainly complicates the situation, potentially introducing a competitor for an NHL or NBA team in a city that used to be a suburb of Seattle."

Blueshirt Banter takes a crack at the Rangers lines, sans Marian Gaborik .

"Kreider played on the first line a little in the playoffs, but I'm not sure if John Tortorella wants to give him that much responsibility to kick off the season. Remember, Kreider's biggest stepping stone last year was learning how to pace himself through an NHL game. That's a learning process that will continue as he goes through his first 82-game season.

Plus, the Callahan - Stepan - Kreider line worked well in the playoffs and did develop some chemistry. Their skills work well together, their styles mesh and Kreider and Stepan have been together since the World Juniors.

That leaves Hagelin, who did play on the first line for most of his time with the big club. His skills worked well with Gaborik (in the end, everyone's skills will work well with a pass-first center, so Richards is a given), but will they work well with Nash? Gaborik and Nash are both snipers, but their game is a little different. Gaborik's game focuses around speed, agility, elusiveness and creating space where there doesn't seem to be any. Hagelin -- the fastest player on the team not named Chris Kreider -- was able to move to other areas of the ice to get his chances because of other team's focusing on Gaborik."

Shea Weber is excited to buy return to Nashville.

"The team stepped up and showed that they're going to bend with the best of teams, and now we can focus on the season, and hopefully get some more pieces of the puzzle and build a contending team for a long time."

I am happy for Preds fans. It is great to see small market teams being able to keep their star players. Weber is the best defenseman in hockey, and he's only 26. If they had lost him for four late 1st round picks, it would have crippled the franchise both on and off of the ice.

Dump n Chase (great name for a blog, by the way) looks at Mike Green in Washington.

"I think that I played a lot more defensive game in that sense," said Green. "I think that what Dale expected was kind of a grinder, chip-in, chip-out kind of game. I respect him as a coach and played that way and played hard for him. I also at the same time am really excited that [new head coach] Adam [Oates] is here. From what I've heard, how he likes to coach fits my style of play and also a lot of the other guys.

Hopefully there is a balance between Bruce Boudreau and Dale, and I think Adam is the guy."

Green did what was asked of him during the Hunter regime. He was a minus player just once in his last 24 games of the 2011-12 season – including the playoffs – and he was a plus-12 during that stretch of two dozen games. But he also totaled just two goals and five points during that span."

Is Jordan Eberle 's shooting percentage sustainable?

"Based on the data available to me, and the fact that Eberle is projected to play on the top power play unit in Edmonton going forward, I'd feel comfortable suggesting that Eberle should end up with a shooting percentage in the top quarter of the league's established forwards over the next seven seasons (min. 500 shots). If we assume that goaltenders remain at the same level over the next five years as they established over the past seven, that would put Eberle at 12.7% or better."

Sticking with my profiles of prospects who have fallen by the wayside a bit (yesterday was Kadri and Niederreiter)… here are two more:

Kirill Kabanov

I'll be honest; I've never been a huge Kabanov fan. However, he has done a lot in the past year and a half to quiet his doubters (myself included). His apparent attitude problems haven't come up at all, and he's played some great two-way hockey for Shawinigan in the QMJHL. He had a very strong developmental camp with the Islanders back in June, too.

The Islanders have lots of good young forwards, as I mentioned yesterday. But don't forget about Kabanov. His ceiling his high and he looks to be committed to taking a crack at making the NHL. The risk of a return to Russia is always there, but as long as you account for it, I'd look to snag him in a prospect draft or later on in a keeper draft this summer.

Jon Blum

Blum struggled last year (putting it lightly). However, he still projects as a top four defenseman in the NHL. He has fallen behind both Roman Josi and Ryan Ellis on the depth chart in Nashville.

Blum is a good skater and he makes a fantastic first pass. He sees the ice really well, too. He plays like Philadelphia's Matt Carle – understated, but he contributes in a lot of ways. His defensive game needs work, though.

It will be interesting to see how he does next year – he was pretty solid in 2010-11, and the Preds would love for him to come to camp and grab a roster spot.

Of the three young guys, I like Josi the most, but all three have the upside to be top four defensemen. At some point the Predators will have to make a move on one of them, but for now they should work on getting them all into NHL action (especially Blum, so he can get back on track and gain some confidence).

Blum's offensive upside is very dependent on the role he will play. He was lethal on the PP with the Vancouver Giants, not with a booming shot but with how well he moved the puck and found the open man.

At this point, he is a great buy low option and I'd peg his upside at 40-45 points (assuming he is playing a regular shift on the PP).

Welcome to Carolina:

{youtube}akT6-oXUmW4{/youtube}

Al MacInnis inflicts some pain on goalies:

{youtube}VaDdTrNhsQc{/youtube}