

July 29, 2012

Written by Jeff Angus

Saturday, 28 July 2012 15:57 - Last Updated Sunday, 29 July 2012 16:26

Correction - Dobber is on vacation from the site, not in general. He is focusing his efforts on the Fantasy Guide - get excited, this thing is going to be phenomenal.

Dobber is off on vacation for a few days, so I will be covering off for him - ramblings will be all mine through next Saturday.

Could Ray Whitney repeat last season's performance? Yes. I think the Stars will give him a lot of minutes - they were missing creativity on the PP last year outside of Ribeiro - Whitney's role will probably be that of a PP specialist. I'm interested to see what kind of impact Whitney will have off of the ice.

The Stars were obviously not prepared to bring the same leadership core back - Ribeiro, Morrow, Ott, and company had failed down the stretch in recent years. Morrow will stick around for now as he is the Captain and he doesn't have much trade value (my own speculation), but Ott and Ribeiro are both gone.

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The incoming Whitney and Jagr are both pros in every sense of the world, and the young guys like Benn, Vincour, Eakin, Glennie, Chiasson, and so on will be able to learn a lot.

Mason Raymond has been a divisive figure in Vancouver in recent years. Some think he is useless, while others think last season was the case of a player struggling after breaking his back. Raymond has scored 25 before and is a versatile forward. He'll have to work his butt off to make the top six, as the Canucks are still in the market for a forward. Potential lines:

Sedin-Sedin-Burrows

Booth-Kesler-XXXX

Higgins-Lapierre-Hansen

Weise-Malhotra-Kassian/Raymond

*Apologies for forgetting Hansen.

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That missing forward could be Doan. It could be a forward coming back in a potential Luongo trade. I'd expect Raymond to chip in with 15-18 goals in a secondary role.

Since there isn't a ton going on right now in hockey, I am going to take some of the questions from [my Fantasy Mailbag that is open this weekend](#) and answer them in the ramblings.

"Where would Sven Bartschi rank on your top 50 prospects list?"

Bartschi is one of the best prospects to own. One, he is very talented, and two, the Flames are going to give him every opportunity to play a big role with them very soon. For top 50, I'd have him somewhere around 8-12. He's a step below the Yakupov/Granlund class, but not too far back.

"Would you trade Zajac for Horton or Hodgson?"

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No. Horton's concussion issues worry me, and Hodgson isn't at Zajac's level yet. I think the Devils will put Zajac with Kovalchuk on the top unit, and he should get back to the production levels he was at before his injury last season.

"Do you think Chicago rolls the dice on another year of Crawford, or do they make a move for a goalie?"

As of now, it sounds like Chicago will go with Crawford and Emery. They have an even bigger hole at 2C, and I am not sure how they plan to fill that. Is Kruger ready? Kane and Sharp are both much more effective on the wing. I could see the Hawks making a play for a goalie closer to the deadline if Crawford struggles, but I think he gets another chance to prove himself.

It sounds like Shane Doan is moving on from Phoenix. He hasn't heard from potential Phoenix owner Greg Jamison. This will be the interesting situation to track this week. How high do you go for Doan? I'd go up[to \$18 million over three years. A bit of an overpayment but that is the nature of free agency, and he brings so many things to the table.

Carolina GM Jim Rutherford had a lengthy chat with Bruce Boudreau before signing Semin. He obviously wanted to get a behind-the-scenes look at what Semin is like, and no better person to talk to than his former coach. I think Carolina is a great fit for him - lots of talent, the media scrutiny isn't great, and he has the motivation to prove himself to land a longer term deal.

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If he wanted money (don't get me wrong, \$7 million is a lot of coin), he would have signed in the KHL a long time ago.

{youtube}wCk3-RVMY4E{/youtube}